

**SOCIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN REFUGEES IN DADAAB REFUGEE
CAMP, NORTH-EASTERN KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This project paper is my original work and has not been presented to any other institution or university for a degree.

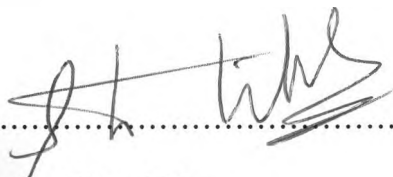
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This project paper has not been presented for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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Date.....22/11/11.....

Prof. Simiyu Wandibba

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to almighty God for His blessing that have seen me through my studies.

To my family members for the unyielding support and encouragement, I always feel blessed around you.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Map of Dadaab Refugee Camp	20
Figure 4.1: Respondent's age	25
Figure 4.2: Number of children per respondent.....	26
Figure 4.3: Source of information on Dadaab Refugee Camp	27
Figure 4.4: Level of satisfaction with Dadaab Refugee Camp	28

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 4.1: Side view of a house at Daadab Refugee Camp.....	34
Plate 4.2: A man transporting firewood for sale to the camp	37
Plate 4.3: A child on a wheelbarrow at IFO hospital-Dadaab	40
Plate 4.4: Typical kitchen at Dadaab Refugee Camp	42
Plate 4.5: Toilet facility at the Daadab Refugee Camp	42

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ABSTRACT

This was an exploratory study of the social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp, Northern Kenya. In specific terms, the study sought to establish the social problems faced by women refugees in Daadab Refugee Camp comprising of Dagahaley, Hagadera and Ifo.

This study was conducted among 50 women refugees conveniently sampled across Dadaab Refugee Camp. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, case narratives and observation. Data were collected through case narratives and IDS were analysed thematically while observation data have been pictorially presented.

The findings indicate that the social problems faced by women refugees at Dadaab Refugee Camp include poor conditions of shelter, inadequate space, language barriers, violence, rape and defilement at the service seeking points and high level of isolation amongst those who lost their family members in the event of migrating into the camp. These problems obviously arise from the women's refugee situation. It is, therefore, recommended that these problems be addressed by those responsible for the welfare of the refugees at Daadab.

The Kenya Red Cross Society, by virtue of being a leading humanitarian organization, should play a co-ordinating role in harmonizing the intervention strategies of other agencies. Finally, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that social justice is pursued and sustained and that the perpetrators of heinous acts such as gender based-violence, i.e. rape, defilement, physical violence and murder, are punished.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CVA	-	Capacities and Vulnerabilities Assessment
CEDAW	-	Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
GIZ	-	Gesundheits-Informationen-Zentrum (<i>German Health Information Centre</i>)
IASC	-	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP	-	Internally Displaced Persons
IRDP	-	International Relief/Development Project
MISP	-	Minimum Initial Service Pack
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
UNFPA	-	United Nations Fund for Population and Development
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
WFP	-	World Food Programme
WHO	-	World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Literature traces the beginning of the problem of refugees in Africa back to the period of struggles for independence. As Milner (2004:10) points out, “while migration, both forced and voluntary, has been a defining feature of African history since pre-modern times, the emergence of the modern refugee phenomenon in Africa may be linked to the struggle for and attainment of independence by most African states in the late 1950s and early 1960s”. In many countries, armed conflicts have characterized the post-independence period and have been the main cause of population flights. Deng (1993) identifies civil and ethnic conflicts as the main causes of forced migrations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Many political analysts argue that most of these post-independence armed conflicts are a result of the colonial legacy, the introduction of new socio-economic and political structures and the changing nature of the State (Kraler, 2005). In many African countries, colonial regimes practised a system of differential and preferential treatment of Africans based on regional, tribal, status and ethnic differences. Most African countries inherited these colonial practices of division and exclusion (Anthony, 1999). The conflicts often opposed ruling groups trying to maintain the *status quo*, on the one hand, and excluded group rallying for change, on the other. Thus, in general, struggles over the control of political and economic power and concomitant massive human rights abuses, including widespread violence are the main cause of population flights in Sub-Saharan Africa. Anthony (1999) cites Chad, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda as examples of major refugee producing countries in sub-Saharan Africa, but the list can undoubtedly be prolonged.

Moreover, armed conflicts that cause population displacement are, in many instances, a result of failure or unwillingness of certain governments to resolve long-standing ethnic tensions (Chazan et al., 1999) or the tendency of certain governments to oppress particular population groups (Adepoju, 1989). For many socio-economic and developmental analysts armed conflicts and the resulting mass flight of refugees constitute the greatest challenge for economic development and the greatest obstacle to economic take off (Nabudere, 2002).

While a majority of female migrants move voluntarily for family or work purposes, a smaller number have been forced to leave their homes as a result of conflict, repression, human rights violations, political instability and similar factors. Some are displaced internationally whereas others are forced to relocate within their own countries (Fagen and Yudelman, 2001).

The total population of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) fell from 20.8 million persons at the end of 2002 to 17.1 million by the end of 2003. Of that population, refugees constituted 57 per cent, up from 51 per cent in 2002 (UNHCR, 2004). Of those for whom demographic data were available, 49 per cent were female and 46 per cent were children under the age of 18 (ibid.). The share of women and girls among refugees varies considerably by country of origin and country of asylum. In Angola, Guinea, Pakistan and Rwanda, for example, more than 56 per cent of the adult refugees (18-59 years of age) are women. By contrast, a study done for UNHCR shows that the proportion of females among asylum applicants in Europe varies from 16 per cent to 46 per cent. On average, women submit 29 per cent of the asylum applications in Europe. However, it is important not to equate that number with the total number of female asylum-seekers and refugees, since that figure reflects only the asylum claims launched by women.

Usually women do not apply separately for asylum; instead, the application is made by their spouses or accompanying male relatives (Golblatt and Meintjes, 1998).

Refugees have a special status in international law. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (UNHCR, 2004:18).

Refugee status has been applied more broadly, however, to include other persons who are outside their country of origin as a result of armed conflict, generalized violence, foreign aggression or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and who therefore require international protection (IASC, 2002).

The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted in July 1951. The essence of the Convention was to provide a general definition of who was to be considered a refugee and to define his or her legal status. In 2002, UNHCR issued two guidelines on international protection to assist States parties and national refugee status determination (RSD) authorities in gender sensitive assessment and in the processing of asylum claims. The guidelines on gender-related persecution and the guidelines on membership of a particular social group, both within the context of article 1 A (2) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, complement other UNHCR guidelines on aspects of gender-related persecution, provide legal interpretive guidance on ensuring gender-sensitive interpretation of the Convention and ensure that refugee status determination procedures do not marginalize or exclude gender-related experiences of persecution (UNHCR, 2002).

In its 2002 guidelines on gender-related persecution, UNHCR stated the following:

Even though gender is not specifically referenced in the refugee definition, it is widely accepted that it can influence, or dictate, the type of persecution or harm suffered and the reasons for this treatment. The refugee definition, properly interpreted, therefore covers gender-related claims. As such, there is no need to add an additional ground to the 1951 Convention definition (UNHCR, 2002:6).

The protection of refugees and displaced women in conflict situations is particularly problematic. Civilians are increasingly the targets of attacks in conflicts. Articles 7 and 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court include rape and sexual violence among the crimes against humanity and war crimes. Rape and sexual assault also occur during flight, at the hands of border guards, government and rebel armed units, bandits and others. *Women's safety may be no more ensured once in refugee and displaced persons' camps or reception centres.* For example, refugee and displaced women have faced serious threats of rape when they collect firewood, often the only source of heating and cooking fuel. Refugee women have also been forced to provide sexual favours in exchange for food rations for themselves and their families. In some cases, only male heads of households receive documentation of their status, leaving their spouses vulnerable to harassment each time they leave their homes (IASAC, 2002). This study was carried out in Dadaab Refugee Camp, North-Eastern Kenya, to determine the social problems faced by women refugees.

1.2 Problem statement

Both international refugee law and the international refugee assistance programmes have traditionally been gender-blind. In the academic literature on refugees, consideration of

refugee women or gender has only recently been explored, and then only minimally (Rogge, 1994). Yet by bringing women into the picture, it is possible not only to illustrate the differential experience of refugee women (Ager, 1995), but also to understand more fully the dynamics of refugees in conflict situations and in refugee-warrior communities.

The social problems facing refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp assume a gender dimension exacerbated by lack of resources such as fuel, water, nutrition, health care, reproductive health supplies and services for the increased population. Firewood, for example, has been depleted to a radius of 5 kilometres around the camp (Ikanda, 2004:4). Security is a major challenge and takes a gender dimension with women suffering the greater burden (Ikanda, 2004: 15). Cases of malnutrition and sexual exploitation and abuse are rampant in the refugee camp and highlight food distribution as one of the major challenges that women refugees have to contend with. Kinyua, (2005:16) highlights gaps in the co-ordination mechanisms for food distribution, and cites gender discrimination and lack of involvement by women beneficiaries in the process. This study aimed at exploring the social problems affecting women refugees in Dadaab Camp by concentrating on the experiences of the refugee women. In order to address this aim, the study was guided by the following question:-

- What social problems are faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp?

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Overall objective

To explore the social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To establish and describe the social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp

1.4 Justification of the study

The findings of this study are important in highlighting some of the customary humiliations women refugees are subjected to that compel them into silence while suffering. Therefore, the recommendations of this study, if adopted by policy makers and international bodies on refugees' welfare, should help in correcting and/or addressing social problems encountered by women while pursuing refugee status such as registration, issuance of rations cards and issues of physical and psycho-social safety at the camp.

The UNHCR, humanitarian agencies led by the Kenya Red Cross, the Government of Kenya represented by the Department of Refugee Affairs should find the findings and recommendations of this study useful in reviewing their current strategies of improving the welfare of refugees, especially women refugees, while at the camp. The study findings will also contribute to knowledge on the gender based-violence (GBV) facing women refugees.

1.5 Scope and limitations of the study

This study was carried out in Dadaab Refugee Camp in North- Eastern Kenya. It explored the social problems faced by women refugees and, in particular, the social problems faced by women refugees at the Dadaab Refugee camp.

The study used qualitative data collection methods and has not generated any statistics to be used to test any hypothesis. However, social problems are basically qualitative rather than quantitative.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the research problem. This literature is reviewed using the following sub-headings: problems experienced by women refugees and stressors experienced by refugees. Finally, the chapter presents the theoretical framework that will be used to guide this study.

2.2.1 Conflict as a consequence of refugee flows

When large numbers of refugees enter a host country, local societies and economies can be disrupted in ways that can often lead to conflict. The refugees may introduce severe strains on the local economy, social infrastructure, and development efforts, especially when the host country is very poor (Gordenker, 1987:150). Refugees may also cause extensive ecological damage to the host country, particularly when they are concentrated in camps in areas already facing land shortages. Ikanda (2004) stresses that many refugee settlements "present serious threats to the ecological balance and may have disastrous and irreparable effects".

International or host government assistance to refugees can cause tensions and conflict between refugees and local citizens, particularly when the local population perceives that the refugees are provided with better living standards (medical care, education, nutrition, etc.) than themselves (Gordenker, 1987; Ikanda, 2004). Providers of refugee aid, aware of the possibility of creating tension, have for decades attempted to follow the formula of local parity, or providing refugees with a level of aid which does not exceed the local population's living standards. However, existing pressures of overpopulation and resource scarcity may be

exacerbated by the introduction of refugees, leading to lower living standards for both the refugees and the local population (Rogge, 1981; Ferris, 1985; Bulcha, 1987). In such cases, according to Kibreab and Nobel (1987:97), "there is the impending danger that the poor hosts may attribute their prevailing misery to the presence of refugees and consequently the harmonious integration of the latter may be blocked by hostile local attitudes".

In addition to the aforementioned problems of economic and social competition, the existence of refugee populations may exacerbate or create ethnic tensions and trigger large-scale political discontent (Ferris, 1985:21). The national government may be faced with increased demands on social services and development initiatives, a problem that is particularly salient because many of the receiving countries of recent refugee migrations have been among the world's poorest. Refugees are frequently blamed for creating political instability and are viewed as a burden on the host society, leading in some cases to forced repatriation by the host country (Sorensen, 1994:181). One recent study has indicated that the process of democratization in many countries, particularly in Africa, has lent new political significance to refugees as scapegoats for national problems (UNHCR, 1997:77.)

2.2.2 Problems experienced by women refugees

All refugees, women and girls face a variety of challenges during their refugee experience that are specific to their gender. These problems often begin even before the women cross an international boundary and become officially refugees under international law, and are experienced by internally displaced women as well.

One of the most formidable challenges that women face is the threat to their personal security, particularly in the form of sexual violence (Turshen, 1998). As noted above, rape and sexual violence are used to persecute women for their or a relative's political activity. Rape and sexual violence are also increasingly recognized as weapons of war that lead to women's flight from their homes (Goldblatt and Mientjes, 1998).

However, sexual violence does not necessarily end when a woman leaves her home; in many cases, women face increased chances of sexual violence once they are in flight. Women refugees, like women in conflict situations, are targeted for sexual and other forms of violence for a number of reasons. DeVoe (1993) states that they may be physically abused because they are considered extensions of their families and not individuals. Women embody the family's continuity and pride as wives who will produce a future generation and as chaste daughters who symbolize the family's virtue. An attack on them, therefore, is an attack on the integrity of the family. Attacks on women may also represent an assault on their ethnic group; because they have a reproductive role, women may be viewed as the embodiment of a given ethnic identity's maintenance (DeVoe, 1993).

During flight, women are often separated from husbands or brothers, further increasing their vulnerability to armed attack and sexual violence. The perpetrators of this abuse may be pirates, border guards, members of the armed forces or rebel troops, male refugees, and others with whom they come into contact with (Camus-Jacques, 1989).

Sexual violence does not necessarily stop when the women reach a refugee camp or country of asylum. While refugee camps are theoretically established to protect refugees and provide

for their needs, they can sometimes become very dangerous places for refugee women. Women face sexual violence not only from armed elements in the camps and the military of the host country, but also from male refugees. Women refugees may be targeted for the same reasons that women in flight are targeted, often as a political attack on their group in the armed conflict. In addition, women may be forced to trade sexual services for food or other basic needs (DeVoe, 1993:23).

The physical environment of the camps may exacerbate women's protection problems. Many different families, often from different sides of the conflict, are sometimes forced to live in close proximity, sharing communal living and social spaces (Forbes-Martin, 1997:21). The author also notes that poor camp design can contribute to women's protection problems, such as overcrowding, communal latrines far from living quarters, poor lighting and inadequate night patrols. In addition, sexual and other physical violence may increase against women even in intact families as male refugees, disempowered and frustrated by the refugee experience, take out their frustrations on their wives through domestic violence and rape (Forbes-Martin, 1997; Young 1994). Forbes-Martin (1997:71) remarks, "The enforced idleness, boredom and despair that permeate many camps are natural breeding grounds for such (domestic) violence".

Sexual and other violence leaves women refugees with deep emotional scars and psychological damage. Sexual violence is used as a weapon of war in part because of the social stigma attached to it in many societies. Women who have been sexually assaulted are often deeply ashamed of their experiences and afraid to talk to anyone about them, and the psychological trauma experienced by victims of rape and abuse in refugee situations is

particularly severe (DeVoe, 1993:22-23). Further, the shame attached to sexual assault makes it even more difficult for aid agencies to address it and aid victims. Women are often reluctant to talk about their experiences, particularly to the overwhelmingly male staff of most camps.

The threats to women refugees' physical security are not only in the form of sexual violence; women face other gender-specific health and security problems as well. In many societies, women are responsible for collecting water and gathering firewood for cooking. If these elements of food preparation are not made available by camp administrators to the women, they may leave the refugee camp to find them. Once outside of the camp, women may be subject to armed assault by soldiers or local men (Ikanda, 2004). In addition, they may wander into minefields while looking for water and cooking fuel (DeVoe, 1993:26).

Women refugees' physical security and safety in refugee camps is further threatened by lack of adequate health care. Women are exposed to more health risks than are men in refugee camps (DeVoe, 1993:23). Ager, (1995) found that members of female-headed households reported significantly more health problems than male-headed households in Mozambican refugee camps and settlements in Malawi. Pregnancy poses particular problems to the refugee woman: once the original emergency phase of flight is over, the leading cause of death among women of child-bearing age are complications from pregnancies (Forbes-Martin, 1997:38). As the primary water-gatherers, they are more exposed to water-borne diseases (ibid). Women's health needs during menstruation are also frequently neglected; male camp administrators have at times neglected to provide sanitary napkins to women or separate washing facilities for women during their menstrual periods (Marshall, 1995). Women are

thus forced to improvise with dirty rags and, because of the social stigma of menstruation, may choose not to wash during this time to avoid the shame of being seen by men, both of which increase the risks of their health.

Women refugees' health is further jeopardized by malnutrition, which is linked to issues of food distribution in refugee camps and settlements. Food distribution networks which favour male refugees tend to dis-empower women and exacerbate patriarchal relations (Forbes-Martin, 1997; Kibreab, 1995; Marshall, 1995; Roge, 1994; Young, 1994). Women produce 70 per cent of the food grown in developing countries, and are in many societies responsible for the production, allocation and preparation of household food (Forbes-Martin, 1997:36).

However, food distribution decisions in refugee camps and settlements have traditionally been made by international organizations and host countries in consultation with male leaders in the camps. Often, the camp administrators give food ration cards directly to men and allow them to control the distribution and allocation of food (ibid: 18; Kinyua, 2005).

Granting food distribution responsibilities in the camps to men leads to a variety of problems for women and children, including female and child malnutrition and related health concerns. Although both men and women may barter their food rations on the black market for other goods, men are more likely to barter them for luxury items such as cigarettes and alcohol (Young, 1994:64).

Forbes-Martin (1997:36) explains other ways used by men to divert food rations from women and children. In some circumstances, food distributed through male networks has been

diverted to resistance forces or for sale on the black market, with women and children suffering as a result. In other situations, food has been used as a weapon by both government and resistance forces which have blocked distribution to civilian populations, particularly displaced persons. In addition, male distributors of food and other items have required sexual favours in exchange for aid (Forbes-Martin, 1997:36).

Male-controlled distribution networks are particularly harmful to women-headed households, which constitute a majority of families living in refugee camps (DeVoe, 1993). If only men are granted ration cards, these families have little or no access to food rations. By taking the control of food allocation away from women, male camp leaders and international administrators are not only disempowering refugee women of one of their traditional spheres of control, but also directly jeopardizing the health and safety of refugee women and children.

Women refugees also face socio-cultural and psychological challenges during the refugee experience. As mentioned above, sexual violence and the trauma of flight leaves lasting scars, the severity of which may impede their long-term adjustment prospects (DeVoe, 1993). Refugee women must also cope with the enormous strain of radical changes in their environment, social and familial roles, and lifestyles.

Rogge (1994:43) notes that those women's traditional roles, responsibilities, and supportive networks become dramatically altered by involuntary migration, especially when the migrations also mean separation from husbands and kin. Extended family networks from which women normally draw much of the strength and support for their onerous roles in traditional society may be completely lost; instead women become isolated, dependent upon

themselves, solely responsible for children in the absence of fathers, subject to exploitation, and, in many cases, also to emotional and physical/sexual abuse. For many women, becoming a refugee sets in motion an almost continuous process of balancing traditional values with a new 'sense of self' imposed by the refugee experience (Rogge, 1994:43).

Particularly for women who are suddenly made heads of households by their circumstances, these challenges can be overwhelming, but also liberating as they take on new economic roles. In intact families, women's new roles can lead to increased gender conflict and domestic violence, while in the greater societal context women's new roles can lead to intergenerational conflict over traditional societal values (Forbes-Martin, 1997; Kibreab, 1995). Women can also become subject to new restrictions when they become refugees, for example, Afghan women in refugee camps lost considerable autonomy under the imposition of Sharia (Islamic Law) and purdah in refugee camps in Pakistan (Young, 1994: 90).

In long-term camps and resettlement programmes, international agencies and camp administrators sometimes create programmes designed to increase the refugees' chances of successful repatriation or resettlement in the host or third country (Young, 1994:91). While most of aid agencies' resources are allocated to emergency relief, small amounts are spent on projects to enhance self-support. These include schools for the children, education and job training for the adults, and other development-oriented programmes. Often, the needs and experiences of women are not incorporated into the planning or implementation of these programmes (Forbes-Martin, 1997). For instance, women's income-generating programmes often focus on what are considered to be traditional women's activities such as handicrafts, despite the frequent absence of markets for these goods. On the other hand, men are often

routed towards agricultural projects, despite the fact that they were often not responsible for agriculture in their country of origin. Lacking other ways of supporting their families, women turn to other income-generating activities, such as engagement in the informal economy (black market) and prostitution to support themselves and their families (Forbes-Martin, 1997).

2.2.3 Stressors Experienced by Refugees

2.2.3.1 Trauma

People fleeing war-torn countries have usually had multiple experiences of trauma (Cheng and Chang, 1994). They may personally have been the victims of organized terror, suffering torture, rape or imprisonment, or else they may be the friends or relatives of others who have. Exposure to violence, repression and the experience of extreme powerlessness are themselves psychologically traumatic events (Van den Wijngaard, 1997). The experience of persecution leads refugees to flee or to be forcibly displaced. For most this flight is precipitous, and the resulting disruption and family separation are traumatic (Van de Wijngard, 1997).

Many people fleeing persecution have spent months or years in intermediary refugee camps. Conditions in these camps (which are usually run by international aid agencies) are variable, but are often unclean, unsafe, impoverished and desperate (Johnson, 1996). Recurring memories of recent trauma, uncertainty about the future and the general monotony of existence take their toll. Refugees also frequently hold grave fears for their friends and relatives still in their homeland, and have great difficulties in communicating with them (Silove et al., 1998). They may also be afflicted by “survivor guilt” (D’Avanzo, 1997).

2.2.3.2 Loss

Losses for refugees start in their country of origin, when possessions and homes are seized, loved ones are killed and, in some cases, the entire country is destroyed (Fazel and Stein, 2003). In flight and even when settled in the new host country, refugees may feel uprooted, homesick and acutely aware of the loss of social networks (Johnson, 1996). In this situation it is difficult to maintain traditions and rituals from the home culture, and with this comes the loss of traditional social controls, for example, those surrounding the acceptable use of alcohol and other drugs (Van de Wijngard, 1997). Eisenbruch (1991:67) writes of a “cultural bereavement” experienced by refugees, acknowledging the existential pain of refugees which “has to do with difficulties in recapturing the lost past and ultimately with the survival of their culture”.

2.6 Theoretical framework

2.6.1 Capacities and Vulnerability Approach

The capacities and vulnerabilities approach (CVA) was designed and tested in the late 1980s by an inter-NGO initiative, the International Relief/Development Project (IRDP). Its stated purpose is to help the givers of aid learn how to give it so that it supports the efforts of people to achieve social and economic development (Anderson and Woodrow, 1998), i.e., how to make relief interventions more developmental. However, it has been used more widely in disaster preparedness and mitigation. It is a practical tool but above all a diagnostic one: it is not prescriptive.

The participation of vulnerable people is an essential component of CVA. In Anderson and Woodrow's words, "This is a powerful way to help them increase their understanding of their own situation, and, therefore, their capacities to effect desired change" (Anderson and Woodrow, 1998:21). They also argue that much of the information that agencies need is either already available or can be easily obtained from local people. "After all, local people usually already know what the situation is. Only the outside agency needs this information" (Anderson and Woodrow, 1998:45). But it is acknowledged that local people do not always have the skills for understanding and organizing what they know.

The CVA format and basic concepts have since been adopted by or absorbed into other vulnerability assessment methodologies and used in training courses and manuals to varying degrees. The extent of its use on the ground is not clear although it does appear to be widely known. The best documented and perhaps most significant adoption of the CVA method has been in the Philippines by the Citizens' Disaster Response Center and Network (CDRC/N) of NGOs since the early 1990s, as part of their Citizenry-Based and Development-Oriented Disaster Response (CBDO-DR) approach that emphasises a developmental approach to disaster management together with community participation in project planning and implementation.

It was first applied by the IRDP to 30 projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America, implemented by a diverse set of NGOs (large/small, technical/general, relief/development, North/South) and different disasters (drought, flood, earthquake, typhoon, volcano, tsunami, refugees). This application was largely retrospective since, although it provided many lessons

about how particular interventions had affected capacities and vulnerabilities, it had relatively little to teach about how to use the method in project design.

2.6.2 Relevance of the theory

CVA as a diagnostic tool is important in understanding social problems. The theory is based on the notion that people become vulnerable when they lack the power to influence decisions, access resources and mitigate socio-economic constraints characteristic of displaced populations. The theory illustrates that improved capacity of recipients of aid and their participation in targeted interventions enhances the capacity to complement and mitigate the impact of war or conflict on displaced populations. The theory provides the rationale for understanding gender roles and intra- household dynamics as they affect the welfare of women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp. These dynamics are responsible for the social problems experienced by the women refugees in the camp.

2.7 Assumption of the study

There are social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents information on the study site, research design, study population, sample size and sampling procedure, as well as methods of data collection and analysis. The chapter finally discusses the ethical considerations and problems experienced in the field and their solutions.

3.2 Study site

This study was carried out in Dadaab which is a semi-arid town in the North Eastern Province of Kenya. The study was specifically carried out in IFO, Dagahaley and Hagadera refugee camps of Dadaab (Fig.3.1). Dadaab camp is located approximately 100 kilometres from the Kenya-Somalia border. Until recently, the local population traditionally consisted of nomadic Somali camel and goat herders. The nearest major town is Garissa, which is the headquarters of North Eastern Province. While a majority of the refugees are from Somalia, a number of them are from Sudan, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanzania and Congo. The camp was built in 1991 for the Somali fleeing the fighting that erupted with the collapse of Siad Barre's military regime. It comprises IFO, Hagadera and Dagahaley refugee camps (UNHCR 2011).

The camps cover a total area of 50 square kilometres and are within a radius of 18 kms of Dadaab town. Lack of land and the ageing water system are only but a few among many problems facing the people of Daadab. Most of the refugees have migrated from the Juba

River valley and the Gedo region, while the remainder arrived from Kismayo, Mogadishu and Bardera, all in southern Somalia (ICRC, 2001).

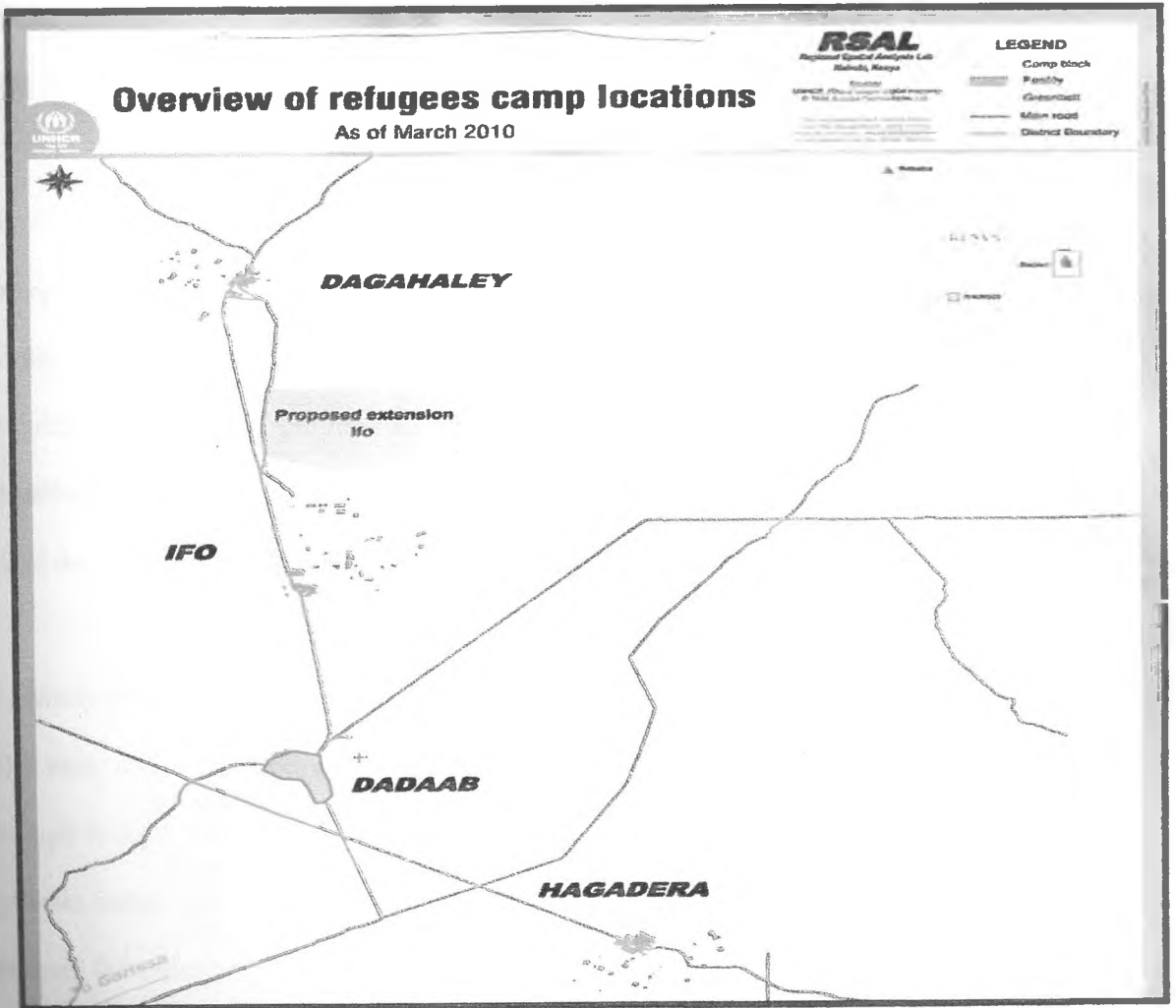


Figure 3.1: Map of Dadaab Refugee Camp

(Source: Google Maps, 2010)

At the beginning, the camp was built to accommodate almost 100,000 refugees in Kenya's North Eastern Province. Although the number of refugees has fluctuated over the years, most

of the original refugee population remains in the camps, joined in the past few years by new influxes of refugees fleeing the recent escalation in the conflict. Since 2006, the number of mostly Somali refugees living in appalling conditions in the overcrowded Dadaab has almost tripled to reach close to 300,000, eighty per cent of whom are women and children (UNHCR, 2009).

On 3rd January, 2007, as the conflict in Somalia worsened following the December 2006 Ethiopian intervention to oust the Union of Islamic Courts, the Kenya Government closed its border with Somalia, citing the deteriorating situation there (HRW, 2007). Since then, it has progressively increased the number of police and military personnel in the border areas. Nonetheless, in the recent months, over 1500 refugees have been flowing to Dadaab daily given the extreme drought conditions in the Horn of Africa (UNHCR, 2011)

3.3 Study design

This study utilized an exploratory study design. Individual lived experiences were examined through in-depth interviews and case narratives while key informant interviews were used to generate expert opinions on the social problems faced by refugee women. The data were analysed thematically.

3.4 Study population

The study population consisted of all women refugees living in Dadaab Refugee Camp. There are approximately 300, 000 refugees in Dadaab camp, 80 per cent of whom are women and children (UNHCR, 2009). The unit of analysis was the individual refugee woman aged 18

years and above, defined as a registered refugee in Dadaab camp and must have stayed in the camp for the last one year before the time of the interview.

3.5 Sample size and sampling procedure

Convenience sampling was used to select fifty women for individual in-depth interviews, while purposive sampling was used to select 4 persons from the United Nations staff, 2 people from the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA) and one person from a locally operating NGO for key informant interviews. In addition, 6 women were purposively selected for case narratives.

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 In-depth interviews

Fifty in-depth interviews were carried out with women refugees in Dadaab camp. This method was important in yielding data on the social problems women refugees experienced at the camp. An in-depth interview guide (Appendix 1) was used to collect the data.

3.6.2 Key informant interviews

These were conducted with four United Nations staff in Dadaab Refugee Camp, two representatives from the Department of Refugee Affairs and one person from a locally operating NGO in the area. These informants were significant in giving information on the causes of social problems to women refugees as well as policy, gender-specific response strategies and overall vulnerability of women refugees to social problems in the Camp. A key informant interview guide (Appendix 2) was used to collect the data.

3.6.3 Case narratives

This method was used to collect data on the accounts of lived experiences of women refugees in Dadaab camp. Case narratives helped to bring out individual lived experiences with respect to social problems faced in the camp including any government or non-governmental channelled assistance to the women refugees. The case narratives were carried out with six women refugees who had lived in the camp for 10 years before the date of the interview. A case narrative interview guide (Appendix 3) was used to collect the data.

3.6.4 Observation

Observation was important in gathering data regarding shelter conditions, bathrooms, water points, hygiene situation around the camp and food distribution. An observation checklist (Appendix 4) was used in this data collection process.

3.7 Data processing and analysis

Qualitative data were transcribed, coded and analyzed thematically. For each of the data sets, separate code sheets were created in an attempt to establish and interpret the patterns and relationships. All tape-recorded work was transcribed and translated into English and terms mentioned in English during interviews were directly picked and used. Quantitative data on socio-economic and demographic characteristics collected from in-depth interviews were coded and analyzed using Micro Soft Excel Windows to show the trends in the data.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Relevant permission was sought for this study before embarking on fieldwork. Specifically,

clearance was sought from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology through the National Council for Science and Technology.

All information pertaining to this study was explained to informants in terms of its objectives, scope as well as the intended use of the information beyond the academic use in order to receive informed consent.

Prior to commencement of the interview, it was ensured that the informants were satisfied with the nature of the explanations and consent sought. The informants' confidentiality and privacy was maintained through the use of pseudonyms instead of the real identities of the individuals and coding of the places of residence within the camp. This was maintained throughout the study process and at the reporting and publication stages. Respondents were duly informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the study. The respondents were also informed of dissemination plans through publication and the means of accessing the study results.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN REFUGEES IN DADAAB REFUGEE CAMP

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings. It starts with a description of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, and then moves on to discuss the rest of the findings.

4.2 Demographic characteristic of the respondents

This study sought to know the age of the respondents in order to determine the average age at the point of becoming a refugee. The findings indicate that 60% of the respondents were aged 40-49 years, 25% were aged 20-29 years, 10% aged 30-39 years while 5% were aged above 50 years. These findings are summarised in Figure 4.1 below:

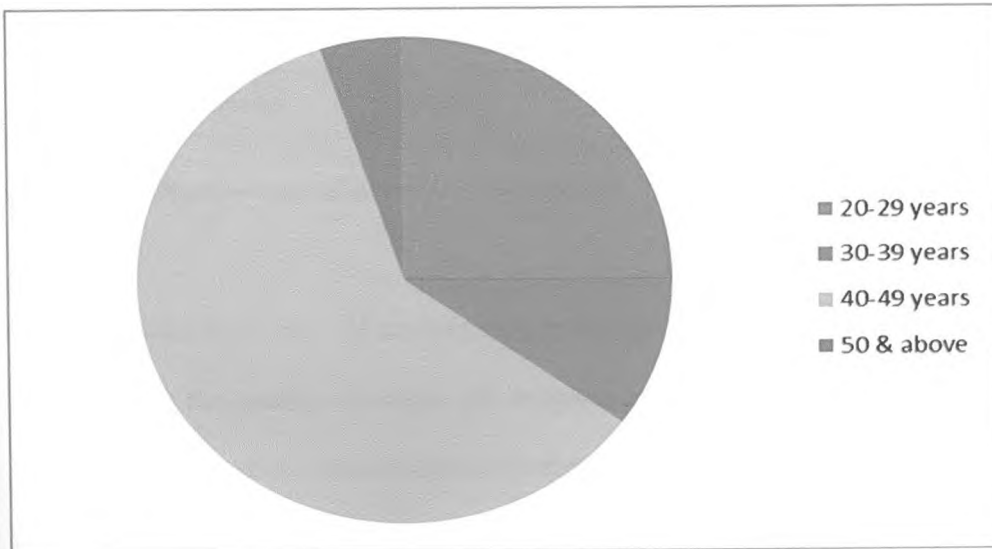


Figure 4.1: Respondent's age

Analysis by marital status shows that all the respondents are married. This is because of the

Somali culture that dictates that women cannot stay alone. Thus, even those who had lost their husbands have been remarried.

The study also sought to know the number of children per respondent. The findings indicate that 35% of the respondents had up to five children, 28% had between six and nine children while 37% had more than ten children. The findings are summarised in Figure 4.2 below.

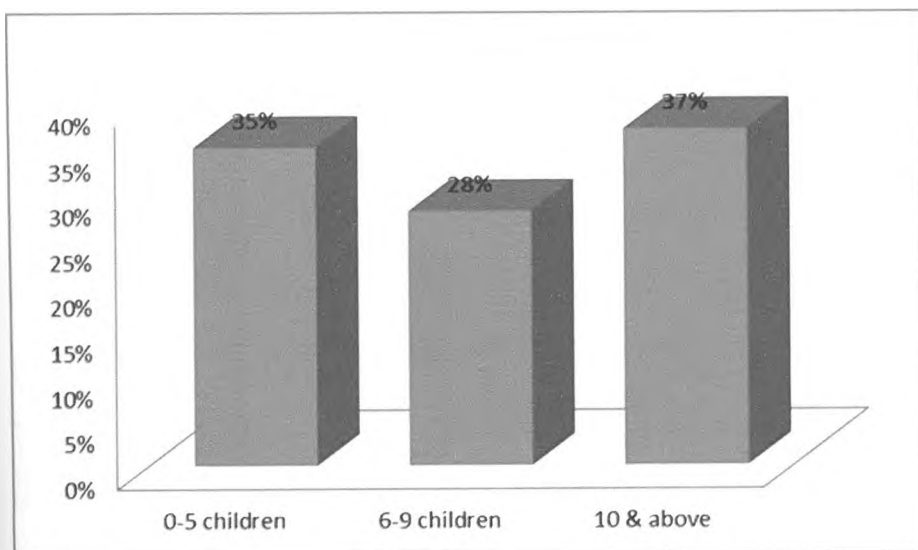


Figure 4.2: Number of children per respondent

On educational level, none of the respondents had received any formal education either at the camp or from the country of origin. On religious affiliation, all the respondents were of the Islamic faith. The study also established that all the respondents originated from Somalia and that the husbands were the household heads in all the cases.

4.3 Knowledge of Dadaab Refugee Camp

The study sought to know how the women refugees had come to learn about Dadaab Refugee

Camp. This was important in assessing the choice of the camp among many refugees, sources of information as well as the means used to reach the camp. The findings indicate that 55% of the respondents had been informed by relatives who left earlier for the camp, 30% had been picked by humanitarian bodies at the border point, 10% had heard about the camp over radio broadcasts in their country while 5% had followed other refugees to the camp, as summarised in Figure 4.4 below.

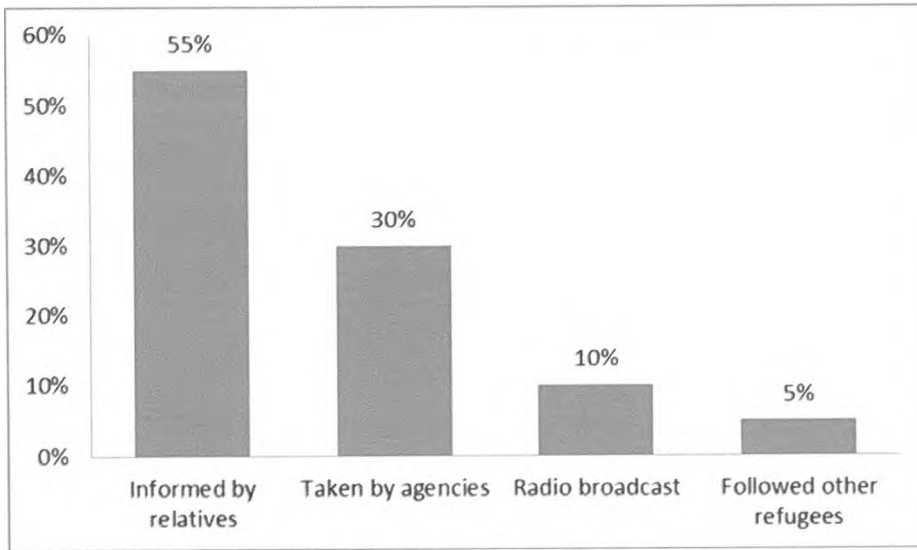


Figure 4.3: Source of information on Dadaab Refugee Camp

When probed on whether there were any other parties that might have informed them about the camp the respondents observed that there exists a chain of Somali business people operating in Dadaab who inform them of the situation and how to move across the borders, as in this interview:

There are people who do business at the camp especially those dealing in cloth wears and foodstuffs. When they come back to Somalia, they tell us about the existence of

better healthcare at the refugee camp, consistent food supplies, peace and a good number of people from our country staying here. Since we are weary of the war, we pack and follow their lead. So, that is how some of us have ended in the camp. (70 year old widow, mother of six)

4.4 Preference for Dadaab Refugee Camp

The study sought to know if the respondents would move to a different place given an opportunity. This was meant to assess their level of satisfaction with the services rendered in the camp. The findings indicate that 80% of the respondents would not move unless advised by the UNHCR, 12% would prefer to move to other countries for better life while a mere 8% preferred to go back to their country if the situation stabilized. The results are summarised in Figure 4.7.

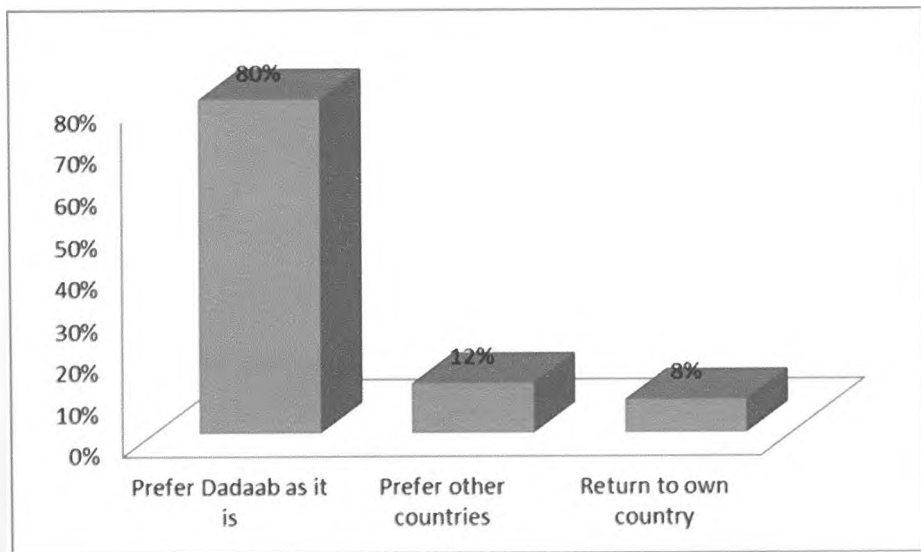


Figure 4.4: level of satisfaction with Dadaab Refugee Camp

The reasons for preference of the camp included free healthcare services, assured food

supplies unlike in the country of origin, as well as prevalent peace and security at the camp. Those who preferred to move to other countries cited better education facilities and cases of relatives who had succeeded, especially in the west, upon being given the asylum status. On the other hand, those who wanted to go back home upon stability cited a big rift between them and their families back in Somalia, the need to go back and rebuild their own country and the need to live amongst their kinsmen. According to one of them:

I long to go back and be reconnected with my extended family, they loved me a lot, I hardly hear from them...I believe they opted to stay despite the ravaging conflict, god knows but they have survived all the same, one day I must get back to my country.

(40-year-old mother of five)

On moving to another country, one of the respondents observed thus:

There are people I know who were helped by the Americans to go out of Africa. They have been supporting their families back in Kismayu with monies and other supplies; at least they have received better education and work opportunities. If I had a chance to leave the camp, I would because this will help change my entire family.

(26-year-old mother of one)

One of those satisfied with the camp environment irrespective of the difficulties they face had this to say:

This camp has become our home, it is safer here than where we have come from, when I see new arrivals, I see the face of war and famine but at least I can get food and medicine around the camp. I have no choice naturally, I have to stay behind unless the humanitarian bodies around take us to a better place than this camp, I won't move on my own...I have developed close ties with these people too given my long stay at the camp since 1994. This is the place I have come to appreciate and love after my country was torn apart by war. **(64-year-old mother of nine)**

The key informants also observed that there is little that can motivate the refugees to go back to their countries when at the same time more of their people seek safety at the camp. The influx is a pointer to the worsening situation so most of the refugees are naturally bound by circumstances to tolerate the camp environment and hope that one day life would change for better. According to one of them:

We give a lot of humanitarian assistance to these refugees indiscriminately; they have come to appreciate our efforts especially in shelter, food and basic healthcare provisions. While we cannot say our services can match the population's demand, we have always ensured that the situation is made more habitable and sensitive to their needs...I think this makes them feel more at home. **(Camp official at Hagadera)**

4.5 Social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp

The social problems faced by women refugees at Dadaab were examined across loss of social ties with family members, displacement from the extended family, linguistic isolation, and

the difficulties in accessing water, food and reproductive healthcare services. Other issues included the condition of shelter at the camp, firewood availability and hygiene in the camp.

4.5.1 Access to food at the camp

The study sought to know how the respondents get food supplies at the camp. This was important in exploring the level of satisfaction with food distribution mechanisms as well as the rations given to each family. The findings indicate that most commonly given food items are maize flour, oil, beans, and porridge flour. It was also established that there are no special foods for the children in the camp.

The food is distributed after every fifteen days by UNHCR and CARE depending on one's family size. However, most respondents observed that the food rations given always run out after eight days. This, in turn, forced a lot of the families to look for alternatives in the nearby markets or from the surrounding community to satisfy family needs. In certain cases, neighbours had to chip in to assist other highly affected families without any monies to buy extra food, as stated by one of the respondents:

I have eight children and my husband does not work either. I have to go and line up for food rations every fifteen days, but sometimes we run out of supplies in seven days. It is difficult to have three meals so most of the times we have one meal in the evening but children eat at school during the day. I rely on my neighbours with a few people to feed to give me some supplies as we wait for the next ration. **(57-year-old mother of eight)**

The key informants also observed that the food given to the families was predetermined by the available stock and always diminished based on new arrivals who get a share once they are registered at the camp. However, one of them stated that while the supplies were quantitatively inadequate, all efforts are being made to ensure a balanced supply of food. **(Department of Refugee Affairs official)**

4.5.2 The conditions of shelter at the camp

The study sought to know the respondents' perceptions of the conditions of the shelters where they are housed in terms of space and construction. This was important in assessing how comfortable the family members find the shelters at the camp. The respondents raised concerns over the materials that are used in the construction of the shelters such as carton boxes, sticks and at times mud walls. These materials are not durable and require constant change; they cannot withstand the vagaries of weather and are easily penetrated by mosquitoes that spread malaria at the camp, with expectant women and young children being highly affected. At the same time, women refugees reported to have constructed the houses in person without any architectural inputs from the humanitarian bodies. In the course of the interviews, it emerged that the agencies responsible for shelter at the camp have a preconceived notion that traditionally, the Somali women are responsible for the construction of houses. While this is true, the responsibility of performing such tasks as refugees impacts on their health and more so in the absence of traditional social support systems. One of the respondents painfully narrated how she was supplied with building materials three weeks after giving birth. In the effort to thatch the house, she started bleeding and had to be admitted and became bed-ridden for one month leaving her children under the care of

neighbours **(43-year-old mother of four)**. In addition to health related challenges, the structures are not decent as captured below: captured below:

The houses are weak and porous, and children and women suffer a lot at night from the prevalent mosquitoes. The winds are strong at night so the sticks cannot shelter you properly. In this camp, women construct from the foundations upto the walls. We only get supply of roofing materials once you have reached that stage approved by the agency...I have to do it because I would want to have a house with enough space for me and my children. Sometimes I use iron sheets from the neighbours' toilets to strengthen my roof. **(43-year-old mother of four)**

On being probed on the space and roofing conditions of the house, the respondents observed that the houses leak when it rains and sometimes their family members, especially children, sleep outside the house due to lack of space. The space does not even allow the women to keep their water containers indoors except for the food rations. As one respondent observed:

My roof has been leaking so I tap water in plastic containers and pour it out. I cannot keep everything I have in the house due to inadequate space especially water containers and the agencies have not helped me either. At one point my son had to sleep outside because the father would not allow him in when the house is this small...the shelters just to say are not adequate in any way. **(33-year-old mother of two)**

The key informants observed that the condition of shelter was getting worse with the arrival

of new refugees. The roofing material is inadequate and the space for construction is also decreasing. One of them observed that this was limiting given the large family sizes among the refugee families:

There is need to find an alternative camp to accommodate large families. The houses they live in are small and inadequate for their needs...the increasing numbers also mean that space around them is diminishing; the resources within our disposal are quickly eroded. Thus, we cannot provide adequate and sufficient shelter to everyone unless more agencies chip in (**UNHCR official**)

Plate 4.1 depicts the nature of shelters found at Dadaab Refugee Camp. The structures are made of weak materials. In addition, the small size and poor roofing make the habitation such a big challenge.

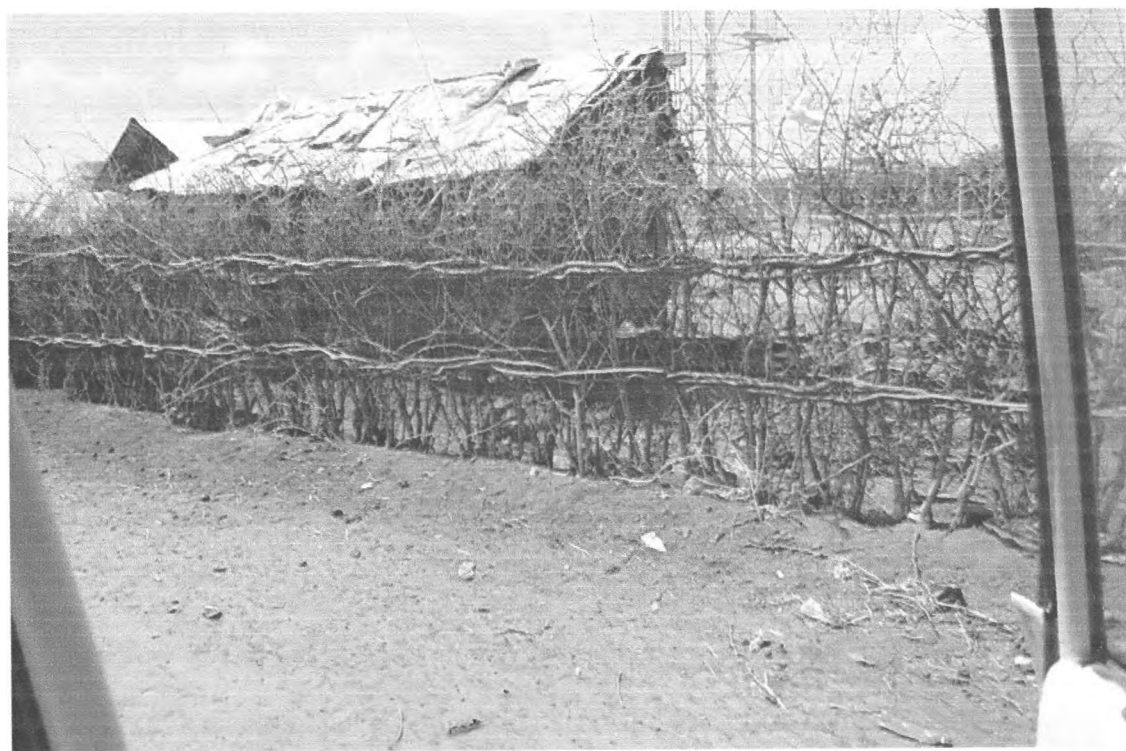


Plate 4.1 Side view of a house at Daadab Refugee Camp

4.5.3 Access to firewood

The study sought to know the ease with which the respondents access firewood at the camp in terms of its distance to the source, its availability, the dangers involved and who is primarily responsible for the collection of the firewood. The respondents reported that firewood is given at the camp sites through agencies such as UNHCR, CARE Kenya and GIZ though the supply is not enough. This in turn has led many refugees to seek firewood in the neighbouring community. In the process, many respondents reported that they had been attacked by shiftas who raped them before being released to go back to the camp. Even men who have involved themselves in this venture have been killed and their bodies dumped close to the camps as captured by one of the respondents below:

The agencies supply us with firewood but uptake is regulated, at certain points, we run out of firewood so we fetch them from the community around...it is not safe though because they rape some women, even my epileptic daughter was a victim...the men who dare to go without any security are attacked by shiftas and killed...it is sad that a family can go hungry due to lack of firewood. **(46-year-old mother of five)**

The key informants observed that rapid degradation of the environment around the camp was the major reason why the government, through agencies, was trying to regulate supply of firewood to the camps as observed by one of them:

You may realise that there is already pressure given the large population of refugees on it...as a matter of policy, preserving the entire ecosystem demands that we regulate

the rate at which the available vegetation can be consumed to avoid the spread of desertification. There, is however, need to provide efficient alternative sources of fuel to the group of refugees which are being explored. **(DRA officer in Dadaab)**

On being probed on whose responsibility it is to fetch firewood, the respondents observed that culture demands that women play this role. This means that beyond the basic household chores, women have to go out of their way to bring firewood into the household for use, as captured in the interview below:

Women are responsible for bringing firewood because they are the ones who cook and there are no alternative sources of energy at the camp. The men who go for firewood from the bushes come back and sell it to us but when a woman has no money to buy, she has to go for it despite the risks. **(53-year-old mother of eleven).**

Plate 4.2 shows the difficulty refugees go through in a bid to get firewood in the camp. It features a male refugee in the process of transporting firewood for sale to the families who run short of firewood at the camp during the distribution intervals.



Plate 4.2: A man transporting firewood for sale to the camp

4.5.4 Linguistic barrier

The study sought to know from the respondents about the language problems experienced at the camp and how this affects their relations with the community. It was also important to know how the language barrier had affected the provision of services received by the women refugees especially at the healthcare centres where they are expected to explain their health problems.

The respondents reported difficulties in communicating with the service providers both at the registration desks, at the health centres and at the Department of Refugee Affairs where they seek transfer forms and information. To that extent, women with language problems have had to seek the services of interpreters whom they are not sure really communicate their needs to the service providers as they would have done in person.

Language barrier is a deterrent to service seeking procedures...you cannot explain your health problems to the officers clearly and you need someone else to help you. Sometimes you are not so sure if they are communicating your intentions...it is difficult especially when you need a private conversation with your doctor. **(39-year - old mother of three).**

However, the study found that the language barrier does not affect the relationships between the community around the camp and women refugees in any significant way since they are able to communicate in Somali language. This in turn has helped to reduce incidents of social isolation that the women refugees could have experienced.

4.5.5 Access to reproductive health services

The study sought to know from respondents whether the reproductive health services at the camp were satisfactory and sensitive to their needs. This was assessed using the availability of maternal healthcare and family planning services. The study established that reproductive health services offered at the camp are satisfactory to women refugees. The respondents reported high accessibility of the healthcare services around the camp provided by different agencies but mostly by GIZ. According to the respondent:

We are given good attention at the health facilities and they even send ambulances to pick pregnant women within the camps. There are adequate facilities and medicine as long as one reports the ailment...even our children have been vaccinated specifically against polio and measles; we really appreciate the high quality we are given at the centre. **(43-year-old mother of five)**

When probed on the exact nature of services they receive at the health centres, respondents observed that they are mostly provided with ante-natal and post-natal care. Other services include proper breastfeeding of children, importance of having children immunized and general counselling on child-spacing. Family planning services are mostly given to those women with less than two years of spacing of children. However, while the services are satisfactory at the health centre, women refugees decried the transportation problem when it comes to children they have to carry to the hospitals rather than be picked by ambulances as is done to expectant women.

The key informants observed that healthcare services at the camp are satisfactory but highly challenged by the high number of refugees arriving every day. This has greatly diminished the amount of essential drugs available within the stocks. It was also observed that the transportation problem reported by the respondents was being addressed through devolving services to the refugee villages other than wait for the cases at the main centres.

Health provision within the camp has been challenged by the increasing number of refugees. This is the case in circumstances for maternal healthcare provision for women and child care services since these two groups form the largest part of refugees. However, I must admit we are taking the services to the camps and making use of community health workers. **(Department of Refugee Affairs official-Dadaab)**

Respondents reported carrying children on their backs or at certain points using wheelbarrows, as shown in Plate 4.3.



Plate 4.3: A child on a wheelbarrow at IFO hospital-Dadaab

4.5.6 Sanitation at the Dadaab Refugee Camp

The study sought to know the extent to which the respondents were satisfied with sanitation at the camp. This was assessed along the level of cleanliness of the toilet and bathroom facilities, the sanitation of the kitchen facilities and garbage disposal at the camp. The respondents lamented the deplorable status of the toilet facilities that also double up as bathroom facilities. Lack of proper fencing around bathroom facilities forces many women refugees to take a bath at night. The respondents also observed that it is quite hard for them to use the facilities for short or long calls in the course of the day due to their open nature which exposes them to the public.

Women hardly use the facilities during the day; people will see you while taking a bath. It is so shameful to use the open toilets in the view of everyone...the slab inside the facility is cracked and at times slippery, some have poor drainage...all I can say is that our toilets are wanting and are not satisfying the needs of women. **(56-year-old mother of six)**

The respondents reported good community garbage disposal at the Refugee Camp where they have organised garbage disposal groups. However, kitchen and toilet facilities were said to be deplorable, as depicted in Plates 4.4 and 4.5, respectively.



Plate 4.4: Typical kitchen at Dadaab Refugee Camp

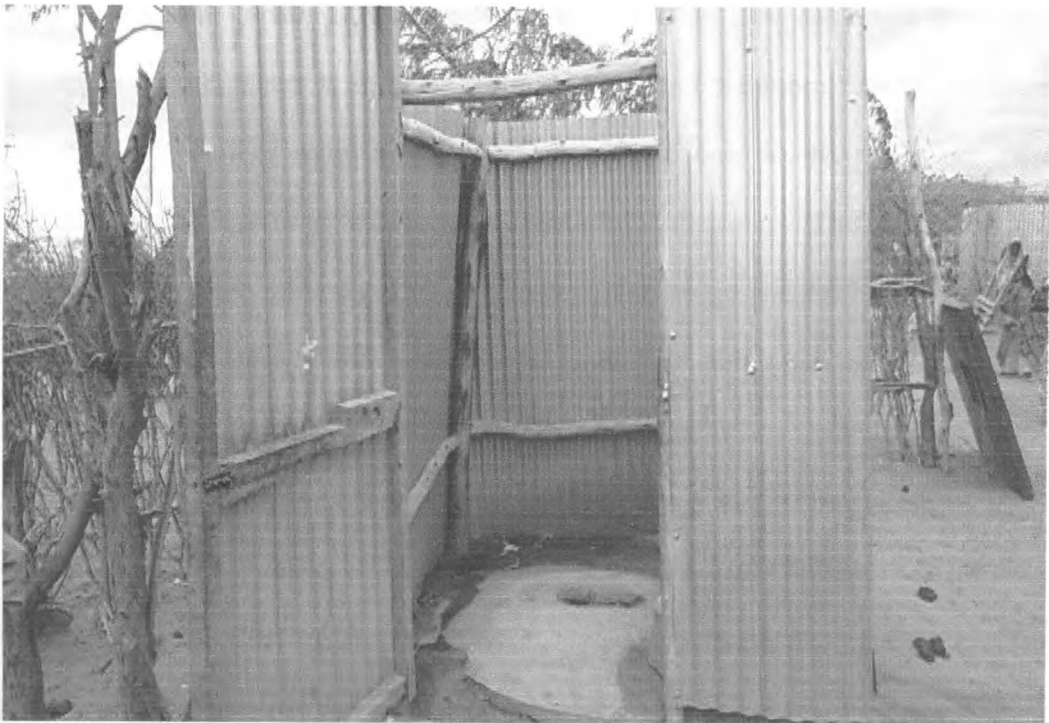


Plate 4.5: Toilet facility at the Daadab Refugee Camp

The following case narrative captures the situations faced by women refugees in Dadaab refugee camp.

I came to the country when our former president of Somalia (Siad Barre) was deposed in 1991 followed by war across the clans. There was too much killing of the people in the villages so my husband and the four children we had started the long trek to Kenya border. There was enough information circulated in the media about refugees being accommodated in Kenya. We were carried in the UN lorries to the camp and registered after a week as refugees. By then, we were a few of us in the camp...communication was a problem but at least we got modest shelters around and there was peace in the camps too. In recent years, it has been hard to get enough food; no consistent repairs of shelters as they used to do...we no longer have adequate space around. There is so much strain on toilet and bathroom facilities to the extent that four families share a single and dilapidated one; so we are at risk of many diseases. Life at times has been really painful at the camp. The population pressure caused by more refugees has forced many of us to go and fetch firewood from the community bushes where we encounter rapes...something has to be done. **(69-year-old mother of eleven)**

From the narrative above, conflict is seen as the major cause of displacement uprooting whole families as in the case above. While the informant could have arrived at the camp when the population density was still low, increased population fleeing from a variety of factors into the camp could have led to strain on resources such as building space, firewood, food rations and toilet facilities, amongst other utilities, that used to be in plenty in the initial camp set up.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study and then draws conclusions from the findings. On the basis of the conclusions, recommendations are made.

5.2 Discussions

Social problems facing women refugees at the camp have been established in this study to cut across issues such as violence at firewood collection points, poor sanitation facilities, poor shelters in the refugee camps and the apparently inadequate food rations at the camp relative to the family needs. The women refugees also reported inadequate space for construction of the houses due to overcrowding at the camp

With respect to safety of women refugees at firewood collection points within the community bushes, IASAC (2002) had established that women's safety may be no more ensured once in refugee and displaced persons camps or reception centres. For example, refugee and displaced women have faced serious threat of rape when they collect firewood, often the only source of heating and cooking. The continued occurrence of insecurity within Dadaab refugee camp points to the fact there are no adequate measures that have been put in place by various agencies to address the situation and the firewood needs of women refugees that have a primary responsibility to cook for their households. Moreover, that study also indicated that women refugees have been forced to provide sexual favours in exchange for food rations for themselves and their families. In some cases, only male heads of households

receive documentation of their status, leaving their spouses vulnerable to harassment each time they leave their homes (IASC, 2002).

Environmental concerns at the Dadaab Refugee Camp have also complicated ease of access to firewood by women at the camp. This has made the local provincial and camp administrators introduce measures to curb further degradation. In essence, there is a limit as to the quantity of firewood any given family can receive, heightening the burden faced by women as primary collectors of firewood. A previous study by Ikanda (2004) found that firewood, for example, has been depleted to a radius of 5 kilometres around the camp, thus creating a major security threat for women searching for the resource (Ikanda, 2004:15). Moreover, refugees may also cause extensive ecological damage to the host country, particularly when they are concentrated in camps in areas already facing land shortages. Kibreab and Nobel (1987:97) stress that many refugee settlements present serious threats to the ecological balance and may have disastrous and irreparable effects. Environmental degradation has far reaching consequences on the welfare of the community and more so for the refugees. Water scarcity and lack of firewood add to the already overwhelming problems experienced by women refugees.

Women refugees in this study reported high inadequate food rations relative to the demand of their families. Similarly, the spacing of food distribution after a period of fifteen days constitutes a strenuous period showing a poor coordinating mechanism. Lack of a well-balanced diet within the camp could be linked to the cases of malnutrition pointed out by the women refugees in this study. In this respect, Kinyua (2005:16) had reported that cases of malnutrition and sexual exploitation and abuse remain rampant in Kakuma Refugee camp.

Food distribution decisions in refugee camps and settlements have traditionally been made by international organizations and host countries in consultation with male leaders in the camps. Often, the camp administrators give food ration cards directly to men and allow them to control the distribution and allocation of food (Kinyua, 2005:18). However, in this study, a majority of persons at the food distribution were found to be women.

The study also established that certain recipients (mostly males) of the distributed food re-sold their rations to other families with higher demands at exorbitant cost which many refugee women cannot afford. This in turn has led to suffering of more women and children within the refugee camp. Forbes-Martin (1997:36) explains other ways used by men to divert food rations from women and children. In some circumstances, food distributed through male networks has been diverted to resistance forces or for sale on the black market, with women and children suffering as a result.

Women refugees in this study reported various forms of violence experienced in and around the camp. These included sexual violence and certain forms of physical violence outside the main refugee camp with the host community at the point of collecting firewood. Respondents also observed that perceived marginalization of the host community particularly with respect to access to food was a major source of conflict between them and the local community around the camp. Previous studies by Gordenker (1987:134) and UNHCR (1997:73) indicate that international or host government assistance to refugees can cause tensions and conflict between refugees and local citizens, particularly when the local population feels that the refugees are provided with better living standards such as medical care, education and nutrition than the local community. Similarly, while commenting on

insecurity faced by women refugees within the camps, Goldblatt and Mientjes (1998) and Turshen (1998) state that **gender-based violence** is one of the most formidable challenges that women face, particularly in the form of sexual violence.

This study also established a number of problems associated with the shelter provided at the camp. These include inadequate space, poor roofing and weak construction materials. Besides, women refugees lamented the lack of architectural inputs from experts that has seen many houses cave in. These findings concur with those of a previous study which noted that many different families, often from different sides of the conflict, are sometimes forced to live in close proximity, sharing communal living and social spaces (Forbes-Martin, 1997:21). The same study also notes that poor camp design can contribute to women's protection problems, citing overcrowding, communal latrines far from living quarters, poor lighting and inadequate night patrols.

The study findings suggest that a number of family members were separated during migration to the camp. In some instances, family members were lost to disease, violence or climatic conditions. Upon arrival, women experience isolation arising from family ties that originally constituted their network in their homes of origin. In a previous study, Rogge (1994:43) notes that those women's traditional roles, responsibilities, and supportive networks become dramatically altered by involuntary migration, especially when the migrations also mean separation from husbands and kin. Extended family networks from which women normally draw much of the strength and support for their onerous roles in traditional society may be completely lost. The women then become isolated, dependent upon themselves, solely responsible for children in the absence of fathers, subject to exploitation and, in many cases,

also to emotional and physical/sexual abuse. Moreover, Johnson (1996) argues that in flight and even when settled in the new host country, refugees may feel uprooted, homesick and acutely aware of the loss of social networks.

5.3 Conclusion

Social problems faced by women refugees at Dadaab Refugee Camp include poor conditions of shelter, language problems at the service-seeking points, and isolation amongst those who lost family members while migrating to the camp. The respondents also reported conflicts with the surrounding communities who have consistently attacked men and meted sexual violence on some women collecting firewood. In addition, the respondents cited inadequate food rations and levels of malnutrition among their children as a cause of concern. The sanitation situation at the camp is also decried by the respondents and this is aggravated by the fact that many families have had to share the available facilities and this is despite the increase in refugee population.

5.4 Recommendations

- There is need to review and increase the food rations given to each family given that many families run out of their rations before the next ration. This can be done by UNHCR and CARE Kenya as major distribution agencies.
- The UNHCR and collaborating partners should improve on the shelters and related facilities at the camp.
- The study recommends a research on the social problems faced by men in order to capture men refugees' experiences in the camp.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: In-depth Interview Guide

Hello, I am Hellen Mwangovya, a student at the University of Nairobi pursuing M.A. in Gender and Development. I am carrying out a study on social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp. You have been conveniently chosen to participate in this study by virtue of being a resident of this refugee camp. I am particularly interested in the social problems that you have faced as a refugee at Daadab Refugee Camp. All the information you give will not be used to incriminate you in any way and your names including any forms of identity will be coded and altered to conceal your identities. I would appreciate if you could spare some time for this interview.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

I would now want to ask you some questions on your biodata as we sum up this interview:

(a) Age (in complete years) _____

(b) Marital status _____

(c) Head of the household _____

(d) Number of children _____

(e) Education level _____

(f) Profession _____

(g) Religion _____

(h) Country of origin _____

How did you learn about Dadaab Refugee Camp?

Why Dadaab and not any other refugee camp?

What have been some of the social problems you have faced in this camp?

What is your assessment of the facilities in Daadab Refugee Camp?

Appendix II: Case Narrative Interview

I am Hellen Mwangovya, a student at the University of Nairobi pursuing MA in Gender and Development. I am carrying out a study on social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp. You have been purposively chosen to participate in this study given that you have been in this camp for not less than ten years. I am particularly interested in the social problems you have faced a refugee in this camp. All the information you give will not be used to incriminate you in any way and your names and form of identities will be coded and altered to conceal your identities. I would appreciate if you could spare some time for this interview. Please note the interview may take up to one hour and all answers are considered appropriate.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Can you narrate to us your experiences in this camp?

Appendix III: Key Informant Interview Guide

I am Hellen Mwangovya, a student at the University of Nairobi pursuing MA in Gender and Development. I am carrying out a study on social problems faced by women refugees in Dadaab Refugee Camp. You have been purposively chosen to participate in this study given your professionalism and understanding of the refugee situation in Dadaab. I am particularly interested in the social problems that women refugees face in Daadab refugee camp and your role as a lead agency in mitigating the same. All the information you give will be treated with utmost confidence and you are at liberty to stop the interview at any time. Please note the interview may take up to one hour and your input is highly regarded.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. With respect to the camp situation, tis here marked impact on men and women because of their gender?
2. What is your assessment of women refugees' situation with respect to: (Access to food rations in the camp, social protection and psychological security, harassment in the camp, access to water and firewood, alternative livelihoods and skill development activities?)
3. How adequate are the housing structures for the women and their families in the camp?
4. Are the health facilities adequate to deal with women's counselling needs, reproductive needs and general medicare?
5. What are some of the intervention programmes put in place to address women's specific needs in the camp?
6. Are there adequate governmental and non-governmental efforts to address women's issues in the camp?

Appendix IV: Observation Schedule

Facility/ item being observed	Availability	Non-availability
Shelter/ house for the informant		
Toilet/ latrine facility		
Bathrooms & water points		
Adequate lighting of the camp		
Security patrols		
Health facilities		
Counseling/training centres		
Firewood/fuel supply points		
Food uptake points		