

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN EMERGENCIES PROGRAMMATIC HIGHLIGHT

## Safety audits in Somalia

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As in many emergency-affected contexts, women and girls in Somalia face the risk of multiple forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including sexual violence, intimate partner violence and forced marriage. The conditions in displacement sites – such as overcrowding; lack of access to safe water, latrine and bathing facilities; and shelters constructed of flimsy, transparent materials – only exacerbate these risks.

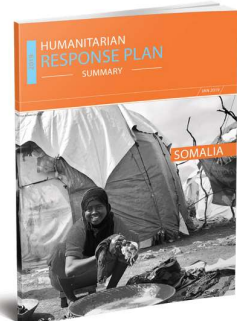
In 2017, a mission conducted by the interagency Emergency Directors' Group (including UNICEF's Director of Emergency Programmes) identified GBV-related risks in and around displacement sites as an urgent priority. Building upon UNICEF's strong GBV programming in Somalia and experience leading the rollout of the *IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action* at global level, UNICEF stepped up to take the lead on addressing the recommendation from the EDG.

Recognizing the many facets of this problem, UNICEF mobilized a multi-agency, multi-sector group of partners to map out a plan for addressing the urgent safety concerns in and around displacement sites. Together with colleagues from the GBV sub-cluster, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Shelter and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), UNICEF developed a custom safety audit tool<sup>1</sup> for the Somalia context, identified sites and timeline for piloting the tool, and trained partners working in those locations on how to utilize the tool to assess GBV-related risks associated with different sectors' interventions. The training and data collection methodology emphasized safe and ethical practice for GBV assessments



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and techniques for safely seeking the perspectives of women and girls. Data collection and analysis was conducted across multiple locations<sup>2</sup> by teams made up of colleagues from different sectors. Once the initial round of safety audit data collection was complete, the results were compiled into a brief report and presentation that was shared with relevant clusters, the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The results had a much wider-reaching impact than had been originally anticipated, including directly informing the HCT Centrality of Protection strategy and many clusters' humanitarian response plans for 2019.



<sup>1</sup> Safety audits are a common methodology used to assess potential GBV-related safety risks through observation and consultation with affected communities.

<sup>2</sup> 38 sites in late-2017 and 47 sites in 2018.

Though safety audits have been conducted for years as a fairly standard component of GBV in emergencies programming, they often involve individuals with GBV/Protection expertise completing data collection and analysis on their own and subsequently sharing their findings with colleagues working in other sectors. What makes the Somalia safety audit experience unique – and particularly valuable for the purposes of learning – is how a multi-sectoral collaboration shaped the entire process from planning to data collection to analysis and recommendations. Not only did this result in a sense of joint ownership of GBV risk mitigation across multiple sectors – and increase the likelihood other sectors would take action to address the safety issues identified – it also contributed to richer data analysis and more practical recommendations, based on the opportunities and constraints faced by each sector. The value other sectors place on this work has been demonstrated by a doubling in the number of (non-GBV) sectors involved – from three in the first round of safety audits to six in the second round.<sup>3</sup>

Sector-specific improvements from the first round of safety audits (2017) to the second round (2018) include the following:

### WASH

- Increase in the percentage of assessed sites with WASH facilities that have a lock on the inside (45% during initial data collection vs. 64% in the second round)
- Increase in the percentage of assessed sites with a water point located inside the displacement site (53% during initial data collection vs. 74% in the second round)

### SHELTER

- Increased percentage of assessed sites that have shelters with secure doors/locks (21% during initial data collection vs. 40% in the second round)
- Increased percentage of assessed sites that have shelters with private sleeping areas (5% during initial data collection vs. 15% in the second round)

### SITE DESIGN/LAYOUT

- Increased percentage of assessed sites with protective physical structure (fencing) around the site (8% during initial data collection vs. 21.3% in the second round)
- Increased percentage of assessed sites with space to walk between shelters and other structures (37% during initial data collection vs. 66% in the second round)

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## Sectors that have contributed to the safety audit exercise in Somalia



UNICEF Somalia has committed to a multi-year investment in this safety audit initiative, as an opportunity to further refine the process, bring in additional partners, expand the reach to a wider geographic area, and allow for a longitudinal analysis of results. The safety audit initiative is being complemented by additional trainings on basic GBV concepts and risk mitigation for colleagues in other sectors, based on a package that UNICEF developed and rolled out through the Nutrition cluster in 2018. The combination of these two components hold great potential for significantly improving safety for women and girls and fundamentally changing the way aid and services are delivered to Somalia’s estimated 2.6 million IDPs, most of whom are women and children.

The Somalia safety audit experience has already been cited as promising practice at global level and is featured in interagency trainings across the world as an example of practical application of the IASC GBV Guidelines. The techniques and approach used in Somalia have also been incorporated into similar safety audit exercises in other humanitarian contexts, such as Nigeria, Bangladesh and South Sudan.



<sup>3</sup> Sectors that participated in the 2017 safety audits were CCCM, Shelter and WASH. In 2018, Nutrition, Education and Health also took part.