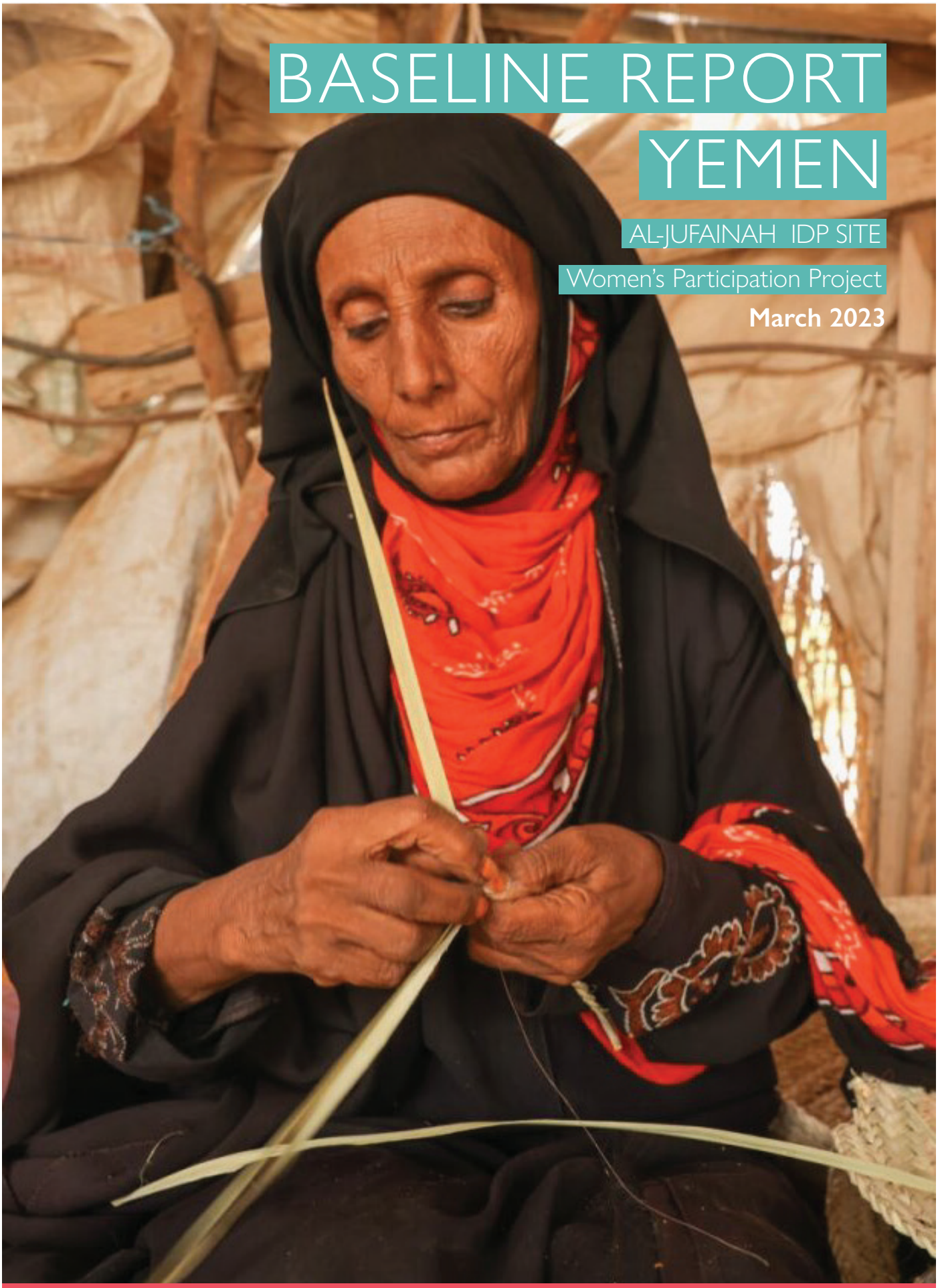
BASELINE REPORT YEMEN

AL-JUFAINAH IDP SITE

Women's Participation Project

March 2023



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The baseline assessment is part of the implementation approach of the Women's Participation Project (WPP), which aims to support camp management practitioners to have a broader understanding of what participation is and develop contextualized strategies to enhance the participation of women and girls in displacement sites. The WPP is part of the global initiative 'Safe from the Start', funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) from the US Department of State.

The data collection and analysis at the base of this report were done by the IOM Yemen CCCM and Protection teams.

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Photographs were taken by the IOM CCCM team with consent from the beneficiaries and a copy will be made available upon request.

A displacement site in Ta'iz governorate where hundreds of displaced families reside. Photo: Angela Wells / IOM Yemen

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CFM	Complaints and Feedback Mechanism
CFW	Cash for Work
CM	Community Mobilizers
EVI	Extremely Vulnerable Individual
GBV	Gender-based violence
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRG	Internationally Recognized Government
PWD	Persons with disabilities
SFP	Site Focal Points
TRD	Transition and Recovery Division

COVER PHOTO:
A woman takes part in a livelihoods training in Yemen. Photo: Majed Mohammed / IOM Yemen.

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INTRODUCTION

The conflict in Yemen, which has been ongoing for over seven years now, has had a huge impact on all civilians and has been labeled as one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.[1] The UN estimates that Yemen has witnessed up to 377,000 deaths since fighting broke out in March 2015[2], this being the result of both direct and indirect causes of the ongoing conflict.

During the ongoing conflict period, millions of people in Yemen have experienced an economic crisis, increased poverty levels, and disruption of public services, such as health provision, infrastructure, and water services among others. Internal displacement has been reported across the country, highest in some governorates such as Marib, thereby increasing the need for humanitarian assistance.

However, as can be predicted with most conflicts, some of the most affected are women and children. Those affected by the war have either lost the patriarch in the family, which in such a society is detrimental as the cultural practices may prevent women from accessing different services if not accompanied by a male head of household , while in other cases, women have been prevented from voicing their concerns and participating in day-to-day community activities. Compounding the matter further, women in such vulnerable situations are prone to domestic violence which is highly underreported or in some cases has been stated as non-existent according to most men in the IDP community. Even with the reports of ongoing truce between the conflicting parties, the situation has not improved and could get worse for women and children if the conflict is still ongoing.

In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index[3], Yemen was ranked 155th, the second-worst gender disparity in the world, and, last, consecutively for 12 years. Being a female in Yemen was said to be the hardest thing, as women have faced different challenges including but not limited to freedom of movement, limited access to education, health care, and livelihood opportunities.

While the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions have encouraged all parties in conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence (GBV) and stressed the importance of their equal participation such as the right to form and be part of committees/leadership structures and contribute to decision making processes, freedom of movement around the sites/city, and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Unfortunately, not much has materialized in Yemen, where many human rights violations and gender disparity specifically directed to women have continued to be reported.

The challenge, therefore, remains on how such rights for the protection of women and girls can be implemented so that there is impact, while also ensuring that the cultural and religious practices are not destabilized and that those in authority are supported to ensure these rights are upheld and safeguarded for those who need them most.

[1] https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ye_HRP_2022_30_Apr.pdf
[2] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, 2021
[3] https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2023

BACKGROUND

The IOM Yemen response has been ongoing for nearly 30 years.[4] IOM has been providing humanitarian assistance through the provision of health care, water, sanitation and hygiene support, displacement tracking, transition and recovery, camp management, shelter, and protection of vulnerable groups.

IOM's Camp Management and Coordination (CCCM) programme have assisted in improving the living conditions of displaced families living in informal and formal sites, and collective centers in three governorates (Ma'rib, Ibb, and Ta'iz), including the IDP hosting site in Marib, Al Jufainah, which is Yemen's largest displaced hosting site that has over 60,000 individuals. Technical advice and capacity building are also provided to authorities in their role of camp administrator, IDP camp committees, and national non-governmental organizations working in site management.[5] Access to protection services remains limited in Yemen, and IOM has sought to strengthen referral pathways and identify innovative and safe ways to support and work with community-based structures.

While undertaking its regular programming in the sites, CCCM and Protection teams noticed that there was a pattern of blocking of humanitarian access to certain activities, e.g., awareness sessions, and assessments, that were mainly designed for women. First, the community-based structures, like the site leaders and camp committees, in Marib IDP sites were all run by men; and women never got the chance to participate. The Executive Unit, which is the government authority in charge of IDPs in Marib, has always been represented by men until very recently when two women were appointed by the Executive Unit to look into women-related matters in the sites.

Permits are always required from CCCM to conduct any activities on the sites, especially women-based activities. When it comes to any communication with female IDP's, IOM is expected to run the messages that are to be shared with the women through the Executive Unit, before approaching target IDP female beneficiaries. Women's participation was noted to be limited, in terms of freedom of movement, leadership and participation in site activities. This was evident through the very limited complaints received from women at the CFM desks/channels and through the limited participation of women in day-to-day site activities. Freedom of movement is restricted and women cannot move from one area to another without having a male companion ("mahram") to be allowed to pass the security checkpoints.

Programmes like IOM WASH also reported challenges while conducting assessments. A questionnaire that sought to understand the health practices and hygiene promotion relating to women's menstrual health was deemed as unacceptable/ 'improper' and had to be deleted from the assessment as directed by the authorities, thereby denying women the right provided for in the UN Declaration of Human Rights under the right to health care.

In one of the needs assessments conducted by the IOM Transition and Recovery unit (TRU)[6], it was reported that women faced several challenges when trying to access healthcare services. Whereas lack of money needed for transportation came across as one of the obstacles that prevented women from accessing healthcare services in available facilities, the lack of female medical staff and gynecologists and the lack of privacy in the health facilities have all contributed to depriving women of most needed healthcare services. (e.g., no separate wards designated for women).

[4] https://yemen.iom.int/crisis-response
[5] https://yemen.iom.int/crisis-response
[6] IOM Assessment on Needs, Gender, stakeholders and (Internal report)

When assessing women's role in making community decisions, Marib[7] was reported as having only 1% of women who have some level of decision-making power. Aden was rated at 8%, and Taiz at 3%. The report also highlighted that in areas such as Marib, which faired very low in the assessment, it was noted that gendered social and economic inequality strongly existed, and discrimination was due to local customs and traditions that restrict women's freedom to work outside the house. All these factors contributed to the denial of or lack of access to education for girls, and women's access to different services including health. The outcomes from other governorates, such as Taizz and Aden, reflected more acceptance towards women's participation, in different areas such as the workforce and women's participation in areas of judiciary, and community improvement.

In light of these preliminary findings, IOM CCCM and Protection sought to understand how best to enhance women's participation in Marib, as well as support the existing women's structures, while still preserving the cultural practices and norms in the community. Having both the authorities and community leaders buy into the importance of women's participation was seen as the key to a successful programme. It was important to better understand what specific negative gender stereotypes existed (whether it be discrimination and/or economic inequality) which might be compounding women's vulnerability to violence.

Displaced women in Yemen display their goods that they make in the Women's Community and Recreational Center.
Photo: Majed Mohammed / IOM Yemen

[7] Yemen Map and site profile.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In an effort to improve women's participation in governance structures in IDP sites and to reduce women and girls' perceptions of risks to GBV, IOM Yemen conducted a data collection exercise using the Women's Participation Project (WPP) tools in Al Jufainah IDP site, one of the biggest sites in Marib, hosting 12,878 HHs (67,343 IDPs), as of January 2023.[8]

The selection of participants to the survey ensured representativity of age, sex, level of influence in the community (leaders and non-leaders) and persons with specific needs, including the elderly and persons with disabilities, in order to capture the perceptions of those whose voices are often marginalized, and aimed at assessing a number of relevant factors to satisfy the below main objectives.

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

This baseline assessment report contains the main findings from the data collection exercise in terms of governance structure and decision-making in the site, meaning of participation from different groups, protection concerns and barriers to women's participation identified by the respondents. In its final section, the report summarizes the main recommendations to address the identified barriers.

METHODOLOGY

Following technical discussions with the WPP Global Team, and in line with the WPP implementation approach, the IOM CCCM team adapted the WPP tools to the Marib context[9] to undertake the qualitative data collection where FGDs (Focus Group Discussions), beneficiary Individual interviews, Key Informant Interviews (KII), and safety mapping exercises were conducted.

The FGDs were conducted in Al Jufainah IDP site in Marib, Yemen, selected due to its unique characteristics. Firstly, Al Jufainah is the largest IDP site in Yemen with over 10,000 households. The population can also be considered as heterogeneous, as the site hosts families from multiple different governorates across Yemen, thus allowing the survey to capture perceptions from a larger variety of tribes and cultural groups than in the majority of IOM managed sites, which tend to host families originating from the same geographical area. The level of formal education within the site population also varies, with some women trained as teachers and nurses, while others never had the chance to attend school at any level. The proximity to the city was also taken into consideration, given the potential for income-generating initiatives for women within the city.

[8] IOM Yemen CCCM SMT January 2023

Al Jufainah site is divided into 10 sectors, with each sector divided into blocks. Participants were selected from each sector, proportionally. FGD participants included men, women, adolescent girls, elderly persons, and PWDs. KIIs were also conducted and targeted the authorities (EXU), the site leaders, religious leaders, NGO workers, and a few people who were said to be influential in Marib, based on either their educational background or standing in society.

To meet the objectives of the survey, the WPP tools were adapted and used to facilitate focus group discussions, safety mapping exercises, and key informant interviews. Before conducting the data collection, IOM CCCM and Protection staff members participated in a 4-day training on the use of the WPP tools and qualitative data collection, facilitated jointly by the WPP Team in HQ and the capacity building officer from CCCM in Yemen. The interview tools were translated to Arabic, with the survey subsequently being conducted in Arabic, and the findings were then translated into English.

A total of 100 persons (87 women and 13 men) participated in the survey.[10]

Summary of data collection exercises:

GROUPS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS PER SESSION
FGD Female Non-leaders (Including Elders 60+ & PwDs)	43	8-12
FGD Female leaders (Including Elders 60+ & PwDs)	20	8-12
FGD Male Non-leaders (Including Elders 60+ & PwDs)	8	8-12
FGD adolescent girls (14-17)	13	6-10
KIIs	16	1
Safety Mapping	21	6-8

LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to only qualitative data and therefore cannot claim to be an accurate or full representation of the perceptions of all the IDPs in Marib. The study also had to be paused for a two-month period due to ongoing conflict and displacements, which were prioritized for urgent response. Some key actors in local governance, including security officers and some government officials, were not interviewed due to unavailability.

A young girl rests at a displacement site in Ta'iz governorate. Photo: Angela Wells / IOM Yemen

BASELINE FINDINGS

1) GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Power dynamics in the site partly originate from the management structure set up by the local authorities (The Executive Unit-ExU). The ExU has the highest authority, followed by the camp manager, the SFP11 (Site Focal Point), who then appoints block leaders. The appointment procedure of block leaders was unclear and varied from case to case, with some hired on merit and others due to personal connections. Aside from the Camp Management Structure, there are multiple other power holders on the site who play a role in decision-making, namely, Imams, elders, NGO staff, school principals, camp committees, and the head of the household.

The security forces, referring to man at check points, were also mentioned; however, it was stated that they had a structure that ran parallel to the other structures, and they seemed to be independent. Permits to carry out activities on the site, bring any materials, or stay on the site, were obtained from the ExU, and the same permits were then presented to the security forces (Marib Police Chief) for another layer of approval.

Throughout the survey, the respondents noted that decisions around camp structure and organization were taken primarily by the ExU and humanitarian organizations and then passed down to the camp manager and SFP for implementation. The women felt that there were little to no consultations with the community, especially with women. As women are not represented in any site camp governance structure it was noted that women only receive information about events taking place on the site through the heads of households, or SFPs and Community Mobilizers. Service providers/organization staff (UN, INGO, and NGO staff or volunteers) also channel information to women in some situations. A small number of women stated that they would sometimes attend awareness sessions conducted by different agencies on the site and might be informed of relevant events throughout the sessions.

Women gather for a workshop in Marib governorate. Photo: CCCM team

The KII respondents confirmed the same governance structure: division of the site into 10 sectors with each sector headed by a male sector leader. The sectors are then divided again into blocks to try and ensure that each block leader has an equal number of households represented. Meetings to do with the administrative matters of the site were held in the block leaders' and SFPs' homes, and decisions were passed on to the community through WhatsApp messages or different committees.

The leaders presented the following roles as per their Terms of Reference (ToR).

1. **Sector leaders** – Register new displacements and share the lists with the camp leader, raising challenges such as lack of services, fire incidents, and gaps, in the camp management. They are also consulted by the agencies working at the sites to coordinate humanitarian assistance and provide lists of beneficiaries and support when required, and they do this in consultation with the block leaders. The site focal points stated that they authorize/ approve 'official papers' that are submitted to the ExU and this could include those entitled to humanitarian assistance, the number of IDPs in their sector as well as security matters that need to be reported.
2. **Camp leader** – The sector leaders report to him, and he then reports to the ExU. The camp leader also stated that stakeholders' donors and organizations consult with him for approval of camp activities, as he advises on the needs required. He stated that he recommends to the ExU the activities required at the site level and that permits are issued to different organizations depending on his recommendations. He also stated that he is invited and participates in meetings with donors, UN agencies, Authorities, and Security forces to raise and update them on the day-to-day camp activities.

When probed further on whether women are part of the governance structure, the leaders stated that they were not. The reason given was that Yemeni society traditionally relies on men to make the decision and govern the sites; the leaders suggested that participation of women in the governance structure would be culturally inappropriate. They stated that the decisions were passed on to the women in different camp forums and some information is usually passed on to women by their husbands or male leaders in the household. The leaders believed that women who wished to raise issues or complaints were encouraged to do so through their SFP, block leaders, and UN agencies; or could also go directly to the authorities, which to them was sufficient.

On the contrary, and during the key informants' interviews, women informed the study team that due to the existing governance structure, women had no forum to raise their concerns, especially those related to gender-based violence (GBV) and what was termed as "women-specific issues" which we learnt meant issues on sexual and reproductive health.

2) DECISION MAKING

The study team was informed that the day-to-day decision-making excluded women and girls. The women were not represented in any camp committees or governance structure. Similarly, persons with disabilities were also notably excluded from these forums.

Women, girls, and persons with disabilities interviewed felt that one of the reasons they were not involved was because the meetings were held in areas not accessible to them, though for different reasons. Women are excluded from male social space, where informal and formal decision-making processes take place, particularly during chewing sessions. Persons with disabilities noted that they were unable to attend such meetings and talks due to distance and limitations in mobility.

As a consequence, based on the responses obtained from the survey, day-to-day decisions regarding women and girls were made by their fathers/husbands, male relatives, Imams, and community leaders. In some cases, the school principles had some influence as well.

The men informed the study team that they felt that decision making was a role left for men, and because women were not part of the camp structure, they were not in a position to make decisions. Some men however stated that there were women who worked on the site as teachers and NGO workers, and this was an indication that women were able to make decisions in some areas.

A small number of the interviewed women, who have had the opportunity to get a formal education, noted that the level of education of both men and women impacts the roles of women in society as well as how women's roles are perceived. It was noted that those women with formal education had gotten support from spouses and parents to study and develop themselves and were actively playing a role in decision making at the household level at least. Meanwhile, the majority of males on the site are uneducated and are reluctant towards women making any decisions beyond basic household management (such as cooking and cleaning). The key informants also attributed that uneducated male reportedly resisted women's freedom of movement and women's participation in any site activities/decision-making opportunities.
Perceptions of women's role in decision-making also varied from governorate to governorate. Families originally from Northern governorates such as Sanaa and Taiz seemed more open to women participating in the site, unlike families from Marib and Al-Jawf.

Throughout the data collection exercises, women stated that they believed that men and boys may be supportive of them being able to make decisions if they trusted that women were capable and well-informed enough to do so. As a result, women recommended that awareness efforts for men be arranged on the importance and ability of women to make decisions and become active participants in different camp platforms while investing in giving education/training opportunities on leadership and communication skills to women to build their confidence in pursuing more participatory roles in the site.

It was also noted that for women to participate in decisions that affected their lives, there needed to be forums where they would be encouraged to speak up and offer their views on different issues, such as community meetings. Livelihood opportunities for women were also suggested as a way of empowering them as most respondents noted that for households where women's views mattered, income was a key factor, implying that if a woman earned her own income she would have more decision-making power within the household. Having educated women mentoring other women and leading community engagement activities would also have an impact. Equal opportunities for both men and women were mentioned as important so that men would not feel discriminated against or left out, and in this case, could be supportive to see women succeed.

A number of women interviewed felt that little could be done to improve the current setup, as it is structured in a way that does not favor them, especially with regard to camp leadership and forums, which they felt was impossible to change.

3) PARTICIPATION - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CAMP OPERATIONS

Participation in site activities by those interviewed was understood to mean effective cooperation in all areas of life on the site, through equal decision-making involving both men and women from the different social groups, assisting each other, and sharing, roles, responsibilities, and experiences, as well as equal access to literacy classes and awareness campaigns.

The study team noted that men participated in general livelihood and income-generating activities, including businesses, cash for work activities, site infrastructure, data collection for assessments (carried out by humanitarian partners and authorities), camp maintenance, fire mitigation response, and awareness sessions among others. They also indicated that some were in community committees such as WASH committees, fire safety committees, and other leadership groups. During the KIIs, and when asked how the committee members were selected, the men stated that those in leadership e.g., sector and block leaders, do the selection, but women were never selected to be in the committees, nor were PWDs.

Participation of women in camp engagement activities varied but was limited, with some women only participating in activities that did not involve interactions with their male counterparts, which included sewing, cooking, and making perfumes. The reason was that they felt comfortable participating in male-free activities given interactions with their male counterparts were deemed as harming a woman's reputation and were viewed as going against cultural and religious practices.

Other women, however, participated in site activities like WASH activities such as cleaning campaigns, and awareness sessions on various topics that affected the site population, such as COVID-19 and fire safety. Some women with children also participated in sports activities for their children, and first aid training, among others. The rest stated that they do not participate in any of the activities as they do not have the approval from the male head of household to do so.

During some of the individual interviews, it was obvious that women's participation was limited, as it was mainly restricted to certain activities like cooking and sewing activities. A participant who was a tailor stated that she too faced challenges in getting trainees for her courses, as only a few women were able to attend her classes as most were denied permission to leave their homes even though the majority had indicated they would like to participate.

When the women were asked about the men's perception of having them participate in site activities, they responded that there is usually a negative perception of women participating in site activities. Some stated that verbal abuse is directed towards them, which is meant to intimidate and bring disrepute to their character in society. Their ability to perform the task assigned is also mocked, and consequently, they will often shy away from participating. A few women however stated that the elderly men in society and those with fathers that are educated tend to support some women and girls who would want to take part in community engagement activities.

Most of the men informed the study team that women and girls should not be allowed to participate in community activities, due to culture and customs, which support the belief they should instead work around the home. They also mentioned an interesting fact: that in some cases, some of them have had disagreements with their wives' families, as some fathers had wanted their daughters to participate in different activities, while their husbands did not agree. Others considered that women were working as teachers, NGO workers, and midwives equated to them being able to participate in site activities and having the right to make decisions.

Access to training and capacity building conducted by different agencies was raised by some participants, noting that the UN and other agencies lead training and capacity building efforts. However, most women were not aware of the procedures that were used to be able to access these services. The men, however, seemed to be quite informed on the available trainings with some mentioning cash-for-work (CFW) programs, on-job training, etc. It was clear to the study team that information was well shared between the men, e.g., job vacancies, and training programs, while the women seemed to have limited information about these types of on-site activities.

4) PROTECTION CONCERNS

As highlighted earlier, the Yemeni society is patriarchal, therefore male-headed households are vastly more respected and recognized than female-headed households. Female-headed households are categorically more at risk of being marginalized and discriminated against in the society. Discrimination often takes place in terms of denial of assistance, as some agencies rely on camp leaders to give lists of those that are vulnerable and needed assistance. From the data collected, it came out that leaders provide lists based on certain preferences, with the process also reported to be corrupt. Freedom of movement was also limited for those who had no male relatives to accompany them, such as female-headed households, who struggle to pass checkpoints, as this is more difficult if unaccompanied by a male chaperone.

The findings from the study raised serious concerns as to how GBV can be reported in a society, where, firstly, duty bearers are all male, and secondly, as significant number of male participants during the study did not believe that GBV exists in their society. Some of the men interviewed also stated that even if GBV were to exist, it would not be considered wrong within the cultural context. One of the female respondents emphasized the risk women faced with an example from home: her young son had the right to discipline his elder sister if he felt she was "shaming" the family.

The limited number of women-friendly spaces available to women was seen as a challenge, as most women indicated that they would like to have a space to go to once in a while to discuss issues and challenges with other women and girls. It was observed that out of those interviewed most seemed to be overwhelmed with house chores and having some space to sit and be listened to was a welcomed idea.

Most women had indicated that their preferred channel of filing their complaints was calling the hotlines. Though this was welcomed, it still gave the study team an indication of women's limitations regarding freedom of movement, as they seemed to feel safer making a phone call, other than walking to a complaints desk which had a negative connotation, unless she was accompanied by a male relative.

A young girl participates in an event at a community centre in a displacement site in Yemen, Marib governorate.
Photo: Angela Wells / IOM Yemen

A displacement site in Ta'iz governorate where hundreds of displaced families reside. Photo: Angela Wells / IOM Yemen

4.1 SAFETY MAPPING

The objective of the safety mapping exercise is to capture local knowledge and social perceptions about risk and safety on a map, which is drawn by the participants. The map (depicting the IDP site, or a part of it) shows places significant to the participants, highlights those places important to them and specify where they feel safe and unsafe. For the data collection in Al-Jufainah, the safety mapping was undertaken with women and girls, which were divided in different groups according to their age and status within the site (leaders and non-leaders).

The areas that were reported to be safe for women were their homes, main roads, schools, and mosques. These were all areas that had crowds, and women felt safe in crowded places. Women's centers were said to be safe as well, however, they do not exist in all IDP sites. In Al Jufainah, for example, there was no women's space at the time of conducting the exercise. Women reported that they felt unsafe at night in areas that were not well lit (for example, when they needed to go out to the latrines or water points at night), or in areas where men tended to crowd, as passing these areas meant they would be taunted. Dogs and open pits were also reported to be a safety concern. Some women stated that they felt uncomfortable sending their children to schools that were far from the homestead, due to the ongoing conflict.

Raising complaints to the block leaders was sometimes reported as unsafe, as sometimes the process was not confidential and the women's identity may not be protected, their issue was not taken seriously, or the woman themselves were blamed for the issue they had raised. One respondent reported that she has in one instance reported an issue to the leader, only for the individual to attack her later as her identity was known, and the matter was discussed intensively within the community. The security officers were viewed as a last resort in case the issues to be reported were really serious and there were no alternative ways to mitigate such matters.

The study team noted that women preferred different methods of raising complaints. Some felt safe referring the matters to international agencies on the sites, by calling the hotlines, talking to the community mobilizers, or going to the CFM desks. However, most did not want to report to the block and sector leaders, due to a level of mistrust, especially with regard to needed confidentiality. Even if not directly raised during safety mapping, the reported lack of trust to leaders might also be reinforced by the fact that they are unqualified for the position based on findings highlighted above indicating some of them are appointed based on nepotism, and consequently, when they carry out their duties, they are expected to favor their friends and relatives and not the general site population.

BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Based on the information collected for this baseline assessment, the main barriers to women and girls' participation in Al Jufainah IDP site are mainly the Governance structures, the obstacles to the freedom of movement, limited opportunities to education and to accessing livelihood activities and the existing cultural factors reinforcing the gender gap. The present section elaborates further on each of the mentioned aspects.

1) GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

The study found that the participation of women in IDP sites was directly correlated to in line cultural practices and traditions, which dictate that the role of women should be restricted to domestic chores and child-rearing, with just a few exceptions showing differences due to education. While this was not an overall outlook for Yemen, as a whole, the group of women in Marib seemed to be more at a disadvantage, as the governance structures in the IDP sites reinforced this cultural belief.

While caution must be taken not to destabilize the existing structure for questions of humanitarian acceptance and security, solutions can be proposed, by looking at ways that women could be engaged by the authorities, humanitarian actors, and the community, so that they can, at the very least, have a voice on matters relating to them. Regarding persons with disabilities, humanitarian actors should be at the forefront of ensuring that they participate, as their current involvement is limited due to relatively easily overcome, practical reasons, such as mobility or the required assistance to speak or hear.

2) OBSTACLES TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Freedom of movement, especially in areas where there is conflict, is extremely limited. Women face a lot of challenges traveling from one area to another. Of major concern are women who have no male relatives, who make up the larger percentage of the IDP population, as most of them have lost their husbands or sons during the war. Based on the finding of this assessment, CCCM will be able to work more closely with the authorities and women's groups to strive to find a solution to facilitate permits for unaccompanied women who require them. Due to lack of awareness, unaccompanied women who need to move around to either get assistance or livelihood opportunities, are labeled as having 'questionable character', an attitude which contributes to depriving women of their human rights.

3) LACK OF EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

From the study, it was noted that education was key to enhancing women's participation and decision-making roles both in the homestead and in the community. Educated fathers seemed to be more open to allowing their wives and daughters to participate more in society indicating that the humanitarian actors should work towards ensuring education opportunities for both men and women. Complemented with awareness efforts on the importance of equal gender participation, this should contribute to bridging the gender gap that exists in society.

In a country that's currently in conflict, the issue is even more challenging, as schools are few, and society – the family, specifically – dictates who can and cannot go to schools, especially in the absence of a strong governmental authority that can re-enforce and compel parents to educate their children.

4) LACK OF LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES

Lack of livelihood opportunities was noted as a major challenge for women, and men as well. Livelihood activities provide opportunities for people to engage outside the household and create economic opportunities for families. Based on the information gathered, on one side, for women, lack of economic activity can limit their level of engagement in decision-making at the household level. On the other side, lack of access to income-generating activities for men can create frustration as they are traditionally considered the provider for the household. This frustration, coupled with prolonged situations of displacement, can ultimately also contribute to gender-based violence (GBV).

5) CULTURAL FACTORS REINFORCING GENDER GAP

One of the challenges faced in Yemen is that many men have upheld the traditional gender roles of male dominance and female subservience. Generally, men broadly make the decisions, while women have no choice but to accept them. This is made even worse by those in authority such as the government and camp leaders who are all men and are generally unwilling to give women the space to be able to participate in society. The IDP governance structures make it even more difficult, while restricted freedom of movement and lack of livelihood opportunities constitute additional limitations to women's participation at different spheres.

A young woman prepares a meal for her family in a displacement site. Photo: Angela Wells/ IOM Yemen

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The following are the proposed recommendations that could be implemented moving forward.

EXISTING POWER/DECISION-MAKING DYNAMICS	
KEY FINDINGS	Decisions are mainly made by the authorities (EXU), Imams, and teachers, who are all men, and the women feel that the decisions are imposed on them and they have no role in offering their viewpoints even in matters that specifically relate to them.
PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS	Men and women should be partners in decision making and IOM CCCM should invest heavily in awareness efforts, the messages should be directed to the men in order to show the importance of women's role in leadership/ participation efforts. Women to be trained in leadership.
CHALLENGES	The current context does not accept/allow women to actively participate in decision-making or take up leadership roles on the site. There are no platforms available that allow women to voice their ideas.
IOM RECOMMENDATIONS	While ensuring the cultural practices are respected, IOM CCCM team will work towards ensuring the participation and leadership of women, adolescent girls, and other at-risk groups in all aspects of site governance and CCCM programming. This will be achieved through establishing Women Committees to facilitate an enabling structure and platform for meaningful participation in site activities and decision-making exercises. Giving women a leadership role is the first step, but ensuring their voices have influence is more challenging and vital. The committee could be a key platform to channel information to other women. Lessons from other missions such as Bangladesh piloted a similar project that was successful in strengthening the women committees by having aid agencies work closely with them, giving information, and training them to collect data and report protection concerns, among other roles. CCCM will work closely with the authorities, and other leaders on the site, and will ensure that awareness is raised on the importance of women in decision-making. The plan is to start with forming committees in Marib and move to Taiz governorate and all other sites across Yemen. The lessons learnt and ongoing advocacy for women's participation will be shared with other UN agencies and local organizations in order to ensure that the issues faced by women are addressed by all partners working in the country.

PARTICIPATION	
KEY FINDINGS	Women do not participate in most activities on the site, like community engagement, sports, entertainment, and livelihood activities. A few take part in some activities organized by different agencies such as sewing, cooking, and Henna making.
PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS	Some women believe they are capable of actively participating in different site activities, but are prevented from doing so. They believe that their participation should be encouraged as it would have financial benefits; thus, they support the rolling out of women-led activities, trainings, and livelihood activities. They recommend establishing a women's committee with regular meetings, to participate at the camp leadership meeting.
CHALLENGES	Most married men are against their wives or daughters leaving the house and moving around unaccompanied. Most do not believe in the importance of women in participation. They believe that free movement will encourage gender-based violence and reputational damage to the women.
IOM RECOMMENDATIONS	CCCM will ensure dedicated programming, participatory approaches, and an age-appropriate curriculum for women and adolescent girls to learn, access information, and participate in community activities. Linkages and communication pathways between women and the Women's Committee will be established to ensure that women participate at all levels of decision-making at the site level. CCCM to locate and construct spaces for women to regularly meet where there are no males, as this is culturally acceptable, and the men will allow their mothers/daughters/wives to attend and participate in different activities. Training of leaders who hold existing key leadership roles like the site leaders and Imams. The existing leadership structure can be reviewed in phases to see how it could accommodate women's and PWDs' views and suggestions. CCCM will continue advocating and raising awareness on the importance of women's participation to the men and this will impact and help with the needed mind shift towards women's participation. Activities that focus on life skills and soft skill development, leadership, and decision-making skills could be scaled up as well as creating an environment more conducive to women and girls' participation by improving WASH facilities and public lighting to improve safety and security.

WOMEN'S SAFETY	
KEY FINDINGS	There are no safe channels for communicating GBV concerns. There are no women spaces available for women to get together. In some areas, there is no electricity at night, which prevents women from leaving their houses at night.
PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS	Having a women's space for engagement in women-related activities/meetings. Distribution of solar lights in areas where there is no electricity. The women committee to have a focal point in each area and assigned in every block for women to reach and communicate any problems and concerns they may have, and could also act as a complaints focal point that refers cases especially GBV issues to organizations in circumstances where women are unable to move around.
CHALLENGES	GBV is a very sensitive issue in the given culture. The conservative culture forces women to refrain from speaking up if they were victims of GBV (especially domestic violence).
IOM RECOMMENDATIONS	CCCM will map and ensure an inclusive and gender-sensitive response plan and work with protection partners on an effective referral pathway, especially for GBV cases. Women community and recreational spaces will be constructed where women can meet regularly to have open discussions and activities that ensure their wellbeing. Women focal points will receive training to be able to lead other women and also be able to channel/refer any GBV-related cases that might approach them. CCCM will advocate for more funding to improve the electrical network in the sites