



CARE SOM Rapid Gender Analysis

Multiple Shocks Brief

Somalia is facing multiple crises, including severe drought, the worst desert locust infestation in decades, COVID-19, and high levels of displacement induced by conflict and drought. Layered and complex crises have caused dramatic shifts and increased vulnerability for women, pastoralists, minorities and communities experiencing frequent conflicts. In May 2021, Somalia declared a national drought emergency and as of July 2021, 5.9 million people needed humanitarian aid, and 2.6m million people were displaced¹.

The RGA collected information across different community groups to understand gender roles and responsibilities, capacities, barriers, vulnerabilities and to generate recommendations for policy engagement and program improvements. The process covered 20 districts. This analysis looked particularly at the gendered impacts of the multiple crises, as well as analysis of effects on population sub-groups who have less access to resources and decisions—such as women, adolescents, and people with disabilities. The RGA surveyed 2,437 households in CARE’s operational areas. Women constituted seventy-three percent (73%) of the respondents. The report also presents robust complimentary qualitative findings generated from 51 focus group discussions and 26 Key Informant Interviews with service providers, officials, and community leaders.

“The shocks have had a devastating impact for the entire community. Women and children are the most vulnerable.”
- Displaced Woman in Bari

Key Findings

- **Drought is the biggest shock people are facing.** 78% of people said drought was the most important problem they faced, and 72% said COVID-19 was one of the most important shocks. Additionally, 35% of people pointed to displacement as the crisis that has affected them most. Men were especially likely to prioritize the locust crisis (49% vs. 29% of women), and women more likely to highlight displacement (38% of women vs. 27% of men).
- **Decision-making is still dominated by men, however, new spaces are opening for women.** Only 33% of women and 48% of men were involved in community decisions. Most affected are women from IDP

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2021-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>

settlements, rural male headed and pastoral communities.

Community elders, government officials, and religious leaders made most community-level decisions, and these groups had few women among them. However, especially with displaced people, women reported more influence in decisions and more

ability to participate beyond strictly traditional roles, especially as the women were increasingly earning income to support the family. Although 39% of women and 30% of men said women's rights are improving, 60% of people said women are not fully heard.

"Sometimes we eat, sometimes we stay hungry. This is how life is..."

- **Food security is the biggest need.** 87% of people prioritized food as one of their core needs. Most families are eating less preferred/expensive foods and more urban female-headed households, IDPs and Af-Maay speakers were affected than other groups. Women were more likely to be eating less expensive foods, and more women were choosing not to eat at all so their children could get enough. Male-headed households

...For children there is no school during the pandemic, so we believe the coronavirus restricted their access to education ... this has affected them socially"

- Woman in Galmudug

were eating smaller portions or eating fewer meals a day whereas female headed households are eating less preferred/expensive foods and limiting adult intake to enable children to eat.

- **Water, sanitation and hygiene are huge concerns.** 84% of people prioritized access to safe drinking water as a key need, and 35% prioritized access to quality hygiene services. 56% of families had to travel more than 30 minutes to safely access water, a burden more likely to fall on women and girls especially in rural areas, IDPs and pastoral communities. 34% of women and 30% of men had no safe access to latrines, and 58% of women (compared to 48% of men) had unmet hygiene needs.
- **Mental health is a major challenge, and health services are weak.** 56% of people reported experiencing mental health challenges. For women, these challenges were likely to be more severe and more frequent—for example, 48% of women and 38% of men reported experiencing mental health challenges once a month or more. 55% of people said health care is one of their highest priority needs at present. 62% of women and 54% of men reported having safe access to health facilities, while 46% of women lacked access to safe maternal care.
- **Education is at risk.** 56% of people prioritized education as a core need. The number of children out of school went from 30% before COVID and drought to 37% during COVID and drought, with girls in male-headed households most likely to miss school which leaves them more exposed to protection threats. Even in locations where CARE and other organizations support education, more girls of school going age were found to be out of school (37%) compared to boys (35%).
- **Women are nearly twice as likely as men to lack an income.** 22% of women and 14% of men reported having no source of income. 32% of women and 43% of men reported lack of employment as the biggest impact of the crises. Women-run businesses have been hit especially hard, with 98% of those businesses losing revenue and income, and 43% having to close.
- **Unpaid care work has gone up, and men are starting to share the load.** While men are starting to take on more gender equal roles, women continued to bear significant unpaid care burdens. 61% of women and 30% of men reported spending time on child care, a break from strict gender roles. However, 64% of women spent time cooking and 58% of women spent time cleaning. No men reported spending time on either of those tasks.
- **Violence is rising.** 44% of people said concerns around Gender Based Violence and women's safety had increased since onset of COVID-19. 26% of women and girls feared violence at home, and **20% of girls reported facing pressure from parents for early marriage** as a means of coping with the crises. 34% of women reported sexual violence as their biggest concern, while 27% said they could not access GBV services.
- **Humanitarian aid must expand and must include local voices:** 74% of people said they have received no humanitarian assistance in the 30 days before the assessment. Of those who received support, only 34% said they had been consulted about their needs and preferences for assistance.

- **Other priority needs:** Other first ranked priority needs included health care (55%) and shelter together with household items (54.7%). Second ranked priority needs included education (56%) and livelihoods, whereas the third ranked priority need was protection.

Recommendations

- **Design support for multiple shocks.** Donors are urged to increase humanitarian assistance to Somali communities affected by the multiple shocks, including drought, COVID-19 and locust infestation, that are threatening to deepen the crises in an already fragile environment. Aim to increase support to specific vulnerable groups such as women and girls at risk of Gender-Based Violence, women with no income or skills, girls at risk of dropping out of schools, pregnant and lactating women (PLWs), marginalized groups, people with chronic illness and mental health concerns, disabled and elderly people to ensure their specific needs are being addressed.
- **Support government agencies to design and implement policies.** NGOs and civil society actors should support Government to develop relevant policies and capacities to handle protection issues affecting women and girls, such as rape, assault, forced marriage and other human rights abuses. Additionally, government and communities must support interventions on negative gender norm changes at both household and community levels to ensure gender equality and joint decision-making. Government and communities ought to continue investing in the education of girls and boys to provide them equal opportunities to thrive and make contributions to the development of the country.
- **Create responses with local groups, especially women.** Agencies must prioritize gender-transformative programming. Engage with local communities, especially women and girls, to understand their needs and engage them during project design, implementation, and monitoring. At least 40% of all our submitted proposals should include participatory and consultative processes with Women Relief Organizations (WRO), women and girls. All community engagements must ensure special needs people are included to provide their inputs into programs
- **Promote female leadership** at the community level and build on the existing leadership structures (Community Health Workers (CHWs), Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Committee members, Community Education Committees (CECs), Girls Education Forums (GEFs) and Village Savings and Loans Associations' (SLA) leadership among many) to create more awareness in the communities. This should also include promotion of women's leadership with existing, male-driven leadership groups.