Tearing Down the Walls: Confronting the Barriers to Internally Displaced Women and Girls’ Participation in Humanitarian Settings

Summary of Key Findings
Presentation by Kristine Anderson, May 8 2019
Methodology

• Literature review on themes of internal displacement, participation, and gender equality in humanitarian settings

• Fieldwork in Niger and South Sudan
  – Focus group discussions with IDP women and girls
  – Semi-structured interviews with key informant
  – Observation of relevant events
Seeking Survival and Missing Participation

• Meeting basic survival needs consumes the majority of IDP women and girls’ time and energy
• Loss of livelihoods results in a loss of personal agency and autonomy for IDP women and girls
• SGBV disempowers IDP women and girls and discourages participation
• Militarization of the humanitarian space creates risks for IDP women and girls
Participation Archetypes: What is working well, what needs improvement

- “Consultation fatigue”
- Women and girls’ safe spaces (WGSS) are lifeboats of participation in humanitarian settings
- Women’s rights and leadership are viewed as “foreign” concepts
- A disconnect between IDP women and girls’ participation at local levels and national levels
Policies Versus Practice

- Despite advances in the policy architecture, policies are not yet meaningfully touching IDP women and girls’ lives.
- There is a conspicuous absence of IDP women and girls in spaces of visible power, particularly at national levels.
- Denying 1325: People in positions of power often delay women’s participation until peace.
Confronting Gender Inequality

- Men and boys still control decision-making and resources in IDP communities.
- Gender inequalities are embedded within the humanitarian system and prevent the realization of gender equality for IDPs and other populations.
- “Meet women where they are:” A need to validate and nurture IDP women’s leadership at all levels.
Tearing Down the Walls: Key Recommendations

- Continued need for technically sound, women-focused WGSS approaches
- Support and upscale technically competent and strategic women’s economic empowerment projects
- Tackling gender inequality within the humanitarian system
Tearing Down the Walls: Key Recommendations Continued

• A clear need for **longer-term financial commitment of donors** to strategic women’s participation projects

• Supporting partners who can carry out **strategic engagement of men and boys** that is accountable to IDP women and girls

• Uphold UNSCR 1325: **Never delay women and girls’ participation**