

# ETHIOPIA

## Piloting a customizable, user-designed information and communication technology-based approach to reduce intimate partner violence among refugees

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### BACKGROUND

A growing body of literature suggests that intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most common form of violence in humanitarian settings, but it often goes unreported and receives less attention than non-partner sexual violence in these settings (1-6). In Dollo Ado refugee camp, where an estimated 216,000 Somali refugees are registered in five camps, GBV is an important issue, but the prevalence of IPV is unknown. (7-9). Recent evidence reviews highlight the limited evidence on effective IPV prevention interventions for the humanitarian context, and emphasize the need for development and evaluation of IPV interventions for these settings (10). Most GBV programs in Dollo Ado target non-partner sexual violence and there is a need, as in other humanitarian settings, for effective interventions to prevent and respond to IPV in this context (2, 3, 9, 11).

### AIMS

The current study aims to generate new evidence on IPV and approaches to prevent IPV in humanitarian crises. It aims to develop and pilot test an innovative, low-cost information and communication technology (ICT) based approach to prevent IPV, and will address important questions on feasibility, acceptability as well as scalability and sustainability of the intervention.

### OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the project will generate new knowledge on risk factors for IPV in Dollo Ado refugee camps in Ethiopia, as well as how social networks and information sharing channels are organized, and will also develop and pilot a user-designed participatory communication intervention in the form of podcasts targeting IPV in this setting. There has been growing interest in using technology-based solutions to address GBV because of its potential to reach large numbers of individuals quickly and non-intrusively, however, few such interventions have been rigorously tested. The specific objectives of the project include the following:

1. To understand the different forms of gender-based violence (GBV) experienced in Dollo Ado refugee camps among women and men, as well as the various channels of communication, information sharing practices and social networks among different age groups and populations in the camp.
2. To develop, together with potential beneficiaries in the Somali refugee population, an ICT-based intervention consisting of user-developed podcasts on IPV and other forms of GBV which can be easily shared via multiple channels in safe environments.
3. To pilot test the intervention and understand its feasibility, acceptability, potential for sustainability and scalability, as well as participant's engagement with the intervention and experiences of knowledge, and attitude change.

### METHODS

The project will involve several stages. The pre-implementation stage will involve engaging key stakeholders including the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), UNHCR, and a local community advisory board, as well as finalizing study protocols and instruments. Final study protocols and instruments will be submitted for ethical review at the relevant institutions in Ethiopia and internationally. The first stage will involve formative qualitative research to understand experience of physical and/or sexual IPV and its drivers, social networks, as well as the main channels of communication and information sharing in this Somali refugee setting. The second stage will involve recruiting and training community members in media communication and podcasting as well as developing and pretesting podcast content using participatory approaches. The third stage will involve piloting the intervention podcasts at Listening Centres selected to broadcast the podcasts within the camps. Quantitative data will be collected prior to the start of the podcast intervention and again post-intervention to assess satisfaction, comprehension and relevance of the content, and change in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to IPV.

### TIMELINE

A multi-disciplinary team consisting of ICT intervention specialists, operational and humanitarian, GBV research, and anthropologic experts will conduct the proposed project over a 24-month period beginning in September 2017.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This project addresses important evidence gaps, is innovative in its approach, and engages women, men, community and religious leaders, among other stakeholders. The project outcomes will have important relevance to programming, research, and policy related to IPV in humanitarian settings and will also provide data and tools that can be used to inform IPV prevention interventions in low and middle-income countries.

References available on request.

