Challenges to research in refugee camp settings: Lessons from a mixed methods evaluation in Dadaab, Kenya
Research Partners

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African Population and Health Research Center
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Research Team: Stella Muthuri, Sheru Muuo, Caroline Egesa

Programme Partners
International Rescue Committee
CARE International
GBV Case Management in Dadaab

- Led and run by IRC and CARE Kenyan national staff
- Recruit and train refugee community workers (RCWs) to share tasks needed to deliver a comprehensive case management
- Build relationships with local religious leaders, community leaders and other referral agencies
- Case management is usually embedded within other GBV prevention and response programming
Research Aim and Research Questions

Research Aim:

To understand how the IRC/CARE GBV model of comprehensive case management with task sharing can influence access, quality, health outcomes and safety outcomes among refugee GBV survivors in the Dadaab refugee camps.

Research Questions:

1. What is the context of GBV in the Dadaab refugee camps?
2. What are the roles and experiences of IRC/CARE national staff and refugee community worker staff who deliver GBV response services?
3. Is a comprehensive case management using task sharing an acceptable, feasible and effective approach at improving the safety, health and well-being of survivors?
Refugee Camp Contextual Factors

- Temporary settlements, changing population

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- **Language and cultural barriers**

https://www.rescue.org/country/kenya
Refugee Camp Contextual Factors

• Temporary settlements, changing population
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• **Populations at risk of further violence**

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- **Crowded, informal structures**

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- **Acute and chronic basic needs and aspirations**

Refugee Camp Contextual Factors

• Temporary settlements, changing population
• Language and cultural barriers
• Populations at risk of further violence
• Crowded, informal structures
• Acute and chronic basic needs and aspirations
• **Minimal amenities, sometimes remote**

http://www.sida.se/English/where-we-work/Africa/Somalia/examples-of-results/A-more-tolerable-life-in-refugee-camps/
Refugee Camp
Contextual Factors

- Temporary settlements, changing population
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- **High risk setting**

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- **Highly securitized setting**

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• **Humanitarian mandates and governance**
Refugee Camp Contextual Factors

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- High risk setting
- Highly securitized setting
- Humanitarian mandates and governance
- Political sensitivities

https://womennewsnetwork.net/2013/04/08/kenyan-government-environments-somali/
Research timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JUNE ‘14</th>
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<th>FEB ‘16</th>
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<td>Phase 1 data collection completed.</td>
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## Setting up the research: Lessons learnt

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Lessons learnt</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hiring qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Recruitment, hiring, supervision led by APHRC in Kenya; takes time; have trained back up researchers</td>
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<td><strong>Remote monitoring and supervision</strong></td>
<td>Daily data upload; regular quality checks for quantitative and qualitative; translation and transcription services in place; daily feedback to field researchers</td>
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<td><strong>Hardship location for researchers</strong></td>
<td>Travel to site to settle researchers in; schedule researchers’ leaves/holidays; check in regularly over phone and email; plan supervision site visits</td>
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<td><strong>Sensitive topics, insecure setting</strong></td>
<td>Pilot study tools tested first with RCWs; adjust international scales/questionnaires to the crisis setting; back and group translation</td>
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<td><strong>Mapping the service delivery model</strong></td>
<td>Capture informal contact within the service delivery model; focus groups with RCWs</td>
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Stay aware of changes in context

April ‘16: Kenyan government revoked refugee status for incoming Somalis

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**May ‘16:** Kenya government announces plan to close Dadaab by Nov 2016; mandatory verification

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May ‘16: Kenya government announces plan to close Dadaab by Nov 2016; mandatory verification
Nov ‘16: Kenyan government delays camp closure to May 2017; repatriation significantly up

Kenya delays Dadaab refugee camp closure by six months
Kenya’s decision comes after calls by the international community to postpone the closure on humanitarian grounds.

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Stay aware of changes in context

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Nov ‘16: Kenyan government delays camp closure to May 2017; repatriation significantly up
Feb ‘17: Kenyan high court rules that closing Dadaab is unconstitutional; Kenyan government appeals this ruling

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Adapt the research: Lessons learnt

1. Loss to follow up for research → Implementing partner assisted in follow up for interviews; second reminder call

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3. **Low rates of return for services** → Adapted the qualitative interview for GBV survivor cohort to understand why

4. **Major changes in camp context not captured with original design** → Added Phase 3 qualitative data collection with RCWs and providers to capture changes in context

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Adapting the research: Lessons learnt

- Regular communication with technical advisors, providers & field researchers regarding camp activities, events, and changes.
- Regular monitoring of incoming data to capture unexpected behaviours (i.e. rate of return for services is low - ask “why?”).
- Build in more than one round of qualitative interviewing due to the fluctuations and changes in the context.
- Work with the programme partner to follow up with study participants.
- GBV research in refugee camps is challenging but possible.
- Where possible, be flexible with research design. This may require additional time and budget.
- Share lessons
GBV METHODS SHORT COURSE applications open

“Researching Gender-Based Violence: Methods and Meaning”

Who should apply:
Individuals who will conduct or commission research on gender based violence

Location:
Gender Violence & Health Centre, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (London, UK)

Dates:
12-16 February 2018

Details:
https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/courses/short-courses/gender-violence
THANK YOU

Email: whatworks@mrc.ac.za
Web: www.whatworks.co.za
Facebook: WhatWorksVAWG
Twitter: @WhatWorksVAWG