"IOM’S GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AIMS TO PROTECT, TREAT, CARE AND SUPPORT THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN SOMALIA THROUGH AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH AND TECHNOLOGIES AS WELL AS BY BUILDING UPON THE STRENGTHS OF BENEFICIARIES."

Somalia has experienced prolonged conflict, as in many similar post conflict situations, alarming cases of gender based violence (GBV) have been reported and there is need to scale up programming and funding to address this growing concern.

Since 2011, The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been implementing programmes to respond and prevent GBV among internally displaced persons (IDPs) by providing psychosocial support, medical assistance in partnership with health actors and building the capacity of community actors to ensure sustainability.

The main objective of the program is to build capacity for better service delivery through the support for a centralized coordination system and the strengthening of existing referral systems and direct survivor assistance in Mogadishu, Puntland & Somaliland.

Migration Health Division’s (MHD’s) approach

1) Conducting evidence-informed programming;
2) Enhancing the capacity and upgrading of skills of local and host communities, community-based NGOs, private sector and the authorities for sustainability and ownership;
3) Strengthening partnership with key stakeholders (including beneficiaries) and private sector.

IOM IN ACTION

In 2013:

- As a result of awareness raising activities on GBV, IOM reached over 35,000 Beneficiaries GBV.
- IOM provided psychosocial support to 267 survivors of GBV.
- A total of 148 survivors were referred to primary or secondary health facilities
- A total of 53 IDP representatives were trained as community focal points
Prevention and partnership

In 2013, IOM continued to support Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) in Somaliland and Ministry of Women and Family Social Affairs (MOWFSA) in Puntland as well as IOM implementing partners for the 16 days of activism, which is annual global campaign to end violence against women.

Through this support, IOM partners held community dialogue sessions to sensitize community members, religious leaders, traditional leaders, IDP leaders on GBV as a human rights violation as well as identify and strengthen community based mechanisms that can address GBV.

Community members were also sensitized through Radio campaigns and sports outreach activities.

IOM partners actively engage men in the social mobilization as well as outreach activities, as this is essential in addressing GBV.

In Burao, Rehabilitation and Capacity building institution, held GBV sensitization sessions targeting men especially on intimate partner violence.

In Mogadishu, Somali Women Development Concern (SWDC) conducted awareness sessions on female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) where religious leaders engaged IDP communities and spoke on the dangers of FGM/C.

Treatment care and support

Through partnership with implementing partners in all three regions of Somalia, IOM reached over 35,000 beneficiaries with awareness messages on the gravity of GBV and provided psychosocial support to 267 survivors of GBV.

50 psychosocial counselors were also trained on psychosocial support and 53 community focal points were trained on providing psychosocial support and the referral pathways.

Community focal points are recruited from the community to reach out to vulnerable members of the community.

Coordination and advocacy

An important dimension of IOM's action against GBV in Somalia is its involvement of all stakeholders, from affected communities, to line Ministries, and organizations within different inter-agency Clusters.

IOM through its implementing partners also supports efforts to push back against the tide of GBV by participating in regular advocacy projects and outreach campaigns that are designed to lead to social change.

“While I need money to meet my daily needs, I have rejected alot of offers from mothers who wanted me to perform FGM on her daughters”

Adey Ulusow, FGM activist, Mogadishu, Somalia
IOM PRIORITIZES THE TRAINING OF PSYCHOSOCIAL COUNSELORS AND FEMALE IDPs AS PEER COUNSELORS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE CASES."

Referrals: the most crucial part of psychosocial support

In 2013, through enhancing and supporting the referral system in Somalia, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (in collaborating with its implementing partners on the ground) was able to conduct the following:

- Provided 267 survivors of GBV with Psychosocial support in all four implementations sites; Burao, Garowe, Galkayo and Mogadishu
- Conducted 148 referrals to health facilities in Garowe, Galkayo, Burao and Mogadishu. In collaboration with the GBV working groups in Nairobi and Somalia that IOM participates in; IOM together with its implementing partners ensure regular usage and reporting through the GBVIMS system for better data collection and monitoring on GBV cases in Somalia.

A young girl participates in 2014, commemoration of International day of zero tolerance to female genital mutilation (FGM) held in Mogadishu, Somalia. Through the awareness raising campaign against FGM, IOM in collaboration with its local partner Somalia Women Development Centre (SWDC) reached approximately over 400 vulnerable populations from internally displaced settlements. © IOM/SWDC 2014
Former FGM practitioner joins the fight against female genital mutilation in Mogadishu, Somalia

Adey Ulusow has lived for many years in Somalia as a Female Genital practitioner popular among the community for performing FGM to many girls in Jowhar town; even her own daughters underwent cutting.

As time went by, Adey was displaced from Jowhar to Mogadishu where she joined Tarabuunka internally displaced settlement. While at the settlement Adey slowly started attending gender based violence (GBV) awareness session, legal awareness sessions, female genital mutilation campaigns. Through these sessions she began to understand the crucial link between FGM and women’s health.

With the various campaigns and awareness raising session conducted by SWDC, IOM local implementing partner, Adey realized the harm and risk she had exposed many girls in Mogadishu, Somalia. As a result, the former practitioner is now actively leading to eradicate FGM, playing a key role in supporting SWDC activities on the ground.

“While I need money to meet my daily needs, I have rejected many offers by mothers who need FGM to be performed on their daughters. I have advised the mothers and women on the various effects of FGM such as; severe health complications and psychological trauma that comprise human right abuses. I have abandoned the practice of FGM and I am now focused on being a dedicated TBA (Traditional Birth Attendant)” Adey proudly says.

In addition to the above, Adey recommends to have more training for TBAs especially on reproductive health issues, family planning, post natal care and HIV/AIDS prevention as most of communities are uneducated.

“Since high prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) was reported in target areas where women are often attacked when they fetch water or use latrines that have no locks at night, IOM has linked social mobilization to prevention of GBV by raising awareness of GBV and gender issues in affected communities.”

Dr Samir Hadjiabduli, Programme Officer (Gender), International Organization for Migration, Somalia