



GENDERED VULNERABILITIES AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Description

In forced displacement, refugees can face extreme hardship due to food, housing and income insecurity, family separation, social exclusion and other factors. To cope with these challenges, many refugees resort to transactional sex (TS) to meet their basic needs, to raise sufficient money to continue their journey, in exchange for help crossing borders, for protection from sexual violence or security. Refugees, in particular women, could also be compelled to engage in transactional sex because of threats, extortions or intimidation, constituting sexual exploitation and abuse. Engaging in transactional sex can bear health risks – particularly sexual and reproductive health and mental health implications. Therefore, these refugees have greater health needs while facing greater barriers to access services, including due to stigma and discrimination.

This research project is the first comparative multi-country multi-disciplinary study to examine the sexual and reproductive as well as mental health impact among displaced populations. By focusing on survival strategies that displaced people employ, the research aims to shed light on why, when and how displaced people, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, engage in TS and examine situations that renders TS exploitation and abuse. The research team explores the consequences of refugees' engagement in TS, particularly in terms of sexual and reproductive health and mental health, by identifying the needs of and barriers to information and services. The project places an emphasis on understanding how gender norms, beliefs and expectations as well as gender inequality and structural determinants create conditions that result in differences in terms of experience and outcome of TS in different populations and in different sites. The goal of the project is to capture the complexities of everyday realities and structural inequalities surrounding TS and generate necessary evidence to identify gaps in policy and response and inform the development of effective and appropriate interventions.

The scientific impact of this research includes advancing definitions, conceptualisations and gendered understanding of TS and its health repercussion in displacement. It aims to shed light on structural and other factors that create conditions that facilitate TS, identifying conditions that renders it sexual exploitation.

Researchers

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Additional information

Funding institutions:

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