

The role of women led networks in urban crisis response in Sudan.

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In Sudan the complex interplay between conflict, resource scarcity, and climate change, underscores the need for integrated solutions that address environmental sustainability and foster peace to build resilience in vulnerable communities. The concept of Urban Humanitarian Response, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of working in urban spaces, particularly in the context of crises such as conflicts, natural disasters, and climate change. It emphasizes the need for a people-centered approach and the importance of understanding the complex systems within cities to provide effective humanitarian aid. (Urban humanitarian response).

Sudan is undergoing a Turbulent Journey of Political Upheaval and Displacement. In April 2019, Sudan experienced a seismic political shift and widespread civil unrest. After three decades of rule, the entrenched political regime was overthrown following massive protests. A civilian-led transitional government emerged through a delicate power-sharing arrangement between military and civilian leaders. Amidst this political turmoil, a civil war erupted between Sudan's military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

In the midst of the Sudanese humanitarian crisis, women have emerged as powerful agents of change. Their resilience, leadership, and collective efforts play a crucial role in responding to the crisis. This paper aims to explore how women's networks are making a difference, highlights the role of women networks in addressing urban crisis and serves as a crucial call to action for adopting community-based approaches to address humanitarian needs in Sudan due to conflict, and in regions facing similar multifaceted challenges. And concludes that ensuring the right to the city for women in humanitarian crises involves empowering them, recognizing their agency, and actively involving them in decision-making processes. By doing so, we can build more resilient and inclusive communities even amidst the most challenging circumstances.

1 APPROACH OF DATA COLLECTION

This article was developed through a review of publicly available information, including reports from UN agencies, international organizations, the media, and local sources. In addition to in-depth key informant interviews with key representatives of community based structures representatives, IDPs representatives, and humanitarian/ development aid workers.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Urban threats and crisis in Sudan

Sudan's civilians have endured over twelve months of violent conflict since fighting erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in April 2023. The conflict initially started in Khartoum but quickly spread to Aj Jazira, Darfur and Kordofan, affecting every state in the country. As a result, millions of people have been displaced, making this crisis the largest displacement and protection emergency globally. As of March 2024, there are approximately 8 million IDPs in Sudan 1.7 persons out of them made mixed cross-border movements into neighboring countries (Displacement Tracking Matrix, 2024). According to Humanitarian Needs Response Plan (HNRP) 2024. 24.7 million people are in need of humanitarian support and protection, of which, 2.1 million are targeted by protection and shelter support. The violence and abuse have caused extensive damage to housing properties, critical infrastructure, including water and healthcare systems, the collapse of banking and financial services, frequent power outages, and disruptions in telecommunication services, along with loss of jobs and income generating activities, and the severity of their needs continues to escalate. Sudan faces women and child protection crisis, with 3 million displaced children, predominantly girls, the highest number globally. Additionally, 19 million children are not in school, jeopardizing their future. Despite operational challenges and limited resources, comprehensive responses are essential to address this crisis and protect vulnerable populations (Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024).

The issue of displacement is protracted, In 2022, OCHA had already reported that around 56 per cent of Sudan's IDPs had been displaced for more than ten years. In Darfur, where many people have been displaced for over 20 years, secondary occupation of land in the place of origin has been one of the most widely reported housing land properties concerns, and many IDPs state this as one of the main barriers to return.

2.2 Impact of conflict on urban settings

The impact of the conflict in Sudan is urban. Cities have become hosting areas for a large number of IDPs. This sudden influx of IDPs is putting significant additional strain on existing urban services and infrastructure, such as water, electricity, health services and solid waste management, which were already scarce before the conflict. As the displacement becomes protracted, significant pressure on the urban basic services and infrastructure is increasingly a source of emerging tension between host communities and IDPs, which is manifested as elevated risks for forced eviction in some states. Aid operations have been met with significant access challenges and insufficient resources in front of widespread and severe humanitarian situations. Lack of access hinders reaching communities in need, especially those that have been unreachable since April.

Cities have become ports for "reverse" population movement transforming them into hosting areas for IDPs. and critical protection concerns. While a great proportion of IDPs are hosted in host communities, a significant number of IDPs are residing in 'gathering sites' in precarious living conditions. Displacement is now protracted, return to areas of origin is impeded, and urban basic services infrastructure is put under pressure that is well beyond its capacity. Overstretched urban capacity is a source of emerging tensions between host communities and IDPs, manifested as abusive practices related to access, adding to the protection concerns in these cities Displacement is a significant factor contributing to vulnerability in the current context.

2.3 Gender roles and vulnerabilities

In Sudan, the impacts of the conflict are clearly gendered. gender roles are deeply ingrained and patriarchal despite the 2005 interim constitution ensuring equal rights for both men and women in economic activities, political participation, education, and all human rights (ACAPS 2024).. The lack of protective laws, along with factors such as conflict and poverty, also poses challenges to upholding these rights. Social and cultural norms also typically position women as subordinate to men. For example, the law does not provide for gender equality and offers minimal protection from GBV (ACAPS 2024). This increases men's power over women, which can be a driving factor of violence. Men are traditionally viewed as the main income earners, while women are expected to fulfil homemaking responsibilities. The prevailing belief is that a woman's financial dependence on her husband or father is normal, emphasizing a traditional structure where men provide for their families economically this is likely to reduce women's power at the household level. Women still play a significant though often underrecognized role in the household economy, engaging in both formal and informal work across rural and urban settings. Their contributions extend to agricultural tasks, handicraft production, and other informal activities.

In the context of the current conflict, traditional gender roles persist within households, worsening gender inequality. The burden of unpaid caregiving, such as childcare, cooking, and cleaning, falls predominantly on women, aligned with regional social and cultural norms. With schools closed, women have to manage children without the support of educational institutions. At the same time, men are increasingly absent as a result of various conflict related factors, further intensifying women's domestic responsibilities (ACAPS 2024).



Figure 1 Female IDPs in Kassala State Photo Credit to Care international Women Lead in Emergencies Report 2023

2.4 The engendered impact of conflict in Kassala State

Kassala State is one of the most affected areas by the war in Sudan and the population displacement, hosting around 157,000 IDPs as of January 2024 (OCHA situation report). Kassala State had existing IDPs from the pre-war period, more than 200,000 people who were displaced from the eastern and southern parts of the State since 2019, due to inter communal conflicts between the Beja and Rashaida tribes over land and resources, and the influx of refugees from neighboring Eritrea, who often competed for the same livelihood opportunities.

The Inter-Cluster Rapid Needs Assessment in Kassala State (November 2023) describes the following needs concerns relevant to gender.

72% of IDPs are accommodated in host communities, 18% in rented accommodation, and 10% in gathering sites or other open area/ informal settlements with limited access to basic services and protection (Displacement Tracking Matrix, December 2023). Schools are used to host IDPs, which was reported as the main reason for children not attending school in two-thirds of the assessed localities in Kassala State. IDPs living in gathering sites fear being evicted from the school buildings as the pressure to open school's mount. Schools in both New Halfa town and Khashm Algerba town, as well as other localities in Kassala State, were reported as lacking adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities as an educational facility, let alone as a shelter (ISRNA UNOHCHR Nov.2023).

Although the living conditions are generally less precarious in host communities and in rental accommodations, in 12 (75%) out of the 16 locations assessed, it was reported that rental apartments are difficult to find. The reported average monthly rent across all the areas assessed for rural areas was SDG 54,000, peri-urban SDG 135,000 and urban areas SDG 300,000. With the sharp increase in rental prices, some IDPs currently residing in

rental accommodation may be driven out from the rental accommodation and forced into more precarious shelter settings. A combination of factors such as guilt, lack of money and rising tensions with host household members as the lodging is prolonged, is causing some IDPs living with host communities to move out of the host families into gathering sites.

In 11 (69%) out of the 16 locations assessed, it was reported that shelters are either too small, or the space is insufficient for the entire household that includes extended families being hosted as IDPs. Lack of privacy inside the shelter is reportedly a main shelter challenge, followed by insufficient shelters, insufficient beds, inadequate ventilation and lack of gender-segregated latrines.

Gender equality and women's safety are critical concerns, especially in conflict-affected regions, where women face Gender Based Violence risks, and lack of access to basic services.

Gender issues of IDPs and host communities

According to UNWOMEN's and ISRNA recent report SUDAN CRISIS IN-DEPTH GENDER ASSESSMENT REPORT, gender issues that face IDPs and host communities are;

2.4.1 Women's insecurity and vulnerability: Most women and children among IDPs are insecure and vulnerable to sexual abuse and harassment. Women and girls have faced escalating protection threats. Reports indicate the use of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) as a weapon of war, including incidents of gang rape in conflict affected areas, targeted attacks based on ethnicity, theft, and extortion continue unabated. Women in the Red Sea do not seek employment in nearby communities because of the fear of violence and the crowdedness of IDPs.

The ongoing conflict has severely impacted access to essential services for women. Healthcare services have been disrupted due to damage to critical infrastructure. The collapse of banking and financial services, frequent power outages, and disruptions in telecommunication services further exacerbate the challenges faced by women. Inadequate ventilation and a lack of gender-segregated latrines were reported in **5 out of the assessed locations**.

Kassala State faces challenges related to malnutrition, kidnapping risks, and child early marriage. These issues disproportionately affect women and girls and require targeted interventions to address their specific needs.

2.4.2 Women's participation and empowerment: Women's participation in local humanitarian response is influenced by the prominence of women's activism in the last decades. However, some efforts to raise awareness may be needed to ensure that women are engaged, and their needs are addressed. The report also highlights the formation of a network called the 'Peace for Sudan Platform', which includes more than 49 women-led peace initiatives, humanitarian initiatives, and civil society organizations, supported by the UN Women Sudan office.

2.4.3 Women's specific needs: The report notes that the services provided by local groups seem to neglect women-specific needs, such as sanitary pads, the needs of men and women with disabilities, and the elderly with special needs. No group specified facilitation of the provision of reproductive health services, although humanitarian reports alerted that thousands of pregnant women need service.

3 Role Of Women in Responding to Crisis in Sudan

Sudanese women have been agents of change, actively participating in peacebuilding, humanitarian work, and civil society efforts, even amidst adversity and challenges (ACAPS 2024).

3.1 Historical review of Women Led Networks before and after war

Women in Sudan have played **critical roles** both **before and after the beginning of the war**. Let's go through their contributions:

3.1.1 Historical Struggle:

a) Since the **late 19th century**, Sudanese women have **organized against colonization** and **fought for their rights**.

b) The formation of the Sudanese Women's Union in 1952 marked a significant turning point in their collective efforts.

3.1.2 2019 Revolution:

c) During the 2019 revolution, which led to the ousting of dictator Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Sudanese women played a crucial role.

d) Despite **political obstacles**, they actively participated in protests and advocated for change.

3.1.3 Gender-Focused Commitments:

e) The 2019 Constitutional Document, including the Juba Peace Document, specifically addressed women's rights, peace, and security.

f) These commitments distinguished these peace documents from past frameworks that had addressed gender issues to a much lesser degree.

3.1.4 Peace Initiatives and Advocacy:

g) In response to the current conflict, over 49 women-led groups formed the Peace for Sudan Platform.

h) Supported by the UN Women Sudan office, they advocate for peace and address the crisis.

i) Networks like Women Against War and Mothers of Sudan document violations, monitor the situation, and promote peace.

3.1.5 Community-Based Services:

j) Regional groups, including women's and youth initiatives, stepped in to run volunteer-led, community-based services.

k) These efforts were necessary after international organizations reduced operations due to the conflict.

l) However, challenges persist, including women's exclusion from leadership roles in governance and conflict-resolution committees.

3.1.6 Resilience and Continuity:

m) Despite setbacks, women civil society stakeholders continue to mobilize community-led action.

n) They support community-led initiatives, disseminate crucial information, and ensure the continuity of regional groups.

4 Types of community Led Networks

According to UNWOMEN's Rapid Gender Assessment report, Community-Based Organization (CBO) consist 37% of the response to urban crisis in Sudanese cities, 27% out of it are women led, while another 27% are youth women and men led. In Red Sea State, the areas of interventions are Support, transportation/travel to safe areas, Food, Shelter, Safe evacuation, Networking and coordination, Psychosocial support/counseling Health care services (medical treatment).

4.1 Types of Networks according to HOW it is formulated.

There are different types of community in the city. While traditionally 'community' was often synonymous with a fixed location, such as a village or neighborhood, the term has wider application in the city. Communities can be linked by non-physical connections. Recent research identifies six typologies of urban communities (Urban humanitarian response Good Practices Review¹²):

- **Communities of interest**, which form around a common issue or concern. Example of this is professionals' networks established after the conflict such as Reconstruction Sudan group who are multi-disciplinary professionals focus in drafting roadmap to reconstruct affected Sudanese cities. another example is Sudanese professional forum, this is a forum initiated after the conflict that focus on networking, sharing knowledge, looking for job opportunities.

- **Communities of culture**, where people share a common language, values or faith. Example of this is the ethnic and cultural associations, like Darfuri associations.
- **Communities of resistance**, where people coalesce around a shared negative experience, such as forced migration. • **Communities of place** – people with a common spatial connection, for instance living on the same street. Example of these are resistant committees that was established in many areas in Sudan specially Khartoum amidst the civil movement in 2019 it is neighborhood based, it considered example of community of place and community of resistance. They continue to provide support during the violent conflict named as **emergency rooms**.
- **Communities of practice**, such as a common livelihood. An example of this is farmers and pastoralists community-based association in rural areas.
- **Virtual communities**, people connected through social media. Examples of this is Together Against Rape virtual women led campaign and Peace for Sudan Platform.

4.2 Types of Community Networks according to gender leading roles

4.2.1 Men led networks.

These organizations, such as the Neighborhood Committees Coordination (also known as Resistance Committees Coordination), primarily assume the community-delegated responsibility of sourcing funds and goods from within and outside their communities.

They are mainly concentrated in the Red Sea, and Kassala states. For example, the youth initiatives/networks could quickly form and organize themselves and voluntarily distribute food, water, medicines, and fuel. They were also able to assist people fleeing the violence to connect with transport to escape. They were able to improvise rapidly in ‘emergency rooms’ in public spaces such as schools and clubs to help those injured. In addition, the tech-savvy youth quickly created a website and applications that assisted people in connecting via cellphone to support each other to meet urgent needs amid the crisis. especially youth-led initiatives were new and were established during the outbreak of conflict to respond to humanitarian needs in their neighborhoods.

Youth led networks did better in utilizing technology and social media in information sharing and communication, they focused on provision of water and education utilizing online learning platforms.

4.2.2 Women led Networks.

The gender dynamics within organizations in Sudan reveal distinct roles and contributions. The Women-Led Organizations possess expertise and experience in addressing sensitive issues like Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and providing services to vulnerable groups. For example, many women-led organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs) in Port Sudan and Nyala were already active in humanitarian aid even before the conflict, they collaborate with UN agencies, focusing on GBV prevention, response services, amplifying women’s voices in the political sphere, and providing economic empowerment services and food distribution during humanitarian responses. Geographically, they are dominant in Khartoum, Blue Nile, and Zalingei in Central Darfur.

During the recent crisis, women led networks focused more and did better performance in coordination and networking roles, they focused on safety issues, awareness raising and advocacy, and human rights (UNWOMEN report)



Figure 2 Awareness raising meeting with Women, Photo credit Kassala Emergency Room Facebook account

4.2.3 Women vs. Men led neighborhoods networks.

In the pre-war, relatively stable context of Khartoum, neighborhood networks formed by both women and men in the Shambat neighborhood of Khartoum North exhibited distinct characteristics shaped by cultural norms, historical contexts, and gender roles.

Women-Led Networks:

- These networks primarily function as **communities of place**, where women play a central role.
- Their activities revolve around caregiving responsibilities, including:
 - Initiating shared small money-saving trust funds (known as “sandoog”).
 - Collaborating to purchase necessary supplies for weddings and funerals.
 - Contributing to street beautification and participating in cleaning campaigns.
- Although they lack clear hierarchical structures, they invite group members to periodic meetings at their homes, usually during daytime due to safety considerations and traditional roles.

Men-Led Neighborhood Initiatives:

- These networks are more **structured**:
 - They have designated leaders and a financial officer responsible for official accounts.
 - Meetings take place in neighborhood open spaces (such as the “Medan”) or community family centers (like “Nadi Al-Osra”).
- Their primary focus is on:
 - **Street maintenance**, especially during flood seasons.
 - **Street lighting** initiatives.

- **Rehabilitating neighborhood mosques** and open spaces.
- They also collaborate with local authorities (municipalities) to allocate land for neighborhood parks, leveraging their networks.
- Meetings typically occur in the evenings after work or on Fridays after Dhuhr prayers.

4.3 women led networks formulated to respond to the urban crisis of conflict.

While in crisis situations women communities are communities of interest where women have same concerns and challenges examples are

4.3.1 *Peace for Sudan Platform:*

Amidst the ongoing conflict, more than 49 women-led peace initiatives, humanitarian efforts, and civil society organizations have come together to form the Peace for Sudan Platform. Supported by UN Women Sudan, this network includes representatives from various regions across the country.

Their primary goals are to facilitate communication, catalyze collective women-led advocacy, and work towards an end to the conflict. These women actively document violations, monitor the situation, advocate for peace, and exert pressure on the international community and other parties to support resolution efforts.

Additionally, they provide practical support to affected families, including shelter for the displaced, evacuation assistance, and medical services.

4.3.2 *Mothers of Sudan Campaign:*

initiative opposes the ongoing war in Sudan and aims to mobilize citizens against it. Founded by Astur, an advocate for women's rights and a writer. The campaign has organized women's protests, demonstrating the increased coordination among women's groups across Sudanese states.

Networks like Women Against War and the Mothers of Sudan campaign actively engage in comprehensive situation analysis, seeking ways to involve civil society and contribute to resilience strategies within the crisis context.



Figure 3 Women Protests Photo credit to Sudan Women Protest Facebook Account

5 Case studies of Women and men community led structures.

5.1 Emergency Rooms role in Evacuation of vulnerable groups of children and disabled from violent conflict to safer place in Kassala.

The emergency rooms operate as a subset of the Resistance Committees, which are youth-led voluntary networks. Their establishment was prompted by the civil movement that began in 2019. These emergency rooms came into full operation only when the outbreak of war occurred. During this time, the government and other humanitarian actors faced challenges in responding to and accessing conflict-affected areas.



Figure 4 Women preparing food to IDPs Photo credit to UN News, UN.ORG



Figure 5 Emergency room members meeting-Photo Credit Kassala Emergency Room Facebook account

Geographically, these emergency rooms are organized as communities of place, each corresponding to specific neighborhoods.

5.1.1 *The situation*

The network structure comprises both a humanitarian body and a political body. The humanitarian body is led by a female project manager and a female financial officer.

Network members collaborate closely with hospitals to provide immediate relief for war injuries. Their existing relationships with these institutions facilitate efficient medical assistance and the distribution of essential medicines.

Upon the violent conflict that raised in December 2023 in Madani city the capital of Aj Jazira state (a city that received massive number of IDPs from Khartoum the capital), after one month of this conflict, the emergency rooms in Madani have led successful evacuation of in close coordination with emergency rooms of Kassala state, have led evacuation to rescue vulnerable groups. Two critical centers were at risk: An orphanage housing homeless child, and A center caring for disabled individuals in Hasahisa, these innocent lives were caught in the crossfire, desperate for safety, their mission is to Evacuate and Protect those who are in emergent need.

5.1.2 *The Response:*

A dedicated committee formed, driven by compassion and determination. One of the committee members, with a personal connection to the orphanage, played a pivotal role. She facilitated coordination, gathering crucial information on the urgent needs of the vulnerable.

- **Collaboration and Coordination**, the committee reached out to relevant partners:

- a) Ministry of Social Work: Advocating for the welfare of the displaced.
- b) Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF): Essential for security.
- c) UNICEF: A lifeline for humanitarian aid. Logistical Preparations:

While logistics were underway, immediate measures were vital: **Guards:** Deployed to safeguard the orphanage, **Water and Food:** Ensured the children's survival during this critical period.

5.1.3 *The Evacuation:*

Amid uncertainty, the committee orchestrated a daring operation, **570 children** were rescued from the orphanage in **Kassala**. Their journey to safety began, guided by hope and resilience. This remarkable endeavor exemplifies humanity's capacity to unite, even in the darkest hours, to shield the most vulnerable among us.

5.1.4 *Provision of shelter in Kassala*

The emergency rooms in Kassala led the process of finding transitional shelters for the evacuated groups. These rooms, operating under immense pressure, A dedicated team liaised with state authorities, seeking suitable transitional shelters they collaborated closely with the State Authorities, Security considerations were paramount as they scoured various locations. they successfully accommodated these groups and provided food and water.

5.1.5 *Women and Men roles in the emergency rooms*

Resistance Committees Coordination and associated groups, predominantly led by men, they provide the following services;

- a) Water and Food: They ensured sustenance for the displaced.
- b) Transportation: Vital for moving internally displaced persons (IDPs) to safer grounds.
- c) Transitional Shelters: A refuge for those uprooted by violence.
- d) Fundraising: Traders, businessmen, and herders rallied, providing crucial support. Their unwavering commitment echoed through the crisis.

Women's Vital Roles:

Amid this tumult, women played pivotal roles:

- a) Medical Services: An astounding 80% of medical providers were women.
- b) Central Kitchens: These hubs, dominated by women (around 70%), providing daily food portions to vulnerable groups specially IDPs, churned out sustenance.



Figure 7 Women providing medical services in Kassala. Photo credit Kassala Emergency Room Facebook account



Figure 6 Members of Kassal Emergency Room providing Water supply services to IDPs and Host communities, Photo Credit to KAssala Emergency Room Facebook account

Challenges and Lesson learnt.

This is a case of community-based networks that are resilient and prompt. Despite access issues in conflict affected areas these bodies transfer money for vulnerable families to facilitate fleeing to safer areas.

5.2 Responding to GBV through Virtual Campaign of ‘Together Against Rape’

Together against Rape, is a women led virtual campaign, started in December 2023 after 8 months of war breakout. Group of women established this platform /campaign to voluntary respond to gender-based violence rape incidents, published in life thread in social media platform as twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn.

campaign aims to prevent the use of rape and sexual violence, organize work through a horizontal structure, demand justice at the social and legal levels for victims, and improve the social and legal conditions for survivors without bias towards any party. The campaign supports survivors and demands immediate and effective protection for women in Sudan, with a vision to prevent sexual violations and achieve a radical change by providing urgent and effective protection for victims.

Campaign members collaborate with social media platforms and improve the social and legal conditions for local and regional groups and international communities to achieve their goals effectively and sustainably.” They worked on monitoring and reporting number of 245 cases of GBV in 6 states in Sudan, 97% of them are women, 46% out them are children at increasing pace. The modality of work is collecting data through groups of volunteers on the ground. The structure is multi-disciplinary of lawyers, artists, doctors, aid workers, communication officers. It is structured as follows medical, psychological, Legal Support Team, Community Engagement Team, Content Creation Team, Media Team, Platform Management Team, and Information Team.

6 Results

The analysis of how women and men led community networks are formulated, structured, where they gather, what are their concerns and areas of interest and when they meet are illustrated as follows.

6.1 Women’s Neighborhood Networks

Community-Centric: Women’s networks often prioritize community well-being. They focus on collective support, childcare, and addressing local needs.

Informal and Interpersonal: Women’s networks thrive through face-to-face interactions. They gather at communal spaces, share stories, and build trust.

Care and Solidarity: Women’s networks emphasize empathy, caregiving, and mutual aid. They create safety nets during crises, such as food sharing or childcare assistance.

Empowerment: Women’s networks empower each other by sharing knowledge, advocating for women’s rights, and challenging gender norms.

Inclusive: Women’s networks often welcome diverse backgrounds, ages, and experiences. They foster a sense of belonging and sisterhood.

6.2 Men’s Neighborhood Networks:

Hierarchical and Formal: Men’s networks may have more formal structures. They often involve leadership roles, decision-making, and clear hierarchies.

Task-Oriented: Men’s networks focus on specific tasks, such as community development projects, economic activities, or security patrols.

Public Spaces: Men’s networks often gather in public spaces, such as local bars, meeting halls, or sports fields.

Networking for Opportunities: Men’s networks facilitate business connections, political influence, and access to resources. They may engage in trade, negotiations, or lobbying.

Gender Norms: Men’s networks reinforce traditional gender roles, emphasizing masculinity, authority, and protection.

6.2.1 *Overlap and Collaboration:*

While women and men have separate networks, there is also overlap. They collaborate during community events, celebrations, and emergencies.

Complementary Roles: Women's and men's networks can complement each other. For instance, women's networks in Kassala organized health clinics, while men's networks focus on provision of shelter and water.

6.2.2 Challenges:

Gender Bias: Women face barriers in accessing formal networks due to gender bias. Men's networks often dominate decision-making spaces.

Visibility: Women's networks may be less visible, especially when their activities occur within households or informal settings.

Power Dynamics: Men's networks sometimes perpetuate unequal power dynamics, limiting women's influence.

7 Conclusion

In summary, Women still play a significant though often underrecognized role in the household economy, engaging in both formal and informal work across rural and urban settings. Their contributions extend to agricultural tasks, handicraft production, and other informal activities. Both women's and men's neighborhood networks contribute to community resilience, but their approaches, priorities, and dynamics differ. Recognizing and valuing these differences is essential for fostering inclusive and effective local networks in Urban settings and responding to crisis.

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