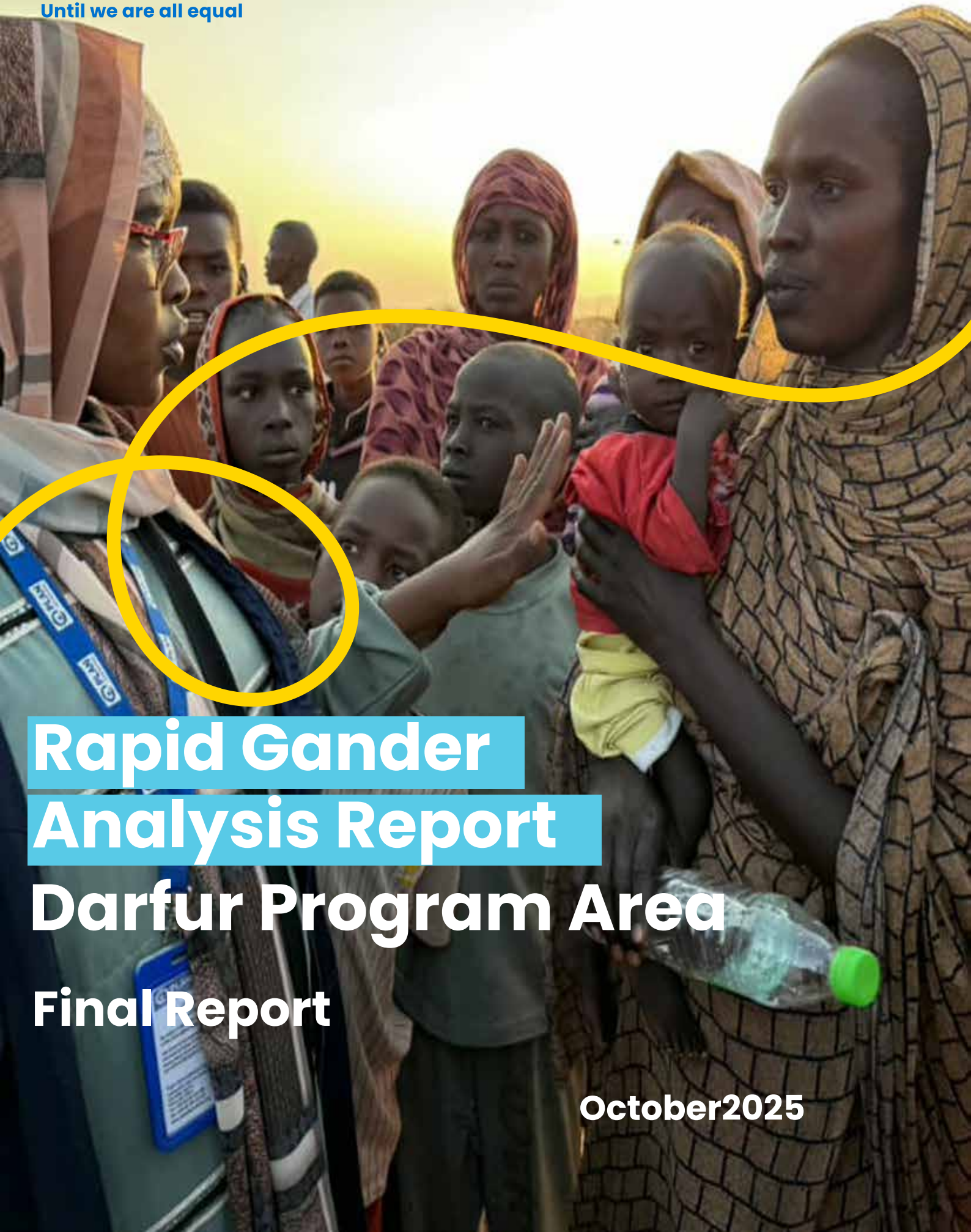




Until we are all equal



Rapid Gender

Analysis Report

Darfur Program Area

Final Report

October 2025



Until we are all equal



Background

Gender analysis is a key component of mainstreaming gender equality within humanitarian and development programs. Understanding barriers and risks faced by women, girls, men, and boys, together with their various gender-specific needs, is integral to the effective design and implementation of programs in addressing gender inequality.

To design and implement gender sensitive and gender transformative programs, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of the specific needs, interests, vulnerabilities and capacities of girls, boys, women, and men

The pre-existing gender inequalities and conflict situations in Tawilla and Darussalam, the analysis will further focus on gender roles and time use, decision-making and power dynamics in the household, access to and control of resources and assets, meaningful participation and decision-making at the household and community level. The gender analysis is also expected to bring out the interaction of girls, boys, women, and men in project intervention components (WASH, Child protection and MPCA services).

Purpose

To generate timely, gender- and age-disaggregated evidence on the specific needs, capacities, risks, and priorities of women, men, girls, and boys, including those with intersecting vulnerabilities, to inform Plan International Sudan's humanitarian and development programming and advocacy.

Introduction

A Rapid Gender Analysis (RGA) was successfully conducted in North Darfur, with a particular focus on the Dar El Salam and Tawilla localities. The implementation process unfolded smoothly, thanks to a well-coordinated approach and the active participation of community members.



Methodology

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in the area, A range of methodologies were used, including both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

These included surveys, community mapping exercises with adolescent girls to explore mobility, safety, and access to services, focus group discussions (FGDs) with adolescent boys and young men, and separate FGDs with young women. Additionally, key informal interviews were conducted with local service providers, including education, health, and protection actors and community leaders to gather insights into existing support systems and challenges. The combination of these methods provided a rich and nuanced perspective on the gender-related issues affecting different segments of the population.

Efforts were made to ensure inclusivity and confidentiality throughout the process. However, challenges such as limited mobility, cultural sensitivities, and logistical constraints impacted the depth of engagement in certain areas.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The demographics of the respondents who took part in the quantitative data collection are as follows

- Gender of respondent: 65% of respondents were adolescent girls, and 35% were adolescent boys.
- In terms of age, 32% were 10-14 years old, while 68% were 15-19 years old.
- **Marital status:** 13.3% married, 76.7% unmarried, 5% widowed, 3.3% divorced, 1.7% engaged.

Key Findings

Protection and Safety

1. Girls feel safest at home, inside the camp, or at school during the day.
2. Valleys and isolated areas used for collecting firewood and vegetables are considered dangerous due to harassment, violence, and the presence of armed groups.
3. Nighttime movement is highly restricted for girls because of inadequate lighting, open spaces, and a lack of protective barriers.



4. There are no girl-only spaces available, which limits opportunities for safe socialization and support.

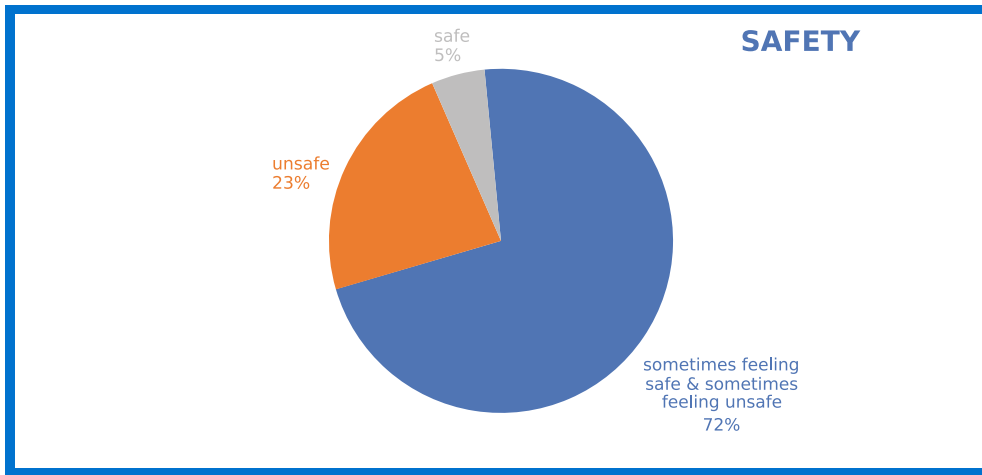
5. Girls face high risks of sexual exploitation, early and forced marriage, harassment, rape, violence during firewood collection and psychological abuse.

6. Boys are often exposed to child labour, harassment, and violence, usually in the context of economic survival.

7. Social stigma, fear, and cultural norms prevent survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) from reporting incidents or accessing necessary services.

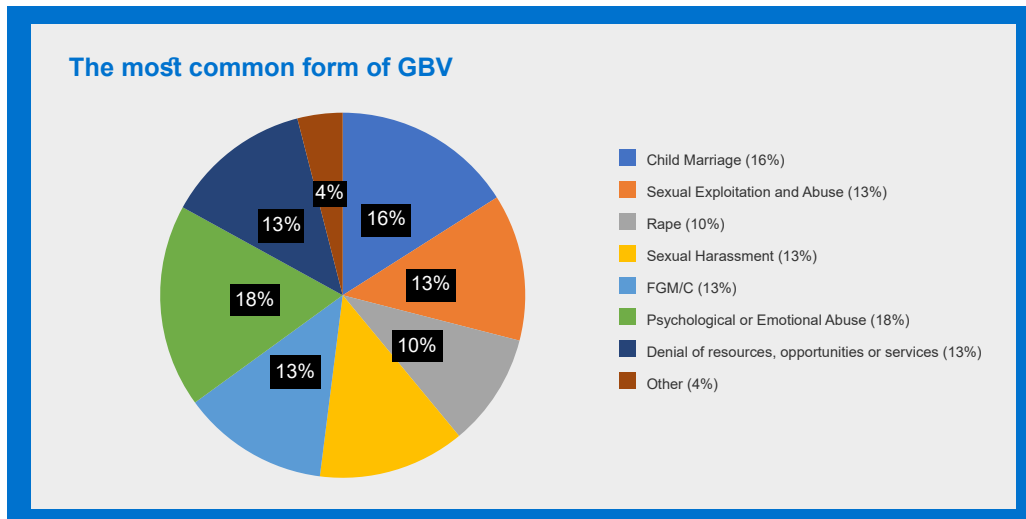
8. Displaced and disabled adolescents face increased risks and barriers to protection.

9. In both localities, a majority of adolescent boys and girls (71.7%) reported experiencing feelings of "sometimes feeling safe" and "sometimes feeling unsafe." Additionally, 23.3% indicated that they felt unsafe, while only 5% stated that they felt safe in their living environment.



The adolescent boys and girls reported that the most common form of gender-based violence (GBV) in both localities was as follows:

- The top one is psychological or emotional abuse, then child marriage, followed by sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, FGM & denial of resources, opportunities, or services, and lastly rape.



In Tawilla and Dar el Salam, 88.3% of adolescent boys and girls reported being aware of where to report incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) to receive support. Conversely, 11.7% indicated that they did not know where to report such incidents. Among those who knew where to report, the following channels were mentioned as the most common: community leaders (35%), police stations (21.6%), and family members (15%).

Additionally, health facilities (6.67%), organizations, friends, and religious leaders were also noted as potential avenues for support.

Access to the services

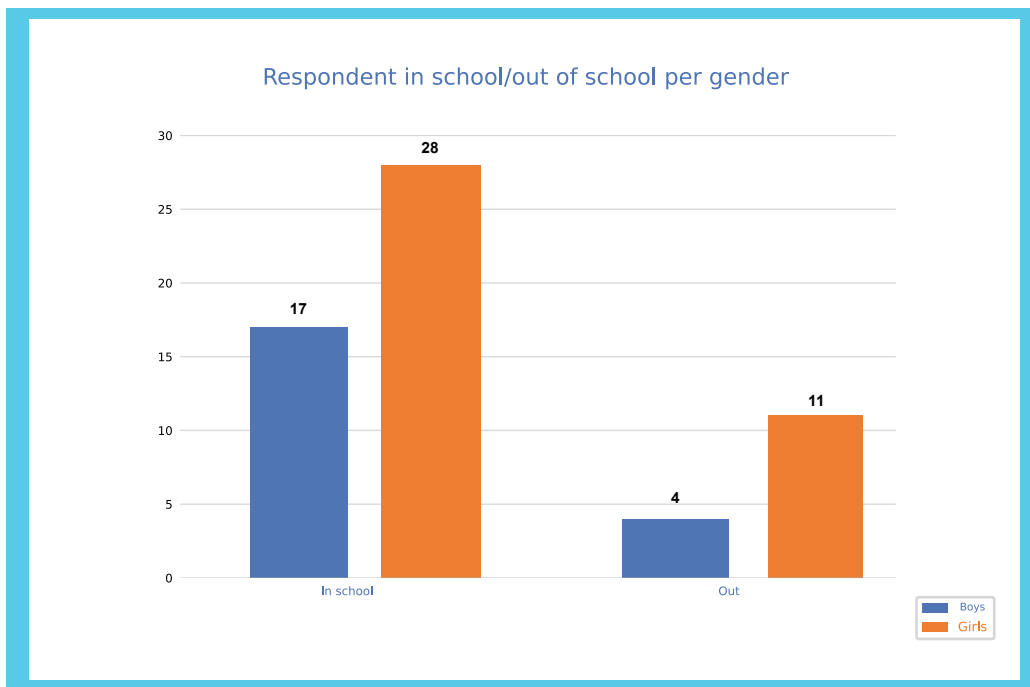
1. Girls access food and hygiene items from distribution centers and markets; however, these spaces lack privacy and personalized support.
2. Hygiene supplies are often inadequate, typically limited to soap, and dignity kits are not provided regularly.
3. Health services are minimal, with limited psychosocial support and no comprehensive care available for survivors of violence.
4. Health facilities are primarily non-functional, lacking doctors, essential medications, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services. Only 3.3% of the girls and boys have access to contraception.
5. Some of the girls do not have access to dignity kits, menstrual hygiene products, or safe and private sanitation facilities. Only 3.3% of girls have access to menstrual supplies.
6. Access to youth-friendly environments, psychosocial care, and organized activities remains inadequate for both boys and girls.



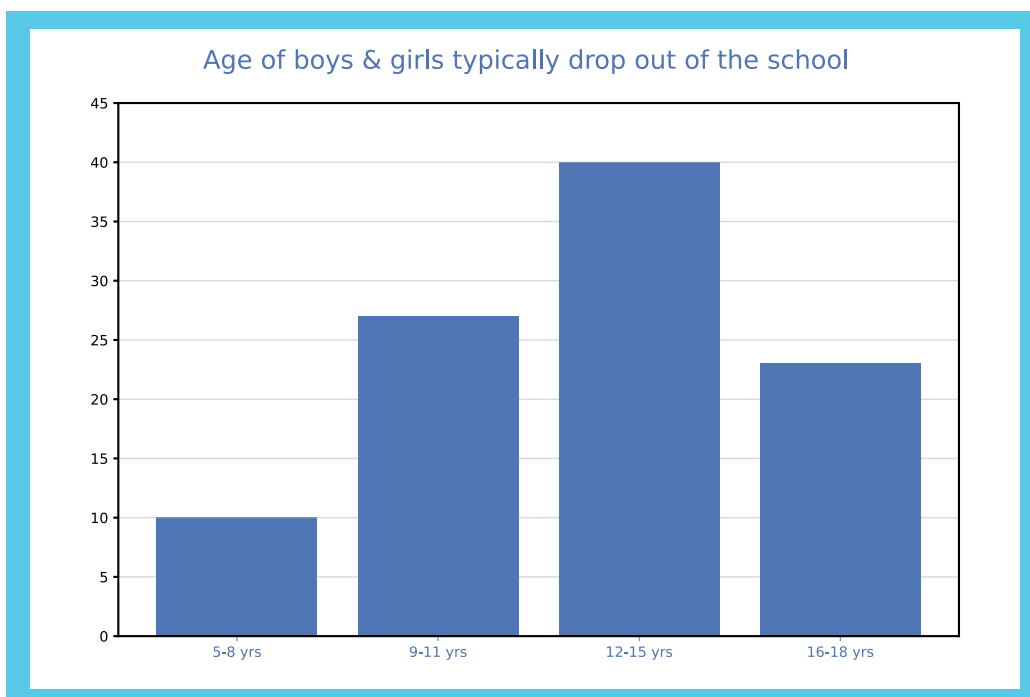
Education

1. Overcrowding of the functional learning spaces
2. Occupation by IDPs in the learning spaces
3. Lack of teachers
4. Lack of education supplies for both students and teachers.
5. Girls encounter additional barriers such as early marriage, caregiving responsibilities, and unsafe travel conditions.
6. Boys are often removed from school to work, which contributes to high dropout rates and child labour.
7. There are no extracurricular or recreational programs, leaving a significant gap in opportunities that nurture and foster the vibrant development of adolescents. This absence creates an environment where young minds miss out on enriching experiences that enhance their social skills, creativity, and personal growth.
8. Formal education options for girls are virtually nonexistent.
9. Some girls attend informal religious schools (khalawas) or study at friends' homes, but these settings lack structure and female teachers.
10. Boys also experience disruptions in their education due to economic hardships and instability. The quantitative data indicate that 75% of respondents are out of school and 25% are in school.





65% total girls (46.7% in school & 18.3% out of school) and 35% total boys (28.3% in school & 6.7% out of school).



The reasons for dropping out of school are as follows: 30% reported issues related to chores at home, 3.3% cited school and uniform fees, 6.7% mentioned a lack of transport and the long distance to school, and 5% noted a lack of menstrual hygiene items. Additionally, 5% expressed safety concerns. The majority, 45%, indicated other reasons for dropping out, which included working on farms, getting married, the absence of schools in the area, no child-friendly spaces, no upper grade levels in the schools, and a dislike for learning.

Livelihoods and Daily Activities

1. Girls aged 14-19 & 20-24 carry out heavy domestic responsibilities and engage in small-scale trading to support their families.
2. Boys (14-19) partake in marginal economic activities, such as trading peanuts and milk, but they face high levels of unemployment and idle routines.
3. Both groups experience food insecurity and lack access to dignified employment opportunities.
4. Girls manage household chores and small-scale trading, while boys engage in informal labour, including providing water from the water point and market work.
5. Both groups express feelings of frustration, stress, and a lack of purpose due to limited opportunities.
6. Economic hardship has resulted in early marriage as a survival mechanism.



Mental Health and Social Well-being

1. Young men aged 10-14 experience psychological distress resulting from family breakdowns, violence, displacement and a lack of purpose in life
2. Girls endure emotional strain due to caregiving responsibilities and social isolation excluded from societal roles.
3. Both genders express a strong desire for safe spaces, recreational activities, and peer support.
4. There is limited availability of psychosocial support, and stigma discourages many from seeking help.



Sprawling camps are home to hundreds of thousands of people in Tawila

Gender Roles and Relations

Traditional gender roles remain deeply entrenched in Dar El Salam and Tawilla, reinforced by cultural expectations and crisis-related pressures.

Girls and Young Women

- Expected to manage household responsibilities, care for siblings, and contribute to the family income.
- Faces strict mobility restrictions and must obtain male permission to leave the home.
- Experiences social control over dress, behavior, and communication, including limitations on phone ownership, public presence, and interactions with boys.
- Excluded from leadership roles and community planning, although young women express interest in participating.
- Restricted in mobility and public engagement; requires male permission to leave home.

Boys and Young Men

- Young males are often expected to be strong, responsible, and protective, despite having limited job opportunities.
- They engage in informal labor and face pressure to support their families financially.
- While they enjoy greater freedom of movement and social interactions, they are often discouraged from participating in domestic tasks.
- Young males are frequently excluded from formal decision-making due to their age, yet they are eager to contribute their ideas and take on leadership roles.
- Unlike girls, they are allowed to travel alone and stay out at night.

Gendered Expectations and Opportunities

- Girls are often marginalized in community planning and are rarely heard in public forums.
- Boys are perceived as more capable and are provided with leadership opportunities, although they also face challenges due to their age and lack of support.
- Both genders express a desire for joint participation, equal treatment, and safer environments.



Plan staff member checks on women at IDP gathering site in Tawila, North Darfur

Social Status and Inequality

- Girls are often marginalized in community planning and are rarely heard in public forums.
- Boys are perceived as more capable and are provided with leadership opportunities, although they also face challenges due to their age and lack of support.
- Both genders express a desire for joint participation, equal treatment, and safer environments.
- Displacement, disability, and ethnicity affect access to services and protection.
- Girls with disabilities encounter significant barriers to education, healthcare, and mobility.
- Boys are often expected to be resilient and self-reliant, which can conceal their vulnerabilities.

Decision-making and participation

- 6.7% of adolescent boys and girls reported having their own money that they can decide how to use, while 83.7% said they do not. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with these adolescents revealed that girls must obtain permission from a male to travel or go out and should be accompanied by someone.
- 51.7% of adolescent boys and girls stated that they feel comfortable participating in mixed-sex activities, while 48.3% said they do not.



Woman carries home humanitarian aid distributed by Plan International

Needs and Priorities For Girls and Young Women

1. Create safe spaces exclusively for girls and establish women's centers.
2. Provide dignified hygiene products and support for menstrual health.
3. Enhance access to formal education by increasing the number of female teachers and improving safety in school infrastructure.
4. Expand services for gender-based violence (GBV) response, including legal assistance, psychosocial support, and medical care.
5. Hire female service providers to foster comfort and build trust.
6. Encourage girls' participation in community decision-making and the design of programs.

For Boys and Young Men

1. Establish youth clubs, sports programs, and vocational training opportunities.
2. Address mental health by implementing community-based support systems.
3. Promote positive masculinity and raise awareness about gender equality.
4. Provide hygiene kits, sexual and reproductive health education, and mental health support.
5. Combat child labor by offering income-generating alternatives and re-entry programs for schools.
6. Involve boys in community consultations and peacebuilding efforts.



Thousands of children are living in precarious conditions in Tawila

Cross-Cutting Priorities

1. Improve infrastructure, including lighting, barriers, health centers, and schools.
2. Promote gender-inclusive decision-making and program design.
3. Facilitate joint dialogues and peer-led initiatives to foster cooperation.
4. Utilize preferred communication channels such as videos, events, community leaders, and informal gatherings.
5. Build and equip schools closer to residential areas, ensuring they have safe latrines and food provisions.
6. Establish mobile health units and integrate sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) into general health outreach.
7. Raise awareness about gender-based violence (GBV), early marriage, and gender equality through community sessions.
8. Improve service accessibility for adolescents with disabilities and marginalized groups.

Recommendations

Protection and GBV Response

- Establish girl-only safe spaces and women's centers to provide protection, psychosocial support, and privacy.
- Strengthen GBV reporting channels through community protection networks and local administration.
- Expand medical and legal services for survivors, including mobile clinics and legal aid.
- Raise awareness on GBV, early marriage, and harmful practices through community sessions and youth-led campaigns.
- Engage boys and men in GBV prevention and gender equality efforts.

Health and SRHR

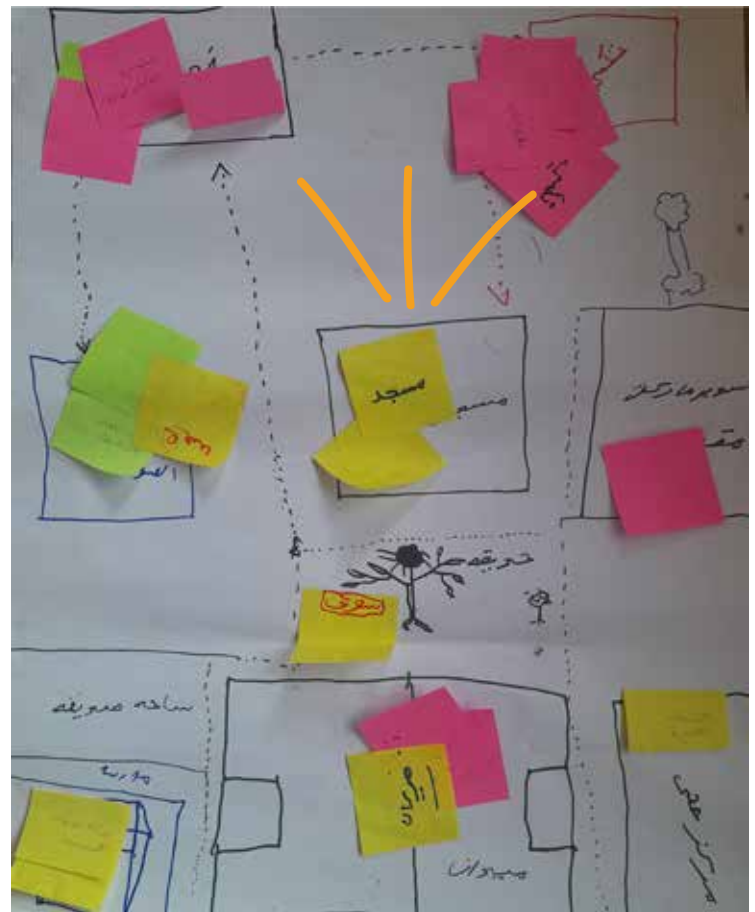
- Build and equip health centers with qualified staff, dignity kits, and SRHR materials.
- Provide mobile health units and shelter-based education on hygiene, reproductive health, and mental well-being.
- Ensure inclusive access for adolescents with disabilities and marginalized groups.
- Integrate SRHR education into general health outreach and school programs.

Education

- Construct schools near residential areas with safe latrines, menstrual hygiene facilities, and food provision.
- Recruit and train teachers, especially female educators, to support girls' learning.
- Distribute school supplies and organize structured activities to motivate attendance.
- Support re-entry programs for out-of-school youth, including vocational and informal education.
- Monitor school safety and provide transportation or local authority oversight.

Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment

- Create youth clubs and vocational training centers for boys and girls.
- Support small businesses run by adolescent girls through microgrants and mentorship.
- Provide income-generating alternatives to reduce child labor and economic exploitation.
- Include adolescents in market-based programs and community development initiatives.



Community mapping with adolescent girls-Tawilla locality

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

- Expand access to PSS services through hospitals, friendly spaces, and mobile outreach.
- Organize peer support groups and recreational activities to reduce stress and isolation.
- Train service providers in adolescent mental health and trauma-informed care.

Participation and Decision-Making

- Facilitate joint dialogues between boys and girls to promote cooperation and mutual understanding.
- Include adolescents in community consultations and program design processes.
- Organize open days, peer-led forums, and youth councils to strengthen young voices.
- Use preferred communication channels videos, events, and community leaders, to engage youth effectively

Key Lessons

- Girls face high protection risks.
- Limited access to education & services.
- Strong gender norms restrict mobility.
- Community support systems are overstretched.



Plan staff member engages with some of the children in Tawila

Context Challenges

- Ongoing conflict & displacement.
- Poverty and food insecurity.
- Early marriage and GBV risks.
- Weak access to health & learning spaces



Conclusion

The Rapid Gender Analysis in Tawilla and Dar El Salam localities reveals profound gender- and age-specific vulnerabilities among adolescent girls and boys driven by displacement, insecurity, and limited access to essential services. Protection concerns are widespread, with girls facing heightened risks of gender-based violence, early and forced marriage, sexual exploitation, and restricted mobility, while boys are increasingly exposed to child labor, violence, and economic pressure. Feelings of insecurity are common across both genders, reflecting unsafe environments and weak protective infrastructure.

Access to basic services remains critically inadequate. Health facilities are largely non-functional, with minimal psychosocial support, limited sexual and reproductive health services, and insufficient care for survivors of violence. Gaps in hygiene supplies, menstrual health materials, and youth-friendly services disproportionately affect girls and contribute to dignity and health challenges. Adolescents with disabilities and displaced youth face compounded barriers to protection and service access.

Education systems are severely disrupted, with high rates of school dropout due to closure of school more than three years, overcrowding, lack of teachers and materials, insecurity, poverty, and harmful coping mechanisms. Girls face additional barriers linked to early marriage and caregiving responsibilities, while boys are often withdrawn from school to support household income, reinforcing cycles of child labor and poverty.

Livelihood opportunities for adolescents are extremely limited, leading to frustration, stress, and a lack of purpose. Deeply entrenched gender norms further marginalize girls from decision-making and leadership, while boys face expectations to provide without adequate opportunities or support.

Key Advocacy Messages

- **Adolescent girls face extreme protection risks and urgently need safe spaces.**

Girls in Tawilla and Dar El Salam are exposed to high levels of GBV, early and forced marriage, and restricted mobility. Establishing girl-only safe spaces, improving lighting and security, and strengthening community protection mechanisms must be an immediate priority.

- **GBV prevention and survivor-centered response services are critically under-resourced.**

Despite awareness of reporting pathways, stigma, fear, and weak services prevent survivors from accessing care. Investment is needed in confidential, survivor-centered GBV services, including psychosocial support, medical care, legal assistance, and trained female service providers.

- **Education access for adolescents is collapsing and requires urgent restoration.**

Three-quarters of adolescents are out of school due to insecurity, poverty, lack of teachers, and harmful coping strategies. Reopening and expanding safe, accessible learning spaces—especially for girls—along with female teachers, learning materials, and school feeding is essential to prevent early marriage and child labor.

- **Adolescents need livelihood pathways to prevent negative coping mechanisms.**

Economic hardship is pushing boys into hazardous labor and girls into early marriage. Age-appropriate skills training, income-generating opportunities, and school re-entry programs are vital to restore dignity and hope.

- **Mental health and psychosocial support must be integrated into all adolescent programming.**

Displacement, violence, and uncertainty are causing significant psychological distress among boys and girls. Community-based psychosocial support, peer groups, and recreational activities should be scaled up.

- **Adolescents must be meaningfully included in decision-making.**

Girls and boys consistently express a desire to participate in program design, community dialogue, and peacebuilding. Inclusive, gender-responsive participation strengthens protection outcomes and program effectiveness.

- **Disability-inclusive and gender-responsive services are non-negotiable.**

Adolescents with disabilities and marginalized groups face compounded exclusion. All humanitarian interventions must be accessible, inclusive, and tailored to diverse adolescent needs.

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Tarsin residents register to receive aid from Plan International



Until we are all equal

About Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child but know this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion, and discrimination. And it is girls who are most affected.

Working together with children, young people, supporters, and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges girls and vulnerable children face. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and we enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national, and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 85 years, we have rallied other determined optimists to transform the lives of all children in more than 80 countries.

We won't stop until we are all equal.

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