

Overview of participatory action research with feminist and women-led organisations

PARTNERS

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In 2021, the Women's Refugee Commission, Rozaria Memorial Trust, and King's College London set out to engage feminist and women-led civil society organisations, experts, and practitioners to learn how best to enhance coordination and collaboration with humanitarian actors to expedite progress towards ending child marriage and supporting already married girls within and across the humanitarian system in East Africa. This brief gives an overview of participatory action research that has been undertaken to support an iterative process of reflection amongst 80 grassroots actors in Eastern Africa working with feminist or women-led organizations that engage in child marriage prevention and/or response efforts with crisis-affected communities in the region.

RESEARCH METHODS

Through the initiative's multi-stage participatory action research process (See Figure 1), the voices and experience of feminist actors and their understandings of gender transformation and patriarchy were elevated to advance discussions on durable solutions to child marriage that are equity driven, and culturally and contextually grounded:

- The systematic scoping review (completed July 2021) provided an enhanced understanding on aspects of successful child marriage interventions that work to prevent child marriage in both humanitarian and development settings and across the globe.
- A series of interactive online workshops (completed October 2021) facilitated rich reflection and discussion between East African actors on programming and collaboration across sectors and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; the evidence from this stage provided a critical foundation for designing the Delphi survey rounds.
- The Delphi surveys (completed December 2021, March 2022, and May 2022) were administered to participants to identify shared priorities, divergences, and gaps in practice. Each survey contained questions about key enablers and barriers to addressing child marriage in East Africa, as well as key enablers and barriers to collaborative working across sectors and across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. Through engaging with the same participants over three rounds, we were able to ascertain levels of consensus around each of these enablers and barriers, and their prioritisation for action to successfully address child marriage across East Africa in the future.
- At the end of the research phase, two in-depth interviews with key actors in the region were undertaken to discuss the implications of the findings for addressing child marriage, from a feminist perspective.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The key findings from the research can be found within a series of thematic briefings focused on education; justice; awareness raising; economic empowerment and livelihoods; community engagement in programming design and implementation; gender transformative approaches; safe spaces and peer-to-peer education; sexual and reproductive health and rights; and collaboration across sectors and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.



FIGURE 1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

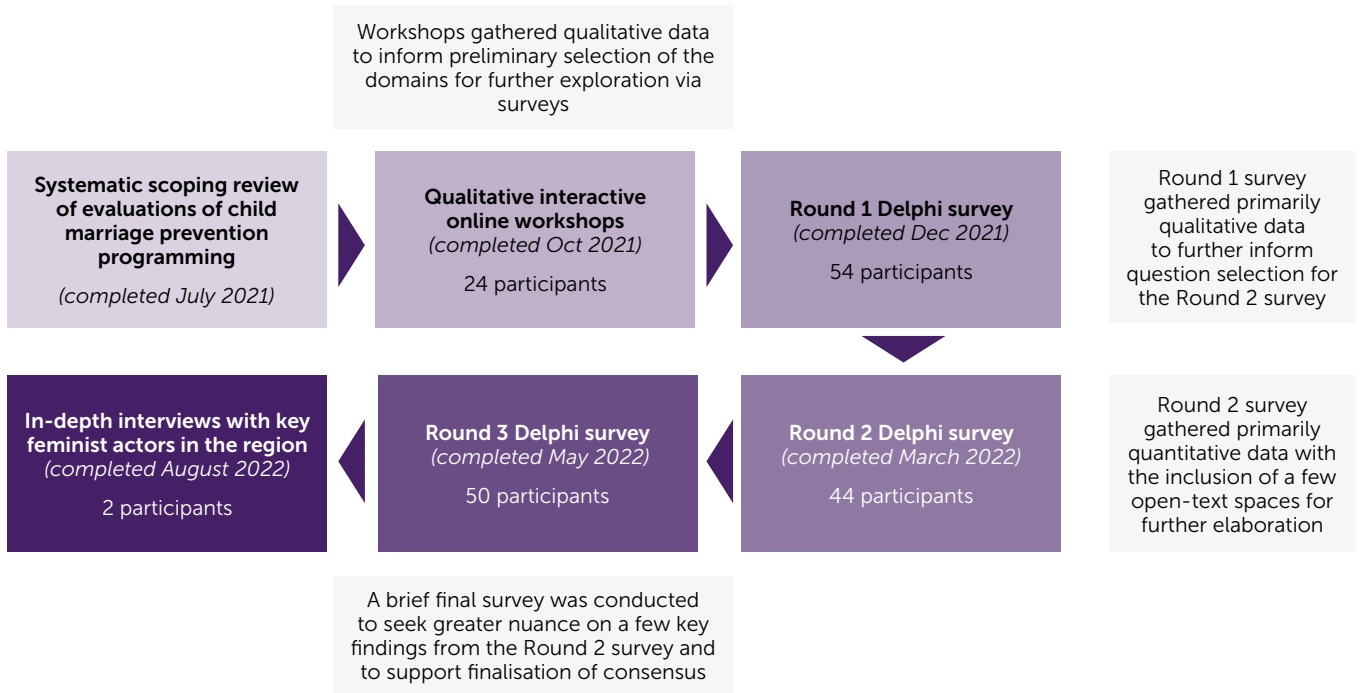
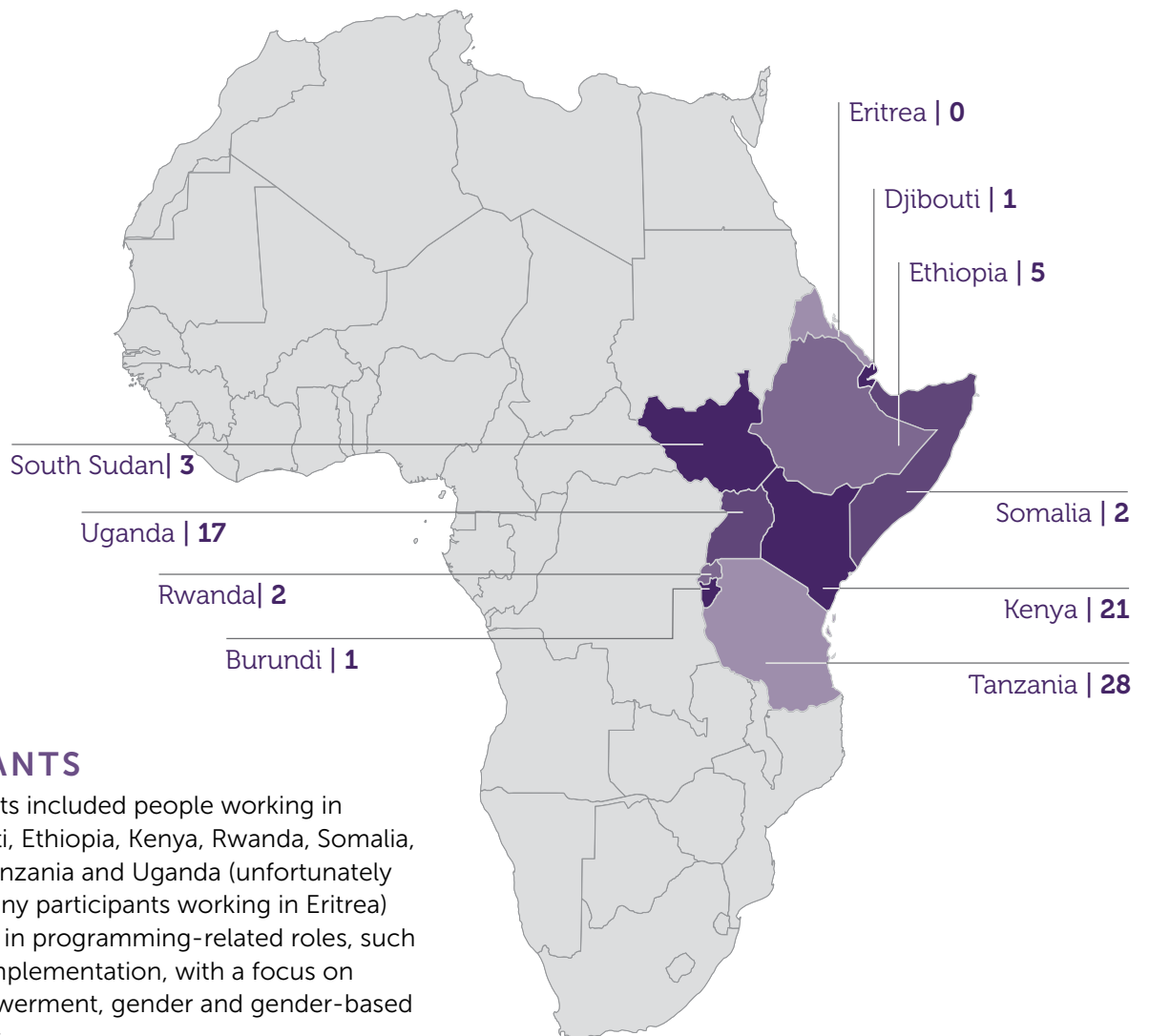


FIGURE 2. NUMBER OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS, BY COUNTRY



PARTICIPANTS

Study participants included people working in Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (unfortunately we did not get any participants working in Eritrea) who specialised in programming-related roles, such as design and implementation, with a focus on women’s empowerment, gender and gender-based violence sectors.