

# Gender-Based Needs Assessment of Marawi Siege Meranao Idps in Iligan City, Southern Philippines: Implications for Sustainable Intervention Programs

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is an examination of the gender-based needs of the displaced Maranao families affected by the 2017 Marawi Siege who are still in Iligan City at the time of the survey in March to July 2019. This study included 144 internally displaced people (IDPs) residing in unrecognized evacuation centers, renting, or staying with relatives. Findings show that the IDPs suffered from the collateral damage of war, living in extreme poverty due to the absence of livelihood opportunities. To survive, they resorted to reducing their food intake, borrowing from relatives, or sending their children to live with relatives. Some Meranao children are seen doing child labor, a sight not seen prior to the siege. They were not prioritized for support and services, as they are staying in spaces defined by the government as private areas. Regardless of gender and age, the IDPs generally need shelter, livelihood assistance, food, and health care to bounce back. They need a sustainable, culture-sensitive intervention program to aid their recovery.

**Keywords:** conflict, gender, internal displacement, ISIS militants, Marawi siege, Meranao,

## INTRODUCTION

The 5-month-long Marawi siege, which started on May 23, 2017, was the most protracted conflict in terms of intensity and continuous duration that has happened in the history of conflicts in Southern Philippines. This war has been the outcome of the radicalization of Muslims in Mindanao, which resulted in violent extremism initiated by Islamic jihadists (specifically by the Abu Sayyaf group led by Isnilon Hapilon and the Maute brothers of Lanao del Norte, Abdullah and Omarhayam) in alliance with transnational ISIS fighters. It is the first urban warfare engaged in by the military and police forces in the Philippines, which lasted for 148 days. This is a war of great magnitude that killed more than 1,100 people, including 165 soldiers (Ranoco, 2017). The government forces also rescued 1,780 hostages (Bondoc, GMA News Online, October 22, 2017). The initial displacement count as of September 02, 2017, registered 78,466 families or 359,680 individuals who received Disaster Assistance Family Access Card (DAFAC) (DSWD DROMIC Report #97, 2017). Sadly, half of these displaced individuals are children. It has to be noted that around 83% of these IDPs are not housed in the 16 evacuation centers managed by DSWD located in various cities and provinces in Mindanao.

The prolonged stay of the IDPs in their current evacuation sites is indeed physically, economically, and emotionally costly. Protection of women, children, and the elderly against gender-based violence and other forms of difficult circumstances cannot be guaranteed in an unhealthy and cramped environment where facilities, food security, and other provisions are lacking. For instance, DAFAC is the lifeline of the IDPs, and most of those housed in CBECs cannot easily access it. Without the DAFAC, children and their families would not be eligible to receive humanitarian assistance.

During displacement, married women become overburdened as they have to continue serving their maternal roles while they keep their family intact amidst the crisis (Ponce, 2006). In prolonged displacement, particularly in an urban area, and in the context of the Meranao community, a study like this may yield a wealth of information that is significant for understanding the gender issues that emerge in an emergency. This information

helps design sustainable intervention plans that are gender-, age-, and culture-sensitive, enabling local government units, humanitarian and line agencies, and other stakeholders to respond, prepare/prevent, and mitigate any disaster of this nature and magnitude in the future.

### Study Objectives

In general, this study seeks to examine the gender needs of the Maranao IDPs found in community-based evacuation centers in Iligan City who are survivors of the May 23, 2017, Marawi siege. They are those who still stay in evacuation camps and cannot be sent back to Marawi City since their original abodes are located in ground zero, the site of the 24 mostly affected barangays by the intensive firefights of the pro-ISIS militant group and the Philippine military and police forces. They have been involuntarily situated in CBECs for more than two years already, and assistance from various local and humanitarian organizations has already terminated.

Specifically, this study seeks to obtain information on the following:

1. Assess the conditions of the evacuees in the evacuation centers.
2. Determine the different needs of the evacuees -men, women, children, and the elderly;
3. Describe the sustainability of the intervention programs being provided to the evacuees.
4. Present suggestions and recommendations for sustainable gender- and culture-sensitive intervention programs for the evacuees.

### METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the community evacuation centers in Iligan City, which are not under the direct supervision of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The qualified research participants originated in the 24 barangays in Marawi City declared to be situated in ground zero. These barangays are as follows: Bangolo, Madaya 1, Madaya 2, Lumbaca Madaya, Daguduban, Wawalayan, Wawalayan Marinaut, Wawalayan East, Marinaut, Marinaut East, Lilod Madaya, Kapantaran, Caloocan West, Sabala a Manao, Sabala Manao Proper, Norhaya Village, Moncado Colony, Moncado Kadingilan, Datu Naga, Dansalan, Datu sa Dansalan, Caloocan Marinaut, Bubong Madaya, and Marinaut West.

A total of 144 research participants were included in the study, representing the IDP population currently living in Iligan City, distributed across the following barangays: Ubaldo Laya, Tambacan, Tominobo, Tubod, Hinaplanon, among others. Key Informant Interviews (KII) were also conducted with camp focal persons, NGO staff, and representatives of Task Force Bangon Marawi (TBFM). A focus group discussion was also held with 10 IDP leaders and staff from a non-governmental organization (NGO), including five women and five men.

The data-gathering instruments used in this study are the following: a survey questionnaire (124 respondents), a key informant interview guide (10 informants), and a focus group discussion guide (10 participants). Direct observation was also being employed at each site to understand the patterns of behavior and conditions of evacuees, including the dangers and hazards they face in the evacuation centers.

Data generated from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The qualitative data from the key informants and focus group discussions were processed and analyzed according to the themes that emerged from participants' responses. Participants' consent was sought prior to proper data collection.

## The Research Location Maps

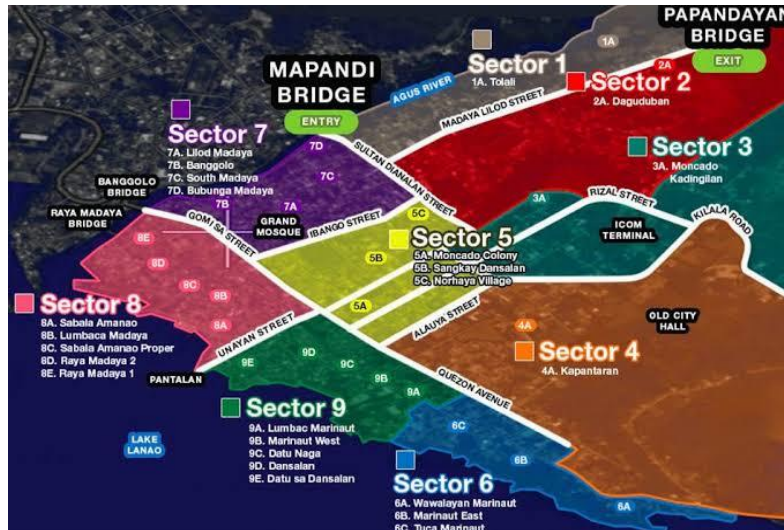


Figure 1. Map of Iligan City indicating the barangays covered in the study. (Source: Google Map)

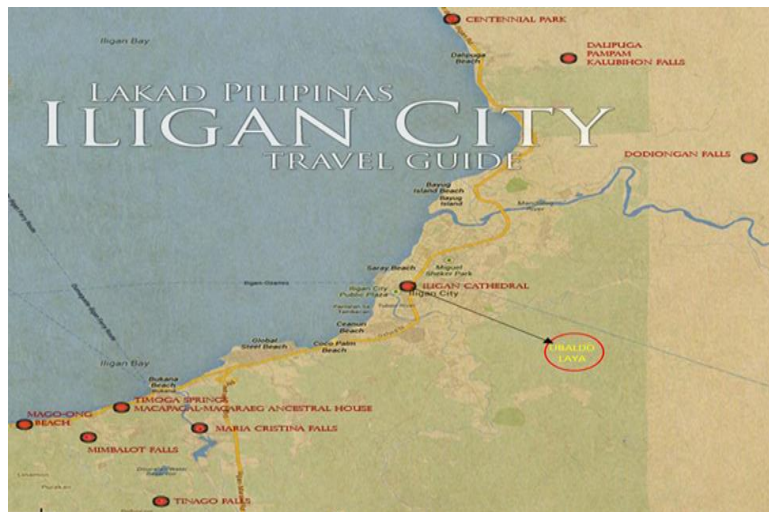


Figure 2. Map of Marawi City indicating the main Battle Area, the site of “ground zero,” comprising 24 barangays. (<https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/10/16/19/for-ground-zero-idps-in-marawi-theres-no-going-back>)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Age, Sex, and Marital Status Respondents

The data for the brief profile of the 124 survey respondents are presented here. Regarding age, the modal age bracket is 21-30 years, with a mean of 35 years. Table 1 shows the age distribution of respondents, indicating that they are more represented in the younger age brackets (21-50 years old), comprising 71%, than in the 51 years old and above age bracket (25%). These respondents are predominantly female (67.7%). They are generally married (79%), while a few are widowed (13 cases or 10.5%), five are separated (4%), and 3 (2.4%) are divorced (see Table 1).

### Educational Attainment

The respondents are highly educated (see Table 1), with 66% having a high school education or higher. In fact, 24.2% finished college, 22.6% completed high school, and 19.4% have a college education. Inversely, the rest are less educated, especially those who only obtained elementary education (14.5%), primary (3 cases), and kindergarten (3 cases). Four cases (4) also registered to have no formal education.

Table 1. Respondents' Age, Sex, and Marital Status

Response	f	%
<b>Age</b>		
20 yrs. old and below	2	1.6
21 - 30 yrs. old	32	25.8
31 - 40 yrs. old	31	25.0
41 - 50 yrs. Old	25	20.2
51 - 60 yrs. old	17	13.7
61 - 70 yrs. old	8	6.5
71 yrs. old & above	6	4.8
No Response	3	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>35</b>	
<b>Sex</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	40	32.3
Female	84	67.7
	124	100
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Single	5	4
Married	98	80
Widowed	13	10
Separated	5	4
Divorced	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Education</b>		
Kindergarten 1 & 2	3	2.4
Primary (Grade 1 - 4)	3	2.4

Elementary (Grade 5 - 6)	18	14.5
High School Level	14	11.3
High School Graduate	28	22.6
College Level	24	19.4
College Graduate	30	24.2
None:	4	3.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>

### Address in Marawi City Before the Siege

The top 7 barangay origins of the respondents while they were in Marawi City prior to the siege were the following: Brgy.Marinaut (21.8%), Brgy.Moncado Cadingilan (19.4%), Brgy.Lilod Madaya (Poblacion) (16.1%), Brgy.Raya Madaya (8.9%), Brgy. Daguduban (7.2%), Brgy. Dansalan (6.4%), and Brgy. Banggolo (6.4%). These barangays are all listed as the most affected areas (MAAs), including the rest of the barangays, notably Sabala Manao Proper (4 cases), Brgy. Bobong Madaya (3 cases), Brgy. Lumbaca Mandaya (3 cases), Brgy.Datu Naga (1 case), and Brgy. Saduc Proper (1 case). These are all presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Address in Marawi Before the Siege

<b>Response</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Brgy. Marinaut, Marawi City	27	21.8
Brgy.Moncado, Cadingilan, Marawi City	24	19.4
Brgy.Lilod Madaya (Poblacion), Marawi City	20	16.1
Brgy.Raya Madaya, Marawi City	11	8.9
Brgy. Daguduban, Marawi City	9	7.2
Brgy. Dansalan, Marawi City	8	6.4
Brgy. Banggolo, Poblacion, Marawi City	8	6.4
Sabala Manao Proper, Marawi City	4	3.2
Brgy. Bobong Madaya, Marawi City	3	2.4
Brgy. Lumbaca Mandaya, Marawi City	3	2.4
Brgy.Datu Naga, Marawi City	1	0.8
Brgy. Saduc Proper, Marawi City	1	0.8
Others ( Bangon, Tolali, Papandayan Caniogan)	5	4.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>



## Address in Iligan City

Iligan is the nearest city to Marawi, where the IDPs can move during the height of the conflict. However, it is sad to note that they have been stranded here for more than 2 years since the start of the May 23, 2017, Marawi Siege because of the magnitude of damage in their original barangays in the ground zero. The exodus of the IDPs to Iligan and their current location also speaks well of the Meranao enclaves in the city. They are mainly located in the following sites in Iligan: Tambacan, Toril (Islamic dormitory) in Merila, Ubaldo Laya, Barangay Tubod, particularly in the one-hectare Lomondot Compound, Barangay Mahayahay, Ceanuri Village, Tomas Cabili, where some IDPs are still living in the madrasah (Arabic school) building. The barangays mentioned currently have a considerable number of Meranao residents, indicating the ongoing in-migration of this group to the city, especially during the height of the conflict.

## Occupation Before and After the Marawi Siege

When occupations of IDP respondents (both husbands and wives) are compared before and after the siege, Table 3 below indicates that Meranao husbands are mainly businessmen, with 43.3% in this work category. However, their number dropped by 17% at the time of the study, as the conflict had destroyed their businesses in Marawi City, and they did not have the capital to start new businesses in Iligan City.

Inversely, there is a significant increase in the number of husbands who did not have work in Marawi City (5.1%) prior to the siege, compared to the number at present (22.9%), indicating job loss. Interestingly, the displacement also affected their place-based livelihood, especially among the fishermen of Lake Lanao. A sharp decline in their numbers is noted, as they could no longer engage in similar endeavors in Iligan City.

Furthermore, comparing the husband's job before and after the siege, a noticeable drop in the number of husband IDPs who claimed to have worked overseas, or as a construction worker, computer technician, Arabic teacher, or vendor, compared to those who make a living as drivers, which showed a slight increase. Obtaining a job through driving may be their way of adapting to the job available in Iligan City. The same trend is also evident among those in the formal sector. Husbands employed as security guards also increased from 1 case in Marawi City to 6 cases at present. The data show that the respondents' fragile economy has been severely affected by the conflict.

On the other hand, two significant trends are observed in the data regarding wives' occupations when they were still in Marawi and upon arriving in Iligan. One is being a housewife, which does not change dramatically with its percentage distribution. The other one is being engaged in business, which comprised 36.1% while they were still in Marawi before the siege, but this figure decreased by 23% at the time of the study. Apparently, job loss and economic vulnerability plagued the IDPs as a result of the conflict.

Table 3. Major Occupation/ Livelihood Before and After the Siege

Husband's Occupation	Before the Siege		After the Siege	
	f	%	f	%
Businessman/woman/ Business owner/ Rice Mill/ Owner of Sari-Sari Store	51	43.6	29	26.6
Driver	14	12.0	15	13.8
No Wife (Separated, Deceased)	8	6.8	7	6.4
Fisherman	6	5.1	3	2.8
Abroad (OFW)	4	3.4	3	2.8

Arabic Teacher/ Teaching ( <i>Iman</i> )	4	3.4	3	2.8
Construction Worker/ Carpenter	4	3.4	3	2.8
Vendor	3	2.6	2	1.8
Mechanics	2	1.7	2	1.8
House Husband	2	1.7	2	1.8
Technician (Computer)	2	1.7		.0
Retired Police/ Retired Lot ARMM	2	1.7		.0
Car Parts Shop Seller/ Selling Air Freshener	1	.9	1	.9
COMELEC Assistant	1	.9	1	.9
Security Guard	1	.9	6	5.5
Student	1	.9	1	.9
BJMP Officer	1	.9	1	.9
Employee			2	1.8
Others (Helper in Masjid; Brgy. Chairman; Furniture; Employee at Capitol; Labor; Farming; Any)	4	3.4	3	2.8
None/ No work	6	5.1	25	22.9
Total	117	100.0	109	100.0
Wife's Occupation	Before the Siege		After the Siege	
	f	%	f	%
Housewife	35	32.4	35	32.7
Businessman/woman/ Business owner	39	36.1	14	13.1
None/ No work	11	10.2	40	37.4
Teacher	6	5.6	5	4.7
Vendor	5	4.6	5	4.7
Dressmaking	3	2.8	2	1.9
Saleslady	2	1.9		0.0
Avon Dealer	1	0.9	1	0.9
Government Employee	1	0.9	1	0.9

Owner of Sari-Sari Store		0.0	2	1.9
Others (Car Parts Shop Seller; No Husband (Separated, Deceased); Waiter (Restaurant); Gardener; Self-employed; <i>Hilot</i> ; NGO worker (Plan International))	5	4.6	2	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Income Before the Marawi Siege and Current

The data in Table 4 indicate three trends in their monthly income while still in Marawi and at the time of their evacuation. One trend is that the conflict exacerbated the already poor situation of the 24.1% of respondents who are earning below P5,000 monthly while living in Marawi. Unfortunately, the number of those found in this category at the time of the study increased by 20.1%.

Another trend noted is the decrease in the number of IDPs with a monthly income of P55,000 and above, from 14 cases in Marawi before the siege to 2 cases upon staying in this city. The same observation is noted in other income brackets, though the difference might not be as significant as the one noted earlier. For instance, a decrease of about half is shown for those earning P30,000 to P35,999 (from 11 cases before to 5 cases after) and P25,000 to P29,999 (a dip from 6 cases before to 3 cases currently in Iligan City).

Moreover, there are 14 cases (before the siege and currently) that manifest stable income of P10,000 to P14,999, and a similar number (12 before the siege and 11 at present) that declare monthly income of P15,000 to P19,999. The data indicate that the armed conflict displaced people physically and financially. The vulnerable jobs are business- and related-occupations that are place-dependent, and any jolt that uproots their base would result in a downward spiral in income for the concerned individuals. The median range difference for both periods also changes from P15,000-19,999 while in Marawi to P10,000-14,999 upon their stay in Iligan.

Table 4. Estimated Family Monthly Income Before the Siege and Current

Estimated Family Monthly	Before the Siege		Present	
	f	%	f	%
Below Php 5,000.00	36	29.0	54	43.5
Php 5,001.00 - Php 9,999.00	8	6.5	7	5.6
Php 10,000.00 - Php 14,999.00	14	11.3	14	11.3
Php 15,000.00 - Php 19,999.00	12	9.7	11	8.9
Php 20,000.00 - Php 24,999.00	7	5.6	9	7.3
Php 25,000.00 - Php 29,999.00	6	4.8	3	2.4
Php 30,000.00 - Php 34,999.00	11	8.9	5	4.0
Php 35,000.00 - Php 39,999.00	2	1.6	4	3.2
Php 40,000.00 - Php 45,999.00	5	4.0	1	0.8
Php 46,000.00 - Php 49,999.00	2	1.6	1	0.8
Php 50,000.00 - Php 54,999.00	4	3.2		0.0



Php 55,000.00 & above	14	11.3	2	1.6
Support from children	2	1.6	5	4.0
None	1	0.8	8	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>

### Income Adequacy and Ways of Coping

As revealed in Table 5 below, six in 10 respondents (61.3%) admitted that their income is not adequate. The primary reasons cited are the lack of work or money (64.1%), children's schooling (25.6%), the absence of other sources of income (7.7%), and medical expenses/other needs (2.6%).

Their ways of coping with their inadequate income have been made possible through the support of their social networks -children/relatives or family (27.5%). They also employed economic coping strategies, such as taking a loan (15.7%) or squeezing their meager budgets (22.5%). Others received financial support as beneficiaries of the **Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program** (4Ps), engaged in small businesses, and some children also obtained temporary jobs, each of which accounted for 3 cases, respectively. Also, when relief goods were abundant, especially in the early part of their arrival in Iligan City, 2 cases admitted to having sold their relief goods to purchase other necessities, such as medicines, which were not available to them.

Their deplorable condition warrants them resorting to physical coping strategies, such as reducing food intake (5.9%), skipping meals (2.9%), or walking/hiking (3.9%) to while away the time. Older family members with young or school-age dependents often sacrifice themselves by eating less so the food on the table is given to the younger ones. Sadly, four respondents admitted they were forced to withdraw their children from school because their families could no longer provide for their needs.

The IDPs felt the direct economic impact of conflict in their lives—impoverishment. Based on the findings, there were already families who did not have sources of income even before the onset of conflict, and their displacement aggravated their abject condition even more.

Table 5. Income Adequacy and Coping Mechanisms for Inadequate Income

Response	f	%
<b>Whether Income is Adequate</b>		
Yes	48	38.7
No	76	61.3
Total	124	100
<b>Ways to cope with Income Inadequacy</b>		
Ask for support from children/relatives/or family	28	27.5
Tighten budget	23	22.5
Obtain Loan	16	15.7
Reduction of food intake	6	5.9

Deal by walking/hiking	4	3.9
Children stop schooling	4	3.9
Skip meals	3	2.9
Availment of 4Ps	3	2.9
Engage in a small business	3	2.9
Children obtain a temporary job	3	2.9
Hard work, patience, and sacrifice	3	2.9
Sell relief goods	2	2.0
Others	4	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

### Gender-Based Needs of IDPs

The following discussions highlight the specific needs of men, women, children, and the elderly as identified by all the respondents. The needs capture some general themes common across gender, although some diversities are also reflected in their responses.

#### Men

As indicated in Table 6, the top 5 priority needs of men IDPs include: 1. Permanent Shelter with 115 responses, 2.) Livelihood Assistance with 98 responses; 3.) Health Care/medical care with 65 responses 4.) Food and Nutrition with 66 responses, and 5.) Mosque with 56 responses.

These results indicate that men prioritize permanent shelter for their families, given that it has been more than 2 years since they have had a permanent abode. They also place importance on livelihood assistance to foster a sense of self-worth and maintain self-esteem as providers in the family. It is significant to note that the idea of having an income to support the family is closely tied to their perception of themselves as the family's head and provider.

Health care, or medical care, is the third-highest priority among men's needs, including free check-ups, medicines, and vitamins.

Again, the inadequacy of food is demonstrated in the table above, which ranks food and nutritional needs as the fourth priority. It should be noted that, as of the conduct of this study, no further food provisions have been given to the IDPs.

The fifth priority is the mosque because this is where Muslims pray, draw strength through prayer, and hear the words of God from their Alims (preachers) for guidance in coping with and surviving the present challenges in their lives.

Other needs include skills training for livelihoods, employment opportunities, carpentry tools, farm implements, and sewing machines. These needs of men have implications for their role as providers for the family's needs. Other needs are items of clothing such as underwear, hygiene kits, and footwear.

The least responses are on education, which means that men have no plans to go to school anymore but to earn a living to support their family, especially in this time of crisis due to the Marawi siege.

## Women

Similar to the first four priority needs of men, women articulated the need for the following: 1. Permanent shelter with 120 responses, 2.) Livelihood assistance with 95 responses, 3.) Health /medical care with 91 responses 4.) Food and Nutrition with 79 responses and 5.) Hygiene Kits with 82 responses.

Men and women differ only in the fifth priority because women often stay at home to pray while men go to the mosque. The hygiene kit also ranks as the fifth priority among women, as they use it for personal care.

If we try to compare the total number of responses for men and women based on the specific need, it indicates that although they have the exact top 4 priority needs, the data shows more responses in women's needs than in men's needs, such as shelter, healthcare/medical care, food, and nutrition. The figures suggest that women's prioritization reflects their experiences during displacement. Married women become overburdened during evacuation, as they have to continue serving their maternal roles while keeping their families intact amidst the crisis (Lanit et al., 2002; Ponce, 2006). Moreover, Tulsi Charan Bisht (2009), in her study in India, revealed that women's experiences of displacement and resettlement are qualitatively different from those of men. Accordingly, displacement not only resulted in physical displacement but also in women's disempowerment. Similar to shelter needs, women need more healthcare and nutrition, not only during the siege but daily, because studies emphasized that women are more prone to post-disaster disease, primarily as a result of poor nutritional status and poorer environmental conditions than men.

Other needs of women include skills training, employment opportunities, sewing machines, underwear and footwear, and makeup kits.

## Children

For the children's needs, again: 1.) Permanent shelter ranks as the top priority need with 95 responses, the same number of responses as healthcare need; 2.) Educational support for their children, such as scholarships, free tuition fees, school uniforms, and school supplies with 89 responses with 89 responses; 3.) Food and nutrition; 4.) Clothing for children and 5.) Toys, hairclips, and footwear received 68 responses.

The prioritization of respondents for health care or medical care needs for children implies the health condition of children affected by war and the necessity of health support. During displacement, children are more affected than adults and are more vulnerable to diseases and sickness.

Salient findings reveal \ that there are children who need livelihood assistance, with seven responses. Although this is against the law on child protection, it cannot be denied that, because of impoverished conditions and the necessity to survive, parents allow their children to earn income to support the family's needs. Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "the Child has the right to the best health care possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, and a safe environment and information to help the child stay well". However, this child's right cannot be guaranteed in times of conflict or war, because family members have a tacit obligation to help the family survive under harsh conditions. Children are silent victims of conflict whose rights have to be protected under any difficult circumstances. Children IDPs who are at the evacuation centers have absorbed negativities and harbor traumatic experiences, which can be abated through appropriate psychosocial interventions (Wessells, M.G., 1998)

## The Elderly

The respondents identified the following top 4 priority needs of the elderly: 1. Permanent Shelter with 97 responses; 2.) Healthcare/medical care, including medicines and vitamins; 3.) Mosque with 79 responses; 4.) Food and Nutrition with 71 responses. Other needs include hygiene kits, clothing, and footwear.

Having a permanent shelter is a basic need for every human being, and so it is identified by the majority of the respondents as the top priority across genders.

Health care/medical care, such as check-ups, maintenance vitamins, and medicines, is identified by respondents as a priority need for their elders.

Regarding livelihood assistance, the table shows only eight responses from older adults interested in it. Perhaps getting older and finding ways to earn an income is not their primary need. According to one participant of the FGD aged 69:

*“Matanda na ako at ayaw nang mga anak ko na mghanapbuhay pa ako, sila na lang daw ang bubuhay sa akin”* (I am old enough and my children do not want me to work, because according to them, they will be the ones to take care of my needs).’

Mosque ranked third among the elderly's priority needs, indicating the premium they place on their Islamic faith. The importance of religion in the daily life of the elderly Meranao reflects its relevance during crisis coping, especially in artificial or natural disasters.

Overall, the study's data show that the respondents' gender-based needs are generally practical in nature, as they are immediate and relate to what people need to satisfy their basic human needs. Human needs for shelter, food, nutrition, or sources of income are what they desire to remain afloat in their miserable condition. In contrast, the strategic gender needs that seek to change women's socio-economic and political status, gender equality, equity, and independence (Moser, 1989) are not prominently featured in the data generated. Awareness-raising to advance societal transformation by upholding the principle of gender equality in a male-dominated Meranao society is a process that requires long-term consciousness-raising and development planning. Also, during evacuation, the respondents generally think about economic survival and getting by, which explains the practical nature of their gender needs.

During an emergency context, Angela Ravens-Robert (2005) points out that “there is ‘no time’ to do gender work, as what is needed is rapid action, life-saving food, and material distribution. Performing nuanced analysis and targeting change is too cumbersome, complex, and time-consuming, indeed downright harmful to the ‘real work’ of saving lives.” This argument points out that there is a lack of concern about how conflict affects men and women in conflict situations, leading to a hazy understanding of the real gender needs of the IDPs.

Table 6. Specific Needs of Men, Women, Children, and the Elderly IDPs

Gender Needs	Number of Responses							
	(multiple responses)							
	Men		Women		Children		Elderly	
Response	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Permanent Shelter	115	19.2	120	14.4	95	15.5	97	23.4
Livelihood Assistance	98	16.3	95	11.4	7	1.0	8	1.9
Food and Nutrition	66	11.0	79	9.5	85	14.0	71	17.1
Health Care/ Free Check-ups/ medicines /vitamins	65	10.8	91	10.9	95	15.5	89	21.4
Mosque	56	9.3	73	8.8	15	2.5	79	19.0
Employment opportunities	55	9.2	43	7.1	0	0	0	0
Skills Training for Livelihood	45	7.5	69	8.3	0	0	0	0

Hygiene kits	10	1.7	82	9.9	63	10.4	37	8.9
Carpentry tools	31	5.2	16	1.93	0	0	0	0
Farm implements	18	9.0	13	1.5	2	0	0	0
Clothing / Underwear	17	2.8	53	6.34	88	14.5	15	3.6
Others: Footwear, toys/ hairclips	15	2.5	51	6.14	68	12.1	19	4.7
Sewing Machine	11	1.8	48	5.76	0	0	0	0
Education Support/ Scholarships	1	0.2	5	0.6	89	14.5	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>607</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>100</b>

### Gender-related Issues at the Evacuation Site

The following is the information obtained in this study with bearing on a plethora of gender issues confronting the IDPs at the evacuation location. Some of these issues are delicate, while the others are reflective of the stress and fatigue confronting the IDPs who have a prolonged stay in the current evacuation sites.

**Early Marriage of Children.** On the issue of resorting to early marriage of their children, it was witnessed by the informants that there had been cases like this that happened in the evacuation sites. Parents would give away their teenage girls to the groom to release their parental responsibility over a family member with whom they are obliged to feed, amidst their precarious situation. However, they believed that it was normal because it is part of their culture. The CPRA Marawi Displacement Report 2017 confirmed that young girls are exposed to vulnerable situations like forced marriages to older men.

**Rape.** One of the issues that surfaced during the rapid assessment of gender-based violence and child protection concerns undertaken in October 2017 indicates that 45 per cent of conflict-affected sites surveyed report girls who are affected by sexual violence or exploitation (CPRA Marawi Displacement Report, 2017).

In situations where uncertainties and confusion are overwhelming, such as conflict, moral order appears to be broken, demoralizing the community. According to Seifert (1993), the incidence of rape and sexual violence seemed to be a universal and widespread characteristic of warfare (Sivakumaran, 2010). The various layers of needs are inappropriately expressed using legitimate channels. Masculine domination over the weak, especially children and women, finds expression in times of war or conflict despite the articulation of their legal protection and the provision of safe spaces in chartered national and international documents.

### Line Agencies providing support to IDPs

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the lead agency in the emergency response stage during disasters, whether natural or man-made, as stipulated in the National Disaster and Risk Reduction and Management (NDRRM) Act of 2010. However, it is sad to note that the respondents are not prioritized for DSWD services, as they live in CBECs and are home-based, which is expected to be under the care of their host families. This assumption has not been the case among the majority of IDPs under study, as they are currently occupying abandoned religious buildings, as in the case of Toril, Purok 1, Ubaldo Laya. Some are also renting houses in various barangays in Iligan City and are waiting for government support. The longer IDP respondents remain at their current sites, the more miserable their condition becomes, since support from the DSWD has already stopped as of April 2018. The IDPs continuously suffer victimization due to conflict.

Other line agencies, such as the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Education, and Department of Health (DOH), among others, extended food and non-food relief items during the first six months after the Marawi Siege. However, the sustainability of their



support to the IDPs was inconsistent. The IDPs would have to scout for other means to survive once the support given to them by these agencies dwindled.

### **Support provided by Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)**

The respondents identified IMCC (Iligan Medical Center College), the Center for Community Extension and Social Development Services (ICESDEV), and MARADECA as NGOs helping the IDP community. Other private organizations were also mentioned, to which donations were made through Palawan Express and MLhuiller pawnshops. Though scanty, the support provided by NGOs and private organizations was valuable to the needy IDPs, who received food items, construction materials from MARADECA, clothing, financial and livelihood assistance, medicines and medical kits, psychosocial support, among others. In particular, among the trainings received by the respondents were stress debriefings to release and heal their trauma and anxiety during the Marawi crisis. Several studies have pointed out the adverse effects of conflict on the psychological well-being of the IDPs (OCHA, 2017; Briones, R.J., 2019; Medina, 2016).

Data from in-depth interviews with key informants reveal that service providers, including NGOs and personnel/staff of Task Force Bangon Marawi and DSWD, also experienced fatigue. The encounters of service providers with the IDPs, whether home-based or evacuation center-based, claiming assistance/services, were emotionally and psychologically draining. They absorbed field-based concerns while also being pressed by limited resources to meet the demands of the disgruntled IDPs.

### **Recommendations of IDPs for sustainable gender and culture-sensitive intervention programs**

The multi-layered concerns of the IDPs cut across the support and assistance of several agencies and actors engaged in post-conflict rehabilitation. The overlapping concerns of the IDP households that involve men, women, children, and the elderly are issues that carry more profound solutions, embracing the efforts of multiple stakeholders. The fragility and instability of Marawi City, the state's support in the post-conflict scenario, and the conditions of the IDPs awaiting reinstatement to their pre-conflict origins are painstakingly arduous. IDPs staying in the home-based evacuation centers who are groping in the dark as to what awaits them in the period of uncertainty are a reflection of the weak ability of the state and other stakeholders to reconstruct the community stricken by conflict. Thus, the gender issues and other concerns exacerbated their agonizing condition with the dwindling assistance of agencies primarily responsible for family survival during evacuation. However, while they are hard-pressed in their current situation, several gender issues have surfaced in their immediate circumstances, enumerated below.

#### **Gender and cultural insensitivity**

Being generally Muslim, the Meranao women wear conservative clothing. Their distinctive attire becomes their identity as they roam Marawi City and the neighboring cities. However, when they evacuated, they had brought nothing with them. So, when they were given relief clothing, they complained about the following:

The others also complained about the quality of the clothing received: "Donations like malong (tubular cloth), abaya (full-length outer garment worn by Muslim women), and prayer mat are second-hand." These narratives speak volumes about their feelings of being insulted, which affected their *maratabat*, or pride, as they expected to receive brand-new items to protect their sensitive egos, even as they were soliciting public support.

Also, since pork is a food taboo among Muslims, they complained that some groceries being distributed to them are "*haram*" (forbidden by Islam). They said that they cannot eat this food because they are Meranao Muslims. They hope that next time, food donors and disaster responders will be culturally sensitive when making relief donations.

#### **Culture-Sensitive Sustainable Livelihood**

As indicated in the succeeding table, the Meranao IDPs wanted capital for business. In general, Meranaos are businessmen, and their presence is visible in almost all cities in the Philippines. The usual livelihood they left



behind in Marawi City before the siege was small businesses, and they wanted to return to this line of work. As one IDP narrates, “I hope they will give a capital for a sari-sari store. *Nasanay kami sa Marawi na may work kahit sari-sari store ngayon na bo bored na kami dahil walang magawa, walang work.* (In Marawi, we had work at least in our sari-sari store. Now we are bored because we have no work)”. This is claimed by both male and female respondents, as indicated in the previous tables, indicating their needs.

Aside from engaging in business, the wives also wanted to develop dressmaking skills, and the males desired knowledge of driving. A few others also mentioned cooking, food processing, and management skills. Computer skills and welding were also taught. Unfortunately, there are complaints that only a few IDPs were selected for the training, and they felt bad about it. However, the need for livelihood support for IDPs shall be regularly evaluated and monitored to assess its sustainability.

The Meranaos, as a distinct ethnic group, displayed a unique character during the megadisaster that hit Marawi City. This is observed in the 83% of IDPs who opted to stay outside the evacuation centers at the height of the conflict, while the remaining 17% chose otherwise, according to DSWD data. Choosing to live outside the evacuation center could mean two things: either they have the means to rent a place, or they own a place somewhere where they could settle safely. Another is that they have reliable networks or families to host them during their evacuation. Those left without options are those who settled to live in the evacuation center, which carries a humble connotation of having a lower family status since nobody in the clan has ever extended valuable support to them. Family honor is anchored on the premium they place on *maratabat*- a strong sense of pride. According to Abbas (2015), *maratabat* “is about honor, ‘face,’ dignity, sense of shame, sense of pride, ethics, etiquette, protocol, and self-esteem. It is an age-old guide to social relations, individual and collective action”.

The fragile and sensitive nature of *maratabat* shapes one’s definition of propriety and decency, as well as the upkeep of personal or family honor, which is central to the culture of the Meranao. *Maratabat* is also entwined with their kinship system as they are clannish (Briones, 1984). During disasters, kin are obliged to help needy relatives as part of their social obligation and to maintain their *maratabat*. Hosting relatives during a crisis or extending them financial and social support are the typical examples of the intersection between *maratabat* and kinship.

The kinship network is not only an element of social organization but also a source of social capital that assists in a disaster situation. Family and kin are instrumental in the survival of most of the IDPs in Toril, despite being stalled in the same place for more than 2 years. This principle is also evident in the lives of the relocated families in Barangay Sagongsongan, Marawi City, as noted by Briones (2017). Social capital can also be viewed as a transformative tool that strengthens vertical and horizontal linkages and stimulates synergy, aiding the recovery process of IDPs.

The congestion, food scarcity, and deficiencies in basic services like water, electricity, and medicines for illnesses are consequences of the disaster of great magnitude, which exhausted the resources of local, national, and international humanitarian agencies. For instance, the IDPs during the Fukushima earthquake and subsequent radiation threats experienced difficulties while on evacuation due to congestion and limited relief resources. Evacuation centers were closed after 4 months, and evacuees were forced to transfer to transition shelters. The complex conditions at the evacuation centers were also felt by the evacuees, who were severely affected by Super Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban, Leyte. They faced a shortage of health facilities, including toilets and potable water. Indeed, the deplorable condition of IDPs in evacuation centers affected by the Marawi Crisis in the Lake Lanao area was reported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in August 2017. The report stated that:

... “Access to basic resources in some of the evacuation centres is limited; conditions are especially difficult for people with disabilities. Moreover, humanitarian actors had considerable difficulty gaining access and providing assistance to approximately 77,000 people who were displaced east of Lake Lanao” (p.6).

## CONCLUSION

What happened to the evacuees in the CBECs is a microcosm of the weak disaster preparedness both at the local and national levels. The Philippines implemented the DRRM Act in 2010 (RA 10121). However, the acid test whether the law has indeed allowed the people and local government units to effectively prepare and manage disasters, starting from evacuation up to recovery and eventually rehabilitation, remains problematic and weak based on the different artificial and natural disasters that occurred after the law was implemented

The current condition of the IDPs in CBECs depicts their continuous marginalization and discrimination, which are all forms of victimization. They have not recovered economically or socially, and they are detached from their strong community and religious networks. The war disengaged them from their happy union with their immediate families, as children have to be located elsewhere to find employment to escape poverty and misery at the CBECs. The findings describe the experiences of ordinary Maranao victims of the 2017 Marawi siege, their deplorable human suffering, loss of livelihoods, and erosion of social relations with the separation of the IDPs from their community network.

The gender needs of the IDPs are generally practical. Men, women, children, and the elderly needed immediate economic support to survive while waiting to be relocated. However, they articulated a more participatory, inclusive, and sustainable intervention program that is sensitive to the Meranao culture in the government's plan for their reinstatement at ground zero. However, the gender dimension is not prominently figured out in the articulation of their aspirations for immediate rehabilitation. This may perhaps indicate that the gender agenda, although pronounced in the Women in Development and Nation Building Act (RA 7192) and in policies with budget allocation for gender and development programs, still has a long way to go. Targeting gender-strategic needs, paving the way for gender equality and empowerment, has to cut across cultures and practices to effect transformative change.

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