



'I'm Prepared': Equality for Refugee Women in the Return and Reintegration Context

Year 3 Learning Report

Prepared for Act for Peace, OfERR and TBC
Institute for Sustainable Futures

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Front cover: Protection and preparedness training for Karenni refugees funded by 'I'm Prepared' (Photo credit: 2019 – TBC); Refugee women's self-help groups in India (Photo credit: 2012 – OfERR/ ECHO Arjun Claire)

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About the authors

The Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF) is an interdisciplinary research and consulting organisation at the University of Technology Sydney. ISF has been setting global benchmarks since 1997 in helping governments, organisations, businesses and communities achieve change towards sustainable futures.

We utilise a unique combination of skills and perspectives to offer long term sustainable solutions that protect and enhance the environment, human wellbeing and social equity.

ISF acknowledges and respects the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians of Australia and the Gadigal peoples upon which the UTS City Campus now stands. We continue to value the generations of knowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples embed within our University and we pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

This document provides learnings from Year 3 research activities of the project “‘I’m Prepared’: Equality of Refugee Women in the Return and Reintegration Context” (I’m Prepared) funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s (DFAT) Gender Action Platform (GAP). ‘I’m Prepared’ is implemented in four country contexts. These countries are India and Thailand, where encamped refugees decide whether or not to return home, and the reintegration contexts of north-east Sri Lanka and Kayah State, Myanmar. The research learnings relate to gender equality and women’s empowerment and changes that have taken place from Year 1 (2018) to Year 3 (2020) of the ‘I’m Prepared’ Project. To note, ‘Year 3’ was originally scheduled to take place between 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020, however due to COVID-19 was extended for a further nine months up to 30 March 2021.

The report has been prepared by the Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney (ISF-UTS), who has been leading research activities in partnership with Act for Peace, Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Elangai/Eelam Refugees (OfERR) and The Border Consortium (TBC).

This report provides insight into the experience of a sub-set of 100 refugee households in the project (50 households in Thailand, and 50 households in India including 12 households who returned to Sri Lanka during the project period) and their experience of a series of activities within the 3-year implementation of the Project. This report is the third of 3 annual research learning reports. The reports were supported by design of research tools; researcher training; data collection; collation and analysis carried out by TBC, OfERR, and ISF-UTS.

The ‘I’m Prepared’ Project

As noted in the Project Design the Project pioneers a refugee-led approach, using protection preparedness methods, to strengthen women’s resilience and gender equality in the return and reintegration process for Tamil and Karenni refugees while developing evidence-based guidance to help women prepare for safe, dignified voluntary repatriation. From 1 July 2017 to 31 March 2021, the project reached over 26,000 refugees or returnees.

This Project built from Act for Peace’s partnership and decades of work experience with OfERR in Sri Lanka and India, and TBC in Thailand to strengthen the preparedness of refugees, increase self-reliance and promote gender equality approaches in return.

The long-term outcome of the project is: Increase and strengthen women’s resilience and gender equality in the return and reintegration process (in Thailand/Myanmar and India/Sri Lanka context). The Project theory of change has three pathways to influence change and associated objectives which are detailed in the body of the report. The pathways are related to knowledge, economic empowerment, and leadership.

The research process

The research was conducted over the three years of the Project (2018-20 with a 9 month extension until March 2021 due to COVID-19) and provides different types of learning which will inform the Project.

Research questions guided the inquiry:

1. What are women and men’s experience of change in the fulfilment of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?
2. What mechanisms within the theory of change (program interventions) influence change and what is the similarity / difference within and across country contexts?
3. What impact do changes to gender equality and women’s empowerment have on women’s and men’s decision making in return / reintegration (since Year 1)?
4. What learning from Year 3 research can inform future projects of partners and women’s empowerment and resettlement in other contexts?

Context of research locations

In Thailand the research was carried out in the two refugee camps where the 'I'm Prepared' activities are being implemented: Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp (Site 1) Muang District, Mae Hong Son and Ban Mae Surin Camp (Site 2) Khun Yuam District, Mae Hong Son.

In India the research focused in 14 camps from the 107 camps where the 'I'm Prepared' activities are being implemented in Tamil Nadu.

Research in Sri Lanka focused on households in north-east Sri Lanka, where the returnees from Tamil Nadu are reintegrating in the Sri Lankan society and economy. Further details on the research participants and country contexts are found within the body of the report.

Research findings

This longitudinal research provides learnings from the different country contexts of Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. It does not provide a country comparison, since that is not helpful to inform local programming and inappropriate to compare research findings across different contexts. Nonetheless, summary comments are helpful to synthesise learning from the unique contexts for refugees in the research countries, informing refugee protection programming in similar contexts.

While there were two and a half years between baseline and final data collection, the research findings should be read with reference to the entrenched barriers and obstacles that pose challenges to realising the strategic and practical needs of refugee women. In the case of those refugee women who had relocated from India to Sri Lanka during the research, most of the cohort had been in Sri Lanka for less than eighteen months and therefore were still in the process of reintegration.

There were positive changes related to meeting women's practical needs in access to information. Women's access to information increased in Thailand, India and Sri Lanka during the three years of project activities. Changes in access to services were more varied across the three country contexts. Women's access to six types of services increased in Thailand, with the exception of shelter-related support. In India women's access to four types of services improved or stayed the same, and decreased for travel documentation and expenditure for flights. Women's access to services in Sri Lanka improved or had no change for three types of services, and access to livelihoods training decreased. However, women who had relocated from India to Sri Lanka benefited from livelihood assistance, which supported them in meeting basic needs and establishing subsistence and economic activities during reintegration.

Across the three country contexts, there was a general trend towards increased safety, justice and dignity experienced by women. In Thailand and Sri Lanka, there were more women who increased than decreased their ratings of safety, justice and dignity. Women in India reported a decrease in safety, but an improvement in sense of justice and dignity.

Regarding the strategic needs of women, there was variation but no substantive changes in research findings from 2018 to 2020. Across the research cohort in the three country contexts, project activities aimed at women's economic empowerment have not translated to changes in gender roles in economic activities. While there was some evidence of the project intervention influencing the types of livelihoods that women implemented, overall women's income stayed the same or decreased. This highlights the broader constraining context of the economy in the research countries where the labour market, conditions and roles are segmented by gender. In the case of Thailand, gender training was delivered to women and men to address the barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment. Women participants valued the gender training, but also emphasised the need for more gender training to be delivered to women and to a broader group of men (as its reach was limited in the 'I'm Prepared' project).

For changes in women's activeness in leadership roles, different research findings highlight the unique country contexts and different gendered relations. In Thailand, research findings show an increase in women's leadership from 2019 to 2020 and it is at a similar level to men's leadership. In the India context where women are well established in the camps, their activeness in leadership has increased from 2019 to 2020. More women are engaged 'a lot' in leadership roles compared to men and overall their leadership is at the highest level of the three country contexts. Comparing the cohort of women when they were living in India in 2018 to when they had relocated to Sri Lanka in 2020, their activeness in leadership reduced significantly, along with men who relocated. This may reflect that women are most likely to prioritise 'family

set up' on return including ensuring that children are settled into school. This finding suggests that leadership roles of returnees in their communities, especially women returnees, need to be championed over a longer time frame for their strategic needs to be met.

Research findings about decision-making for the future highlight the broader context in which the 'I'm Prepared' project was implemented. Women and men are both involved in decisions about where to live in the future, with a slight shift in responses during the 3 years of research, from women and men separately making decisions to joint decision-making. There were changes in Thailand, with more women in 2020 being unsure or identifying their camp to live in the future, compared to those who planned to return to Myanmar in 2018. In India, women's decision to move to Sri Lanka in the future remained stable, though they reported some delayed plans due to the impacts of COVID-19 and other factors. For women who did relocate and reintegrate to Sri Lanka, their confidence in the future about their lives and those of their families increased. In addition to support from relatives, community leaders and other agencies, the research findings highlight there needs to be a safe and enabling environment for refugees to return to their home countries.

In all country contexts, the research identified that women who participated in the 'I'm Prepared' activities found value in participating over multiple years. Women recalled a diverse range of learnings, and applied these learnings to improve their lives and those of their families and neighbours. Women in Thailand reported the activities increased their knowledge and understanding, while women in India described building their capacity to contribute to their community. Women living in Sri Lanka felt their livelihoods, security, leadership and self-esteem had improved through being involved in the project activities in Indian refugee camps and on return in Sri Lanka.

Participants in the 'I'm Prepared' research valued the opportunity for self-reflection. Through being interviewed multiple times, participants reported observing a change in themselves over time and were able to reflect on how they applied the learning from the project activities. This reflection on what they had achieved further increased their motivation for future actions.

The research findings highlight the value of women's leadership which should be central to any voluntary return and repatriation program. Women who are educated about preparedness share their knowledge with others in their family and communities. Economic empowerment needs to include both livelihood training and also programming and advocacy to address a broader enabling environment including security and access to informal and formal finances. Women's leadership should be encouraged and supported in both host and home country environments. Women are at the centre of return and reintegration processes and longer-term preparedness programs are needed for women and their families.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ANCP	Australian NGO Cooperation Program
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
GAP	Gender Action Platform
ISF-UTS	Institute for Sustainable Futures - University of Technology Sydney
KNWO	Karenni National Women's Organisation
OERR	The Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Elangai/Eelam Refugees
TBC	The Border Consortium
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. Introduction

This document provides learnings from Year 3 research activities of the project “I’m Prepared’: Equality of Refugee Women in the Return and Reintegration Context” (I’m Prepared) funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s (DFAT) Gender Action Platform (GAP). ‘I’m Prepared’ is implemented in four country contexts. These countries are India and Thailand, where encamped refugees decide whether or not to return home, and the reintegration contexts of north-east Sri Lanka and Kayah State, Myanmar. The research learnings relate to gender equality and women’s empowerment and changes that have taken place from Year 1 (2018) to Year 3 (2020) of the ‘I’m Prepared’ Project. To note, ‘Year 3’ was originally scheduled to take place between 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020, however due to COVID-19 was extended for a further nine months up to 30 March 2021.

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This report provides insight into the experience of a sub-set of 100 refugee households in the project (50 households in Thailand, and 50 households in India including 12 households who returned to Sri Lanka during the project period) and their experience of a series of activities within the 3-year implementation of the Project. This report is the third of 3 annual research learning reports. The reports were supported by design of research tools; researcher training; data collection; collation and analysis carried out by TBC, OfERR, and ISF-UTS.

This report is primarily intended to be of use to ‘I’m Prepared’ implementing partners as well as key stakeholders engaged in work with Tamil and Karenni refugees. This final year research aims to provide learnings to support the ongoing community-based protection programming of Act for Peace, OfERR and TBC to ensure best outcomes for refugees are met in similar contexts. The report will also be of interest to stakeholders beyond the ‘I’m Prepared’ Project working with refugees, including DFAT considering the Australian government’s endorsement of the Global Refugee Compact which prioritises voluntary repatriation. The research will be an important resource to use in national, regional and international-level advocacy about ways to better support women’s empowerment in return and reintegration programs.

As described in the research approach, the research seeks to learn about women’s experience of the ‘I’m Prepared’ Project and the extent to which the goal of gender equality and women’s empowerment is achieved. The research provides a longitudinal study of a sample group of project participants to learn about the experience of the ‘I’m Prepared’ Project and extent to which higher level project objectives have been realised.

The report is structured:

Section **Error! Reference source not found.**: Background to the I’m Prepared Project

Section **Error! Reference source not found.**: Overview of the research approach

Section 0: Context information about the research location and participants

Section **Error! Reference source not found.**: Research findings

The report also includes detailed analysis of interview responses for Thailand, India and Sri Lanka in attachments (separate documents) to this report.

The audience of this report may also be interested in the Policy Brief on Gender Equality and Empowerment for Refugee Women in Return and Reintegration Contexts, produced by ‘I’m Prepared’ partners in March 2021.

2. Background to the 'I'm Prepared' Project

This section provides a brief overview of the 'I'm Prepared' Project, especially for audiences of this report beyond the organisations implementing the Project. The section details the objectives of the Project, key elements of the theory of change and types of activities included in the Project. The rationale, where the Project was implemented and implementing organisations is also provided.

As noted in the Project Design¹:

The Project pioneers a refugee-led approach, using protection preparedness methods, to strengthen women's resilience and gender equality in the return and reintegration process for Tamil and Karenni refugees while developing evidence-based guidance to help women prepare for safe, dignified voluntary repatriation.

Voluntary repatriation involves refugees returning to their country of origin, and can only be promoted when conditions in the country of origin enable safe and dignified return. Voluntary repatriation is one of the durable solutions promoted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), alongside local integration and resettlement. In order for repatriation to be truly voluntary, it needs to be based on informed decision making and freedom of choice to ensure refugees are not exposed to unnecessary risk or become dependent on family networks in return areas. Repatriation is just one step in the return and reintegration process, which cannot be considered safe and dignified unless contexts enable returnees to be treated on an equal basis to other citizens of their country of origin.

This Project built from Act for Peace's partnership and decades of work experience with OfERR in Sri Lanka and India, and TBC in Thailand to strengthen the preparedness of refugees, increase self-reliance and promote gender equality approaches in return.

After over thirty years of conflict, indigenous Karenni refugees from Kayah state in Myanmar now residing in refugee camps inside Thailand are preparing themselves for potential return. Similarly, Tamil refugees who fled the civil war in Sri Lanka are now, after nearly three decades, preparing to return from Tamil Nadu in India to their homeland.

The experience of Act for Peace and its partners prior to the GAP "I'm Prepared" project indicated that often women's empowerment status diminished during the return process, as it was common for women refugees to not be involved in key decision-making and become increasingly dependent on family members to survive, among other factors. Many of the leadership positions and freedoms gained in the camp environment are no longer available living in the areas of return. Within refugee return and reintegration praxis, it is not common for community-led preparedness to be a priority focus. Furthermore, the capacity and desire of women to play a central role in decision making within the family and community can be limited due to patriarchal norms. However, when refugee and returnee women are able to help drive these processes, they enhance their knowledge and preparedness for decision making, an experience that can build confidence individually and collectively across a camp population.

In the refugee communities in which OfERR and TBC work, there has been a long-standing focus on community-led preparedness for return. This Project has progressed this agenda further, applying an innovative model² for return and reintegration based on coordinated activities between host country and home country, empowering women to better anticipate, prepare for, and manage the risks and challenges they are likely to face in the return and reintegration process and strengthening community-based livelihood support systems. The Project mobilises resources and existing support mechanisms and systems in order to strengthen women-led networks and to boost community-driven support for female returnees to improve their protection capacity and enhance their livelihood opportunities.

¹ Source: Act for Peace, "I'm Prepared" proposal to the Gender Action Platform (GAP) grant 2016.

² This innovative model was first trialled in the Sri Lanka Refugee Return and Reintegration Project (SLRRRP) in India and Sri Lanka commencing in July 2016, and continuing currently under SLRRRP Phase II. "I'm Prepared" has provided the opportunity to expand the pilot of the model into the Thailand-Myanmar while tailoring it to that context based on the expertise of The Border Consortium.

The long-term outcome of the project is: Increase and strengthen women's resilience and gender equality in the return and reintegration process (in Thailand/Burma and India/Sri Lanka context). The Project theory of change has three pathways to influence change and associated objectives³:

1. **KNOWLEDGE:** Increased preparedness and capacity to make informed decisions regarding safe, dignified and voluntary return and reintegration for Karenni refugee women in Thailand and Tamil refugee women in India.
2. **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:** Returnee women and local women in areas of return have increased participation in sustainable livelihood and income development initiatives during return and when they are integrating in their respective country
3. **LEADERSHIP:** Karenni and Tamil refugee and returnee women have increased leadership and influence in the decision-making, design and delivery of return and reintegration programming both in camp settings and in areas of return

Within these pathways to influence change types of activities include: trainings; establishing groups in locations of return/reintegration (welcome groups and economic empowerment groups); information and experience sharing between refugee communities and those in return/reintegration communities; support for referral services; and advocacy and influence to decision makers.

In addition to the implementation focused outcomes, a fourth outcome is focused on research and learning to inform ongoing programming. This research report sits within this Outcome 4, and contributes to the evidence base of the project.

4. **LEARNING:** return & reintegration stakeholders have a strong evidence base for effective planning & preparedness programming.

The Project contributes to the three DFAT program-wide GAP objectives:

Objective 1: Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through the delivery of innovative or transformational NGO projects that reduce violence against women, increase women's economic opportunities and improve leadership for and by women through collective action.

Objective 2: Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through shared learning on good gender equality practice and lessons from trialling new approaches with GAP NGOs and the broader ANCP.

Objective 3: Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through increased collaboration on gender equality development challenges, including between NGOs and DFAT bilateral and regional programs.

³ See Annex 1 for more details about the theory of change and pathways to influence change. \

3. Overview of the research approach

3.1. Purpose and scope of the research

The research (within Objective 4 of the 'I'm Prepared' Project) sought to:

- Learn about the return and reintegration experiences of women and men in the 'I'm Prepared' Project, and provide Project partners with an in-depth understanding of what gender equality and women's empowerment changes are taking place and how/why these changes have happened.
- Provide opportunities for learning and reflection for Project partners and Project participants, in order to identify strengths that can be built upon as well as areas for improvement, within years 2 and 3 of the Project.
- Provide an evidence-base that can be used to strengthen return and reintegration programs aiming to achieve women's empowerment in other country contexts⁴.

The research was conducted over the three years of the Project (2018-20 with a COVID extension until March 2021) and provides different types of learning which will inform the Project.

- Year 1 research conducted in early 2018 provided a baseline of locally informed understandings of gender relations (practical and strategic needs, gender roles, and access and control of resources) and decision-making about return / reintegration.
- Year 2 research conducted in mid-2019 provided an assessment of changes to gender relations (practical and strategic needs, gender roles, and access and control of resources) and decision-making about return / reintegration and contribution of program interventions as well as other factors to influencing any changes experienced within different project locations (Thailand and India).
- Year 3 research conducted in late 2020 (contained in this report) provides an assessment of gender changes and decision-making about return/reintegration and contribution of program interventions as well as other factors to influencing any changes experience within different project locations. Year 3 has an increased focus on return/reintegration experiences for Tamil refugees in Sri Lanka.

A sample group of project participants was selected in Year 1, and those who continued to participate in project activities were invited to participate in the research in Years 2 and 3.

The longitudinal study of same women and men in household units aimed to reveal the trajectory of change and lived experiences of participants within the Project. The yearly 'snap shots' of experience provided a means of assessing the extent to which gender equality and women's empowerment is experienced.

⁴ The research therefore aligns closely with the DFAT GAP objective 2 "Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through shared learning on good gender equality practice and lessons from trialling new approaches with GAP NGOs and the broader ANCP" and DFAT GAP Objective 3 "Contributed to enhancing gender equality outcomes in developing countries through increased collaboration on gender equality development challenges, including between NGOs and DFAT bilateral and regional programs."

3.2. Research questions

The research questions are adapted for Year 3.

Life of Project Research Questions	Year 3 Research Questions
1. What are women and men's experience of change in the fulfilment of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?	What are women and men's experience of <i>change</i> in the fulfilment of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?
2. What mechanisms within the theory of change (program interventions) influence change and what is the similarity / difference within and across country contexts?	What <i>mechanisms</i> within the theory of change (program interventions) influence change and what is the similarity / difference within and across country contexts?
3. What impact do gender changes have on women and men's decision making in return / reintegration?	What impact do changes to gender equality and women's empowerment have on women's and men's decision making in return / reintegration (since Year 1)?
4. What learning can be generated from the projects to inform livelihood projects for women's empowerment and resettlement in other contexts?	What learning from Year 3 research can inform future projects of partners and women's empowerment and resettlement in other contexts?

3.3. Analytical framework

As the Project aims to promote and bring about gender equality, we have used the Moser Framework⁵ to guide gender analysis. The Moser Framework helps us to understand the different needs and interests of women and how development programs may be able to meet these. The Moser Framework divides women's needs into two categories; 'practical needs' and 'strategic needs.'

- *Practical needs* are needs that help women to have easier lives, for example, access to goods or services (water, food, health care), safety and protection.
- *Strategic needs* are those that will help women to become more equal with men and to share equal power with men in the household, community and society they live in.

The women's empowerment changes that the research explores link to the Project outcomes of 'I'm Prepared', so may include:

- Women's increased preparedness and capacity to make informed decisions;
- Women's increased participation in sustainable livelihood and income development initiatives; and
- Women's increased leadership and influence in decision-making.

In Year 3, we analysed changes in these elements of the Moser Framework:

- Practical and strategic gender needs
- Gender roles (livelihood roles, leadership and community roles)
- Access and decision-making regarding income

The research also drew on a realist evaluation approach which is relevant to identify what change has resulted from participation in I'm Prepared activities. Realist evaluators aim to identify the underlying

⁵ Moser, C.O.N (1993). Gender Planning and Development: theory, practice and training, Routledge, London and New York.

generative mechanisms that explain how the change outcomes were caused, and the influence of context. In this research, we considered the links between context (who participated in I'm Prepared activities, and the broader political, social and economic context for refugees), mechanisms of change (program interventions) and outcomes (changes in gender equality and stated outcomes resulting from participating in 'I'm Prepared' activities).

The interpretation of Year 3 research findings took into account the impacts of COVID-19 and learning about participants' coping strategies and support.

3.4. Relevance of the research to 'I'm Prepared' multi-year outcome indicators

This research also sought to gather learnings relevant to the multi-year outcome indicators defined for the 'I'm Prepared' Project. Whilst not all outcome indicators were measured through the research, key indicators relevant to gender equality, women's empowerment and the return and reintegration process were captured in the research findings. Where data was not able to be collected specific to indicators, proxy indicators or data relevant to gender equality/women's empowerment was provided. Particular care was taken to ensure appropriate indicators of outcome measures were included in the research findings and comparison of baseline to multi-year targets was presented in this Year 3 research report.

3.5. Research process

Researcher training

While in previous years ISF-UTS had travelled to Thailand and India to train local researchers in-person, in 2020 ISF-UTS built the capacity of experienced TBC, Karenni National Women's Organisation (KNWO), and OfERR staff who had been part of the research in previous years, to lead the training with other local researchers in their regions.

To this end, ISF-UTS facilitated an online Train-the-Trainer workshop on 'I'm Prepared' research on 10 - 11 November 2020 for 4-7 TBC and KNWO staff (all female). TBC and KNWO staff facilitated in-person training in Ban Mai Nai Soi camp for 'I'm Prepared' local researchers on 8-9 December 2020 for 6 KNWO staff (all female). TBC and KNWO staff facilitated in-person training in Ban Mae Surin camp for 'I'm Prepared' local researchers on 16-17 December 2020 for 8 KNWO staff (all female).

ISF-UTS facilitated an online Train-the-Trainer workshop on 'I'm Prepared' research on 2, 16 & 17 November 2020 for 6 OfERR staff in India (3 female, 3 male). OfERR staff in India facilitated an online workshop for 'I'm Prepared' local researchers on 30 November – 1 December 2020 for 7 OfERR staff in India (4 female, 3 male). 6 OfERR Ceylon staff (3 female, 3 male) in Sri Lanka were trained by ISF-UTS in an online Train-the-Trainer workshop on 'I'm Prepared' research on 2 – 5 November 2020. OfERR Ceylon staff facilitated an online workshop for 'I'm Prepared' local researchers on 18 – 21 November 2020 for 16 OfERR Ceylon staff (9 female, 7 male). The Act for Peace partner focal point based in India, Dr. Florina Xavier, also attended and supported the trainings.

Structured interviews

Structured interviews were used as the primary research method for Year 3 research and an interview guide was prepared in collaboration between ISF-UTS, TBC, OfERR, and Act for Peace. The same interview guide was used in both Thailand and India, and a similar interview guide was used in Sri Lanka with modifications relevant to the return context.

The draft interview guide for Year 3 was developed by ISF-UTS, based on questions from the Year 2 interview guide. It includes both quantitative (closed response) and qualitative (open response) questions. Informed by the Moser Framework, questions explored gender roles, access and decision-making about income and practical and strategic needs of women in line with focus of the 'I'm Prepared' Project. Practical needs relate to access to services; information; safety and protection; and income. Strategic needs relate to control; leadership; and choice to influence decisions that affects one's life. There were also specific questions around participants' experience of 'I'm Prepared' activities and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This interview guide was then workshopped and familiarised to local researchers during online training sessions. During the training OfERR staff suggested a change to one of the interview questions, which was accepted by ISF-UTS and carried across to the other interview guides for Sri Lanka and Thailand. Translation issues were also discussed and resolved prior to beginning data collection.

Sampling participants

During November – December 2020 interviews with refugee women were carried out with those who has been interviewed in 2018, 2019 and had participated in ‘I’m Prepared’ activities. Men from the same households were interviewed.

Research sample	Thailand	India	Sri Lanka
2018 (baseline)	50 women from refugee camps in Thailand participated in the research. 50 men from the same households also participated in the research.	50 women from refugee camps in India participated in the research. 50 men from the same households also participated in the research.	N/A
2019	Of those women that attended at least one project activity in Thailand, a sample of 25 women was chosen. 25 men from the same households also participated.	Of those women that attended at least one project activity in India, a sample of 28 women was chosen. 28 men from the same households also participated.	(Some women had returned and were in the process of resettling, so were not interviewed).
2020 (final evaluation)	Of the sample of 25 women from Year 2, 24 women who stayed in the refugee camps and participated in project activities, were invited to be interviewed. 1 woman was excluded from the study because she emigrated to another country. 21 men from the same households were also interviewed – 3 men were not available to be interviewed due to illness or leaving the camp.	The 2019 sample of women who stayed in the refugee camps and participated in project activities in India in Year 3, were invited to be interviewed by OfERR. This group included 24 women and 24 men from the same households were also interviewed.	Of the 2018 & 2019 sample of women in India who returned to Sri Lanka during the course of the ‘I’m Prepared’ project and participated in project activities, were invited to be interviewed by OfERR Ceylon. This group included 12 women and 12 men from the same households were also interviewed.

Women’s participation in ‘I’m Prepared’ activities in Thailand is shown in Figure 1. Out of the 24 women interviewed for the research, 15 had participated in Gender Training, 14 in Livelihood Training, 23 in Protection Training and 6 in ‘Go and See’ visits. All three trainings that were also run in 2019 saw an increase in participation. ‘Go and See’ visits were only offered in the third year of research (2020).

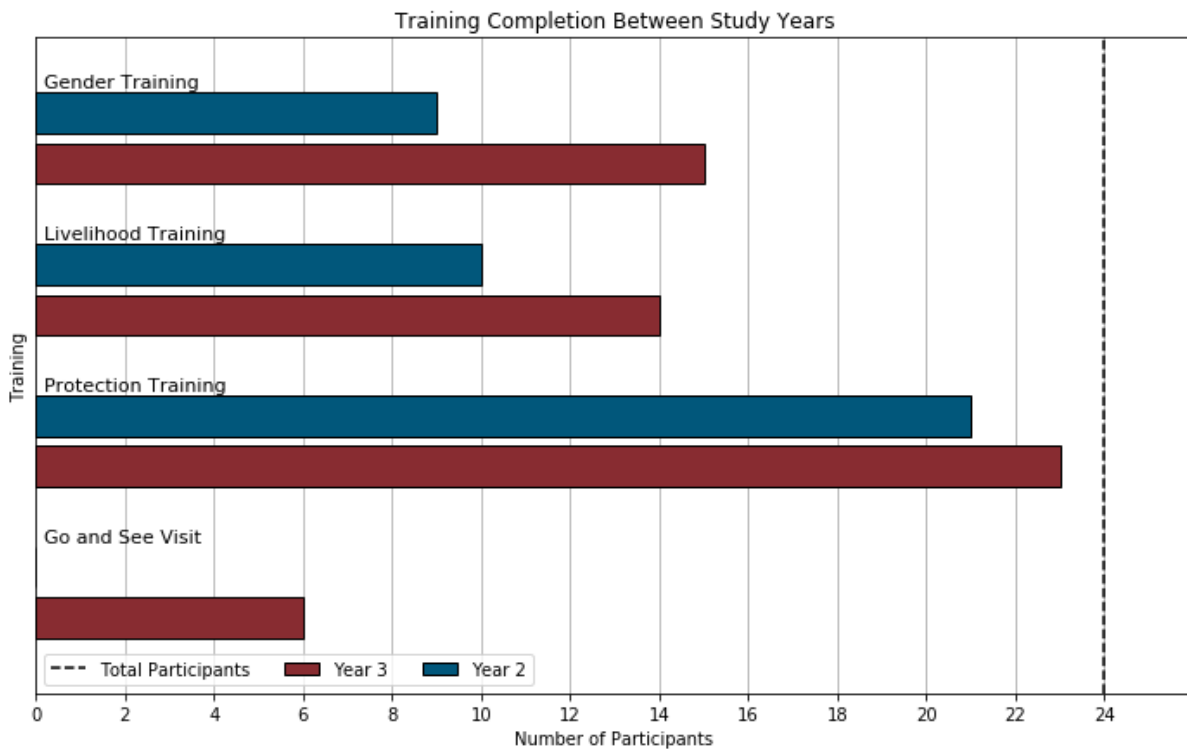


Figure 1: Thailand research sample - Participation in I'm Prepared activities between 2019 and 2020

For the India sample, women's participation in 'I'm Prepared' activities is shown in Figure 2. Out of the total 24 women interviewed in 2020, 22 had participated in the Protection training, 17 in Livelihood Training, and 11 in Women's Network activities. Compared to 2019, an additional 4 women in the 2020 cohort engaged in Livelihood training, and an additional 2 for Women's Networks activities.

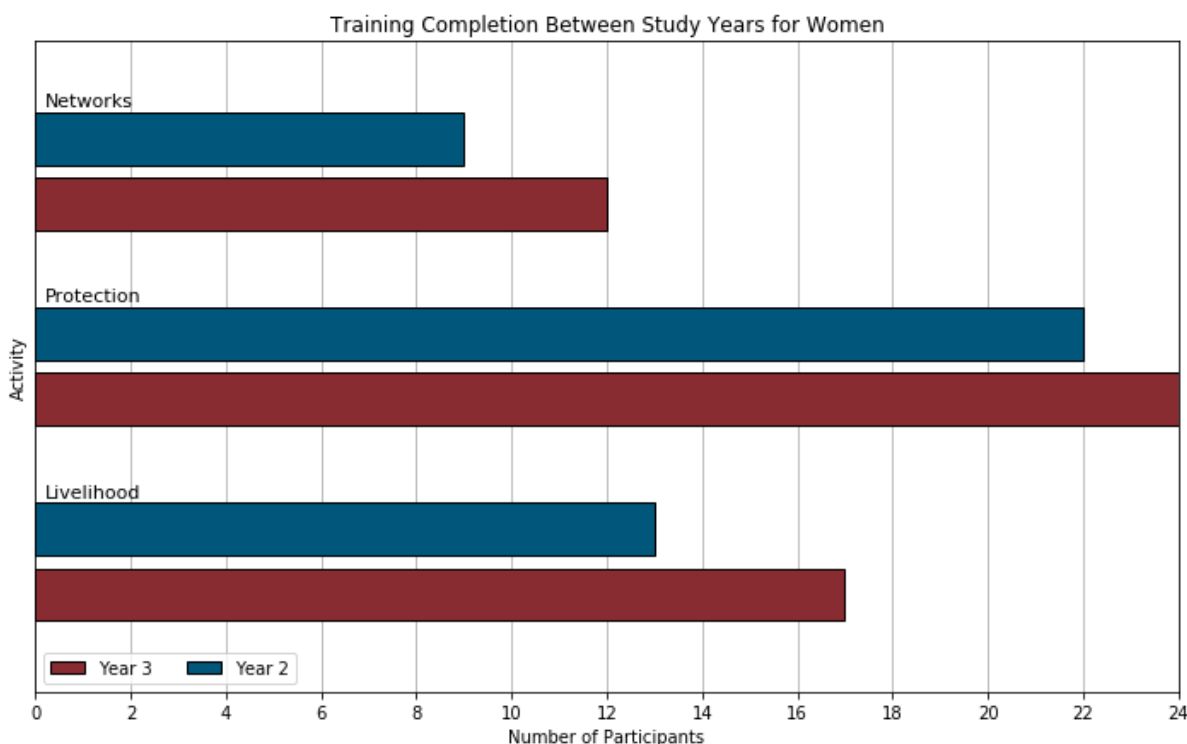


Figure 1: India research sample - Participation in I'm Prepared activities between 2019 and 2020

From the Sri Lanka research sample, women's participation in 'I'm Prepared' activities is shown in Figure 3. Out of the total 12 women interviewed, 10 had participated in Protection Training, 9 in Livelihood Training,

and 6 in Women’s Network activities when living in India. After relocating to Sri Lanka, 9 women had received Livelihood Assistance and 8 women had participated in Welcome Group activities.

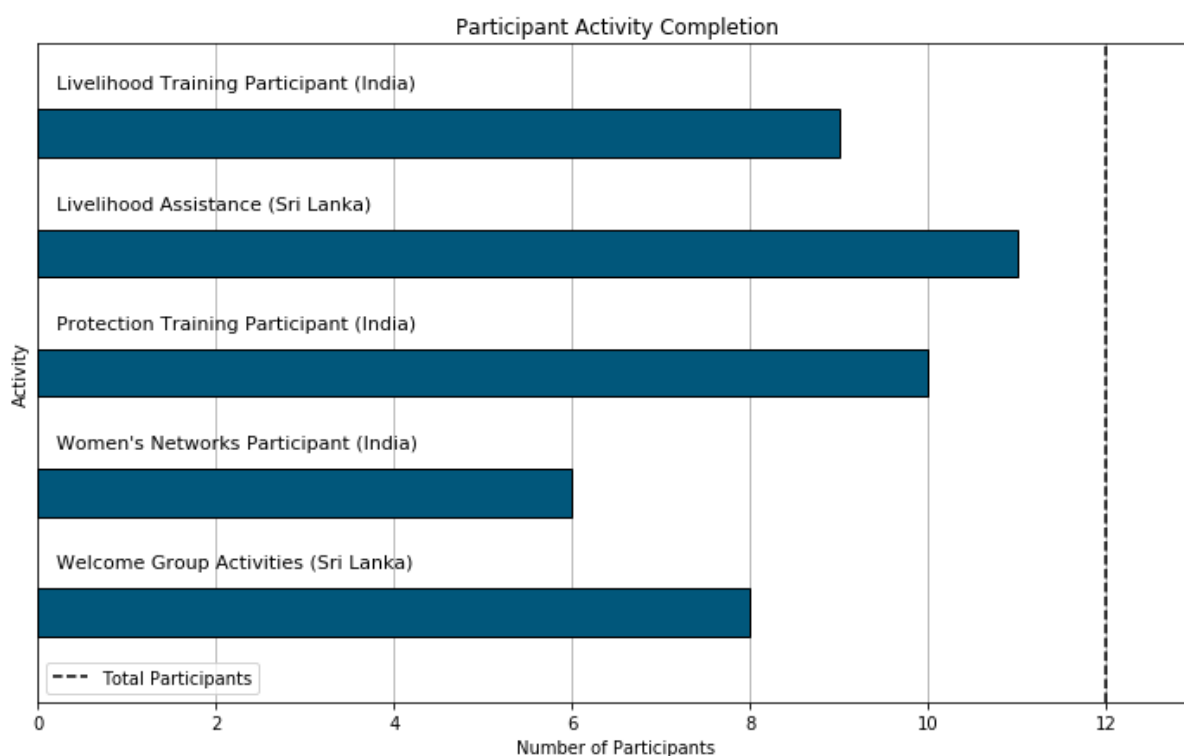


Figure 3: Sri Lanka research sample - Participation in I'm Prepared activities between 2018 and 2020

Data collection process

At the start of the interview researchers provided information about the three-year research project and obtained consent from the refugees for their participation. Generally, research participants are included in the data where both a woman and man within a household both consented to participate in the research. As noted above there was allowance to include three women in Thailand (where men in the household were not available) only due to non-availability of men in 2020.

Interviews were scheduled with participants, at a time and place convenient and safe for them. Due to barriers with travel and other safety concerns related to COVID-19 in India, seven interviews were conducted over the phone rather than in person. Each interview generally took approximately one hour, conducted by one interviewer and one note taker who recorded responses on a printed interview guide (translated into the local language). Women and men were interviewed separately from one another in a private setting.

Data collation

A collation template (excel spreadsheet) based on templates from previous years of the study was prepared by ISF-UTS and sent to TBC and OfERR. Collation of survey responses was prepared by TBC and OfERR. In order to ensure a streamlined process, translation was carried out as part of the collation, i.e. the collation template was prepared only in English, with responses translated as part of entering data into the collation template.

Data analysis

ISF-UTS conducted both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data, in line with the interview questions and broader research questions. The analysis compared experiences of gender equality and women’s empowerment between Year 1 and Year 3, in terms of change to practical and strategic needs of women being met. The analysis involved experiences of participation in ‘I’m Prepared’ activities, and learning about the influence of participation in those activities to the gender equality changes.

3.6. Ethics

An ethical approach was a key component of the proposed research agreed between ISF-UTS and Act for Peace and has been a core practice implemented by ISF-UTS, TBC and OfERR. During researcher training, the topic of ethical research was included and principles of ethical research (beneficence, respect, justice, research merit and integrity) were introduced and contextualised by the local researchers. Local researchers identified the potential risk of triggering reactions to sensitive topics raised, and ensured questions did not direct responses in this direction, as well as being prepared to refer participants to support services (counselling) if the need arose. Ethical conduct of research was piloted and, based on this experience and reflections, ethics protocols refined. An information sheet was prepared and translated to local language, a script to gain verbal informed consent from research participants was also prepared and read out at the start of interviews. Documentation of verbal consent was completed by local researchers which was collated and recorded as part of the collation process. Each entry of interview responses also included checking and recording that informed consent was documented by interviewers.

Records and storage of interview data have ensured the privacy of research participants. Data has been de-identified at the earliest point using a filing system which replaces participants' names with identification codes. The list of research participants, codes and their contact details is kept separately to the interview responses, and is used to identify the same individuals as part of the longitudinal study.

3.7. Limitations

It is helpful to note limitations of the research to inform interpretation of the research findings, and describe how these were mitigated to the extent possible.

Translation of key concepts relevant to the 'I'm Prepared' Project from English to local language was a challenge in the researcher training, defining the interview guide questions and also in translation of interview responses to English. In Thailand, local researchers had the added challenge of translating concepts/ interview questions from Burmese to relevant subdialects (Kayaw) used in the camps. The researcher training and testing of the interview guide with local researchers sought to mitigate these challenges and importantly detailed reflection on the interview guide questions and key words was important to define local meanings. In collating interview responses, translation to English also posed risks, and it is important to recognise that local meanings may have been lost in translation/collation processes.

Data collection was carried out by in-country partners, after orientation and training by ISF-UTS. Many of the researchers who carried out data collection in Thailand and India during 2019 continued as researchers in the data collection process in 2020. In Sri Lanka, the researchers were trained by OfERR staff who had gained experience through attending the research training in India and had conducted a pilot process of data collection and analysis with returned refugees in 2019. Thus, the experience of the group of in-country researchers was mixed, which may have impacted the rigour of the data collection process. Nonetheless training refugees as researchers and as primary data collectors is a valuable component of the project, to build capacity and provide maximum learning opportunities.

Year 3 data collection was originally scheduled for around May 2020, 12 months after the second year of data collection. However in 2020, program implementation including research activities were delayed due to the impacts of COVID-19 in the project sites. Facilitated by a program extension, ISF-UTS rescheduled activities, so that data collection was carried out in November – December 2020. During the extended project period in 2020, there were many disruptions in refugees lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is important context to be considered in this report. The timeline for gathering 'snapshots' of participant experiences was as follows:

Data collection timeline	Thailand	India	Sri Lanka
Year 1 (baseline)	March 2018	April - May 2018	N/A
Year 2	March - April 2019	July - August 2019	N/A
Year 3 (final evaluation)	December 2020	November – December 2020	November – December 2020

The availability of research participants was an issue that resulted in a smaller sample size in Year 3. Since taking part in the interview in Year 1, some research participants had not participated in 'I'm Prepared' activities, had become unwell or had moved to a third country. Since the intent of the research was to learn about experience in the Project, those women who had not participated in project activities were not included in the sample.

It is important to recognise that the sample size is not inclusive of marginalised groups as intended. The research sought to include people living with disability (PWD), however at the time of the baseline survey in Year 1 only one of the in-country partners had protocols for selecting PWD to participate. While Act for Peace has worked intensively with the in-country partner regarding disability inclusion within the 'I'm Prepared' project, since the research cohort was decided in Year 1 in line with longitudinal research design, PWD are not included in the research. In Thailand, only one household identified as having a person with a disability was recorded by researchers. This is too small to disaggregate data meaningfully and compare experience of these research participant with others. In India, very few PWD have decided to return to Sri Lanka, due to (i) the provision of support for PWD who remain in the camp, (ii) insufficient understanding of disability inclusion in Year 1 of the project. Since 'I'm Prepared' focuses on those refugees interested in returning to Sri Lanka, this led to very small numbers of PWD included in the project in Year 1.

The research focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment primarily inside the home (intra-household) and includes interviews with a woman and a man from each household. This has meant that experiences of women living in female-headed households (single women, sexual minorities and widows) were outside of the scope of the research.

In the analysis of research data there were choices made due to budget constraints which limited the potential to do a range of different analyses. For Year 3 of the research, the decision was made to analyse the experiences of women over the three years of the Project, with a focus on returnee women. There were only a few instances of comparisons of women and men where there is an indication of inequality. As mentioned earlier, additional questions were also added to learn about the impact of COVID-19 on refugees who participated in the research.

4. Context information about the research location and participants

In Thailand the research was carried out in the two refugee camps where the 'I'm Prepared' activities are being implemented: Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp (Site 1) Muang District, Mae Hong Son and Ban Mae Surin Camp (Site 2) Khun Yuam District, Mae Hong Son.

In India the research focused in 14 camps from the 107 camps where the 'I'm Prepared' activities are being implemented in Tamil Nadu. Research in Sri Lanka focused on households in north-east Sri Lanka, where the returnees from Tamil Nadu are reintegrating in the Sri Lankan society and economy.

4.1. Thailand-Myanmar context

General

At the end of December 2020, a total of 79,463 refugees from Myanmar remained in nine 'temporary' refugee camps along the Thailand / Myanmar border, with restricted mobility and minimal official means of gaining employment or income. The 'I'm Prepared' project works in two camps, predominantly populated by Karenni refugees - the population total of the Ban Mai Nai Soi (BMNS) is 7805 people including 49% female and 51% male; and the population total of Ban Mae Surin (BMS) was 1,933 people with 49.8% female and 50.2% male. Some of the camp population were born in Myanmar and left many years ago, and some of the younger population were born in the Thai camps, without eligibility for Thai citizenship. The refugees continue largely to be dependent on external aid for food, shelter, protection and essential services. The Border Consortium (TBC) has been the sole organisation providing food assistance and shelter to Burmese refugees, in these nine refugee camps, since the first arrivals in 1984. TBC's more than 30 years of collaboration with refugee camp management has built trust and mutual understanding between the organisation and the refugees, making it possible to continue facilitation of community cooperation and engagement in the context of decreasing NGO presence and services.

Despite UNHCR and TBC predictions of increasing returns when the project was designed, refugee returns to Myanmar throughout the 'I'm Prepared' program have been low due to the safety situation in the local communities in areas of return in Kayah State, Myanmar. The possibility of low returns was anticipated in the project design, which focused on risk-awareness, informed decision making and preparedness for return, which would be relevant for future returns. The Governments of Myanmar and Thailand, UNHCR and the respective ethnic armed organisations all agree that conditions in the South East are not yet conducive to the 'promotion' of large scale refugee return, although UNHCR has been facilitating 'spontaneous' returnees, and refugees have been returning unofficially. The peace process has not yet addressed the causes of conflict and displacement or the withdrawal of troops from contested areas (which are also potential areas of return). In adopting the learnings from the Sri Lanka return context into the Myanmar return context, modifications were women's empowerment groups and the formation of the community economic development forum, to recognise a need for a greater proportion of non-returnee host community members in these groups in Myanmar due to the aforementioned smaller number of returnees in Myanmar compared to Sri Lanka.

Implications for the Project Design in the Final Project year from Context Changes

The key contextual change in the last 18 months of the project related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions around accessing the camps were imposed in March 2020 and remain in place up until the end of 2020, which are designed to safeguard the refugees from coming into contact with the virus. However, these restrictions have been eased slightly in line with general easing of restrictions in Thailand.

Income generation opportunities for refugees remain extremely limited in this context. Hence, TBC continues to provide maximum levels of humanitarian aid to "most vulnerable" and "vulnerable" refugee households, and higher than normal levels to other households, to ensure food security is strong. The project incorporated messaging on COVID-19 continues, with infection prevention and control measures in place for partners and program delivery. By the end of 2020, TBC staff were once again able to travel more freely including into refugee camps, however in early December there was one person who tested positive in a non-Project camp and so there was restriction of movement for the refugee camps (throughout 2020, TBC

had adopted a mixed office work and work-from-home policy.) In terms of the local communities in areas of return in Myanmar, although some cases of COVID-19 have been reported in South Eastern Myanmar, there has been only one reported in areas where the project works. Testing in Myanmar remains generally low while Thailand will continue to be effective in detection of Coronavirus cases, and their containment through comprehensive contact tracing and testing. As with TBC Thailand, TBC Myanmar is engaged in coordinating meetings and responses to COVID-19. That said, the project activities in Myanmar have not shifted to specific COVID-19 activities.

3.8. India-Sri Lanka context

General

Tamil refugees in India are in a unique situation, since India and Sri Lanka governments have made different statements about their return. The Government of Sri Lanka has said that it is supportive for Tamil refugees return to Sri Lanka. The Government of India has not made any statement requesting the Tamil refugees to return. The two governments have agreed to facilitate voluntary repatriation, and have a strong preference for handling the matter as a bilateral affair. As such UNHCR has not been able to secure a tripartite agreement on return, although it does facilitate return travel on a case-by-case basis from outside the camps as it has not been permitted to operate in the camps. Refugees want a bilateral decision between the two governments so that the transition process may be smooth. Having lived in India for more than two decades, most of the refugee population are frustrated with the protracted situation. For some, irregular movement by boat with the assistance of people smugglers to Australia was one option to get out of the refugee context. OfERR and OfERR Ceylon have been working together with Act for Peace to make a tangible change to this situation. This includes helping refugees anticipate the risks, challenges and opportunities related to their options to stay, return or move irregularly by boat, and then helping them make informed decisions and prepare, if they voluntarily opt to return, and then reintegrate in Sri Lanka.

Reintegration is challenged by the economic situation in Sri Lanka. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka commissioned a framework for economic development in the northern province, yet the framework observed that the post war reconciliation strategies have not met the expected level of holistic success and sustainable level of economic growth. The reasons identified are, lack of proper reconstruction strategies for the northern economy, insufficient investment for technology transference and continuing fragility of population coming out of war which is a barrier for their participation in development.

The political scenario is ever changing which also challenges return and reintegration, including due to shifting Ministerial and departments responsible for return and resettlement. A change in government could mean change in policy and particularly resettlement policy of the Government. A constitutional crises began in Sri Lanka when the former President Mathiripala Sirisena appointed former President Mahindda Rajapaksha as Prime Minister on the 26th of October 2018. This had resulted in the Former Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe being involved in legal action and by the end of the year, Mr. Wickramasinghe took over the government as Prime Minister. As a result of the unstable political situation, the negotiations between Government of India and Sri Lanka on return of refugees by ship and suitable assistance package for returnees was derailed. During this period there were reduced numbers of refugees returning. If a package is announced by the Government of Sri Lanka there are better chances of return from India. The situation in India is different given the enormity of the country with varied issues and the Sri Lankan refugee issue in that context. The sudden demise of the former External Affairs Minister was a loss to the voluntary repatriation process. However, all hope is not lost since the current External Affairs Minister is willing to work with the Government of Sri Lanka on return and so is the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka.

OfERR and OfERR Ceylon continue to work on both sides of Palk Strait, and across political and ethno-religious divides, to ensure that refugees can return in safety and with dignity.

Recent events

The 'I'm Prepared' project focused on Tamil refugees who had registered for the ferry service and had an intention to return to Sri Lanka in the future. The ferry service for repatriation of refugees has not happened as anticipated. Further, the unstable political situation and poor security situation in 2019 led to reduced returns.

As with much of the world in 2020, the key context change has related to COVID-19. In India, there has been a total number of 487 refugees tested positive from 62 different camps. There have been a succession of lockdowns in Tamil Nadu, which in the latter part of 2020 the third highest number of cases in all of India. OfERR volunteers and health workers in the camps implemented a range of mitigation and management measures, including phoning all high-risk refugees (who they are aware of through the long-standing health outreach work OfERR undertake) to check they are isolating themselves and do not have symptoms. If they have symptoms, OfERR health workers will liaise with authorities to get them tested. OfERR volunteers also work on collecting information from all camps on general well-being and in those camps that are affected by COVID-19 on symptoms among other refugees; and have mobilized relief items for refugees as and when possible.

In Sri Lanka, there have been no known cases of COVID-19 in the North-East of Sri Lanka among returnees. However, the lockdowns have impacted on returnee livelihood opportunities and the crowding of new arrival accommodations – as returnees stay with extended family – posed health risks during COVID. OfERR Ceylon offices are able to work in Colombo and other districts with social distancing and keeping to the other norms. OfERR Ceylon Welcome Groups continue to liaise with government officials to link the most vulnerable returnees with dry rations and other support so they can stay inside and don't put themselves at risk pursuing livelihood activities. OfERR are also providing COVID-19 information through WhatsApp groups etc. with Welcome Groups.

In the elections last year, His Excellency Gotabaya Rajapaksa who was the defence minister during the last Rajapaksa regime which ended the violent civil war was elected President and later also won the parliamentary elections. This was initially a concern for Tamil refugees considering return, although this has not become a key factor in determining return numbers. Due to COVID-19, the return process has been stalled although some refugees would like to return as soon as possible. Some have had their passports and exit permit expire since there was no travel allowed. During a meeting in December 2020 in the Foreign Affairs office, the Honourable Mr. Charles Nimalanathan MP, TNA enquired with the Foreign Affairs Minister regarding the status of the Sri Lankan refugees. He said that due to the COVID-19 situation, return is not taking place. The foreign Secretary mentioned that the issue is not forgotten and there is no block for the returnees. The External Affairs Minister from India had raised the Tamil concerns in his recent visit to Sri Lanka in early January 2021, however there was no official response from the Sri Lankan government in this regard.

5. Research Findings

This section provides a summary response to the research questions as outlined in 3.2 above. Since the research has been carried out in different country contexts (Thailand, India and Sri Lanka), and the findings are to inform ongoing programming in each country by TBC and OfERR, findings are presented per country, to offer specific insights and best contribution to country level programming. A brief summary and reflection of findings across all country contexts is offered as a conclusion to support the overall 'I'm Prepared' Project and other refugee protection projects.

Findings have been written in brief and in plain English to maximise engagement by multiple audiences and assist with translation of key research findings.

Detailed analysis of interview responses is provided in separate attachments to this report. The intent of providing detailed analysis for each country is to share transparent findings with Project partners, and to maximise their engagement in the research findings and use within implementation of 'I'm Prepared' and ongoing community-based protection programming.

5.1. Thailand

What are women and men's experience of change in the fulfilment of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?

What mechanisms within the theory of change (program interventions) influence change?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the sections of the interview guide which are relevant to practical and strategic needs of women, gender roles and access and decision-making related to income.

Practical needs of access to information and services

Increased access to information⁶ and access to services⁷ is an indicator of practical needs being met, in order to improve living conditions and wellbeing.

Women participants reported a high level of access to four types of **information** in 2020. Information on the duration of support to refugees from donors was least accessed with 9 out of 24 women (37.5%) reporting they had no access and 6 out of 24 women (25%) saying they "don't know". Similarly, access to information on return and reintegration planning from Karenni leaders was mixed – 15 out of 24 women (62.5%) had access, 6 out of 24 women (25%) did not have access and 3 out of 24 women (12.5%) said they "don't know".

Comparison between responses from 2018 to 2020 show a positive shift towards more access to all types of information (Figure 4). While information regarding duration of support was the least accessed out of the six types of information, results showed a strong improvement from 2018. 13 women increased their access (increasing from "Don't know" to "No access" or "No access" to "Access").

⁶ The types of information are: "Peace process and political situation in Myanmar", "Thai government policy towards refugees", "Duration of support to refugees from donors", "Voluntary repatriation", "Resettlement to third country" and "Return and reintegration planning from Karenni leaders".

⁷ The types of services are: "Rations/food support", "Shelter related support", "Health services", "Education services", "Livelihoods training", "Counselling", and "Justice and legal services".

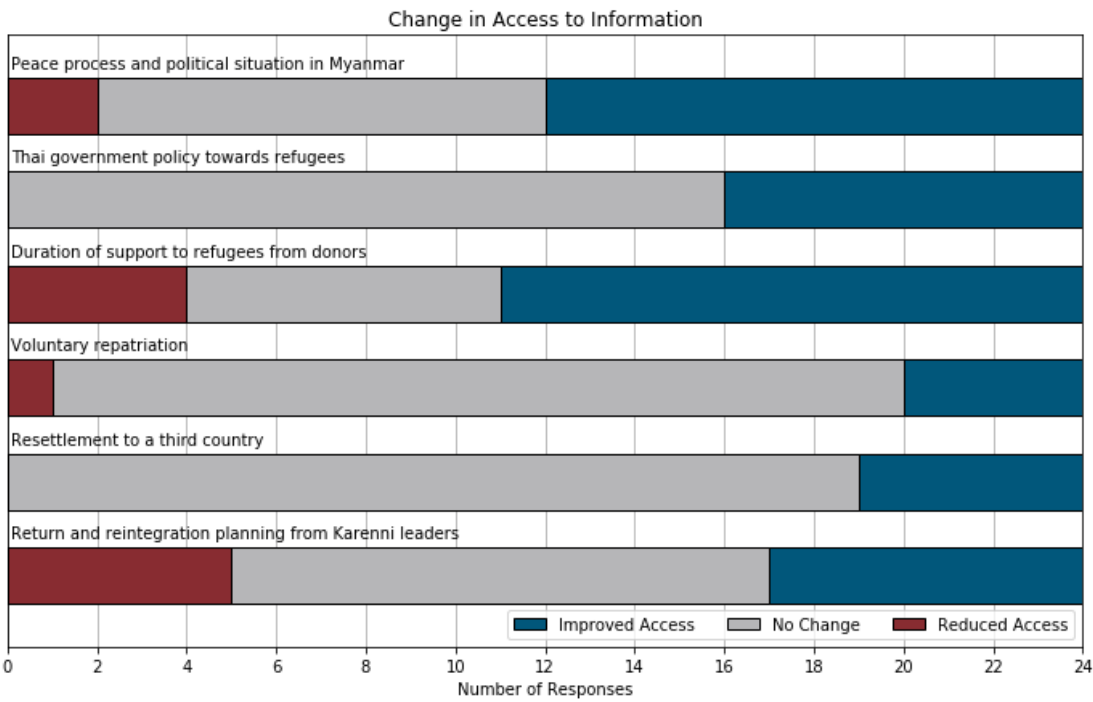


Figure 4: Change in the access to 6 types of information between 2018 and 2020 in Thailand

In 2020 the majority of women participants reported they had access to **services**, with the exception of shelter-related support which only 9 out of 24 women (37.5%) had access to.

Comparison between 2018 and 2020 (Figure 5) shows increased access to Livelihoods training, Counselling and Justice and Legal services. Access to rations and food support, health and education services show little change.

The comparison also shows reduced access for shelter-related support. TBC's explanation for this finding is that it correlates with a decrease in donor's provision of building supplies over the past two years. More recently TBC has made new budget allocations to building supplies so that access to shelter-related support is expected to increase for 2021.

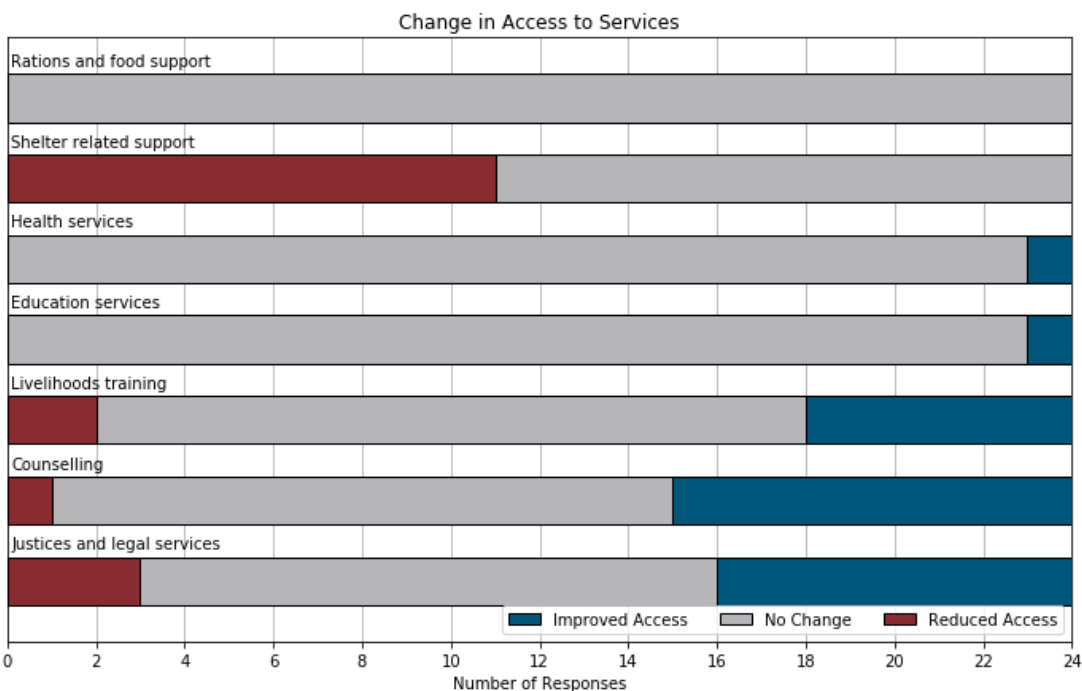


Figure 5: Change in access to services between 2018 and 2020 in Thailand

Overall, the majority of research participants experienced increased access to both information and services comparing research findings in 2018 (prior to participation in 'I'm Prepared' activities) and 2020.

Access and decision-making related to income

Increases in **women's income** is an indication of their economic empowerment. Comparison to previous years (2018 and 2019) show that men's income is stable, while women's income has become more varied (Figure 6). The median income for women research participants has decreased to 500 THB while the maximum value has increased (there is a broad range of income) in 2020.

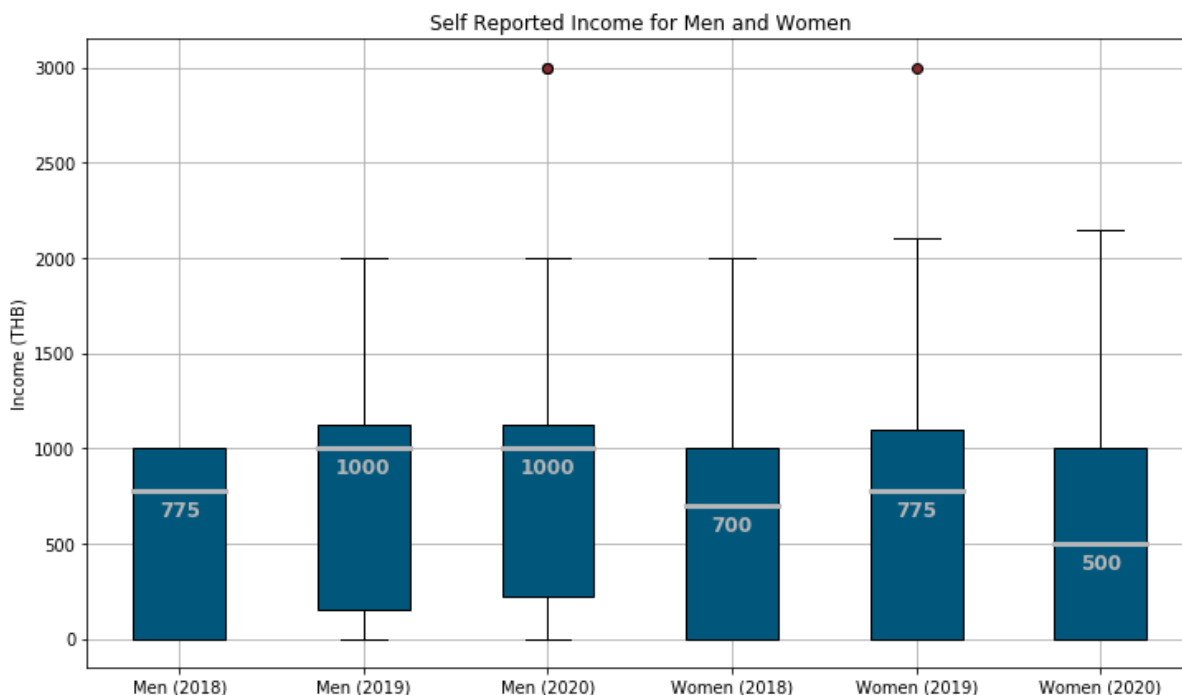


Figure 6: Boxplot of self-reported income between men and women from 2018-2020

In the refugee camps in Thailand, both women and men have limited income-generating opportunities. Comparison of women's reporting of men's income to their own self-reported income in 2020 show that households tend to have unbalanced income, however, the difference is not determined by gender but rather more so related to different household conditions (Figure 7). Seven women indicated income equality between the men and women participants. Eight women indicated women earn more than the men. Nine other women reported that men earn more than women.

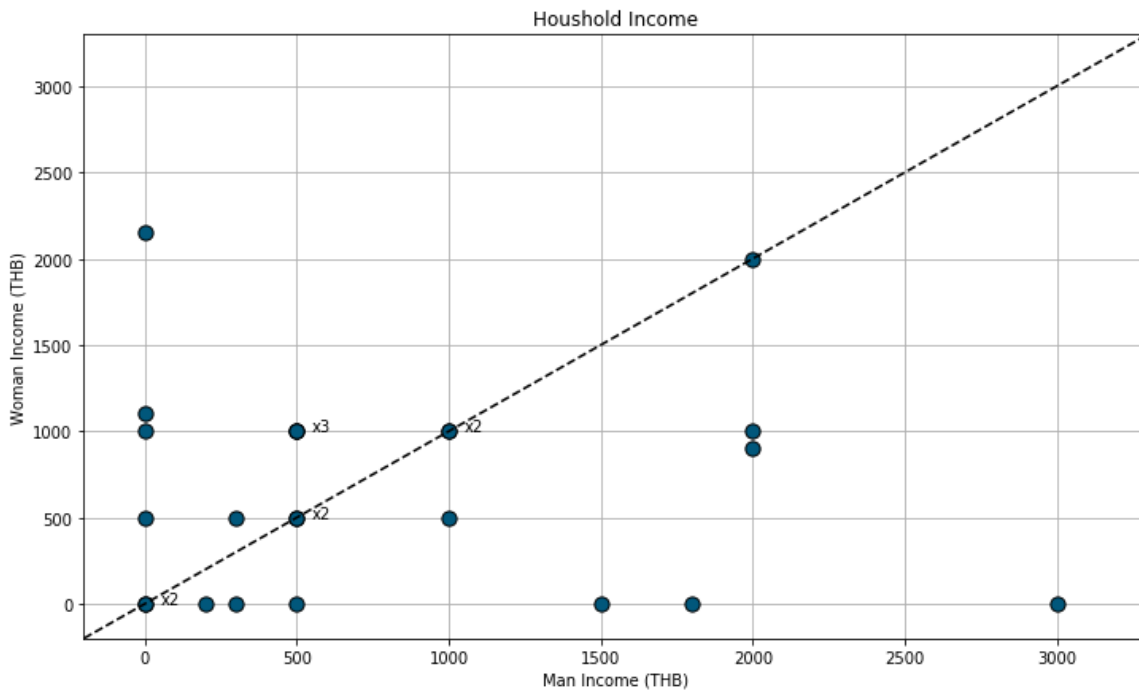


Figure 7: Scatterplot of household income reported by the woman research participants in Thailand. Each point represents a single household and the dashed line is equivalent to income equality

Equal decision-making and **control of resources** is an indicator of strategic needs of women being fulfilled. In 2018, 10 women indicated that 'women decided how money is spent' separately, while in 2020 responses from these same women shifted to 'both men and women together decided how money is spent'. This shared household decision-making regarding money may influence the process of household decision-making regarding decisions about the future.

Livelihoods

Increased confidence in **livelihood skills and opportunities** is an indicator of empowerment.

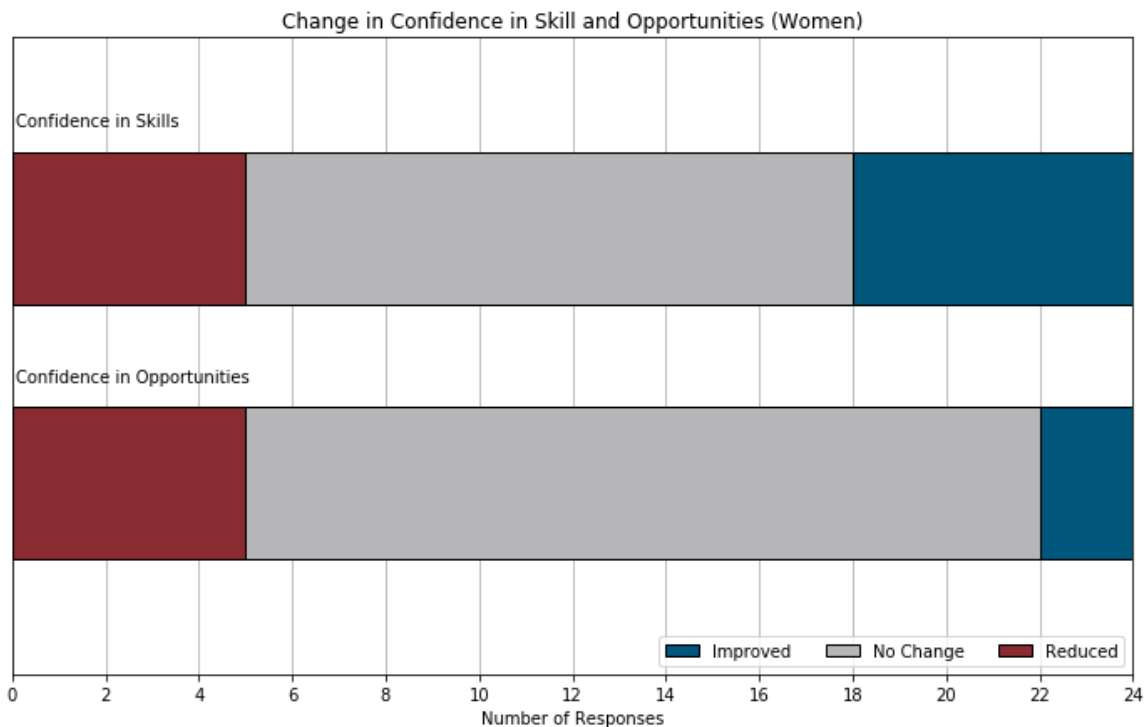


Figure 2: Change in women's responses regarding confidence in livelihood skills and opportunities between 2018 and 2020 in Thailand

In regard to confidence in **livelihood skills**, research participants have reported an inconsistent level of confidence (Figure 8). Five women participants had decreased confidence and six had increased confidence since 2018, while the other women stayed the same. In 2020, most women (14 out of 24, 58%) indicated their confidence was “in the middle”. 9 out of 24 (38%) responded they were “not at all confident” and only 1 (4%) said she was “very confident” (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Women’s reasons for low confidence in livelihood skills included being uneducated or illiterate; needing more skills training; old age/poor health; and limitations due to their status as a non-citizen in Thailand.

All the women (n=14) who participated in the **Livelihood training** responded that they found it valuable and they applied the learning to earn family income. Women described a range of practical skills they learnt from the training including making bean sprouts; making pig food; how to vaccinate and raise animals; and financial literacy (recording their income, savings and expenses). Five women shared their learning within the family, and seven women shared with immediate neighbours.

In regard to confidence in **livelihood opportunities**, there was a trend towards decreased confidence (Figure 8). Five women participants had decreased confidence and two had increased confidence since 2018, while the other women stayed the same. In 2020, 17 out of 24 (71%) women responded they were “not at all confident”. Women’s reasons for low confidence in livelihood opportunities include lack of land; political instability in Myanmar; and uncertainty about the future.

Men had similar responses with 7 out of 21 (33%) indicating they were “not at all confident” in livelihood skills and 18 out of 21 (86%) were “not at all confident” in livelihood opportunities (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

The findings above are likely to be linked to the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the large majority of women (22 out of 24, 92%) stated that their experience of the COVID-19 pandemic affected their livelihood in 2020. Some women were able to continue growing vegetables on small plots of land, raising pigs and received supplies from donors. However, many participants reported financial hardship. One woman responded that the price of a pig was usually 2,000 THB, but the selling price dropped to 1,000 THB which affected her a lot. Family members could not go out to work and earn income. While costs of items in the food card increased along with commodity prices, this was compensated for by TBC’s increase to the value of household food cards to respond to both reduced livelihood opportunities and an increase in commodity prices.

Gender Roles

Changes in gender roles, with women and men being more equally involved in leadership roles, is an indicator of women’s empowerment.

In 2020, women and men’s **activeness in livelihood activities** was similar with each other, and overall an increase from the previous year. Interestingly, while many men reported losing work opportunities in 2020, only 5% (n=1) were ‘not at all’ active in livelihood activities. Qualitative responses indicate that women and men do different types of livelihood activities, and while both women and men do “housework”, it is mostly considered women’s work.

Our analysis shows little change in women’s **activeness in social/cultural community activities** from 2018 to 2020.

Women’s responses in 2020 show an increase in their **activeness in leadership activities** from 2019.

Activeness in leadership	2019	2020
‘Not at all’	64% (16 out of 25) women	33% (8 out of 24) women
‘Little’	6% (4 out of 25) women	42% (20 out of 24) women
‘A lot’	20% (5 out of 25) women	25% (6 of 24) women

In 2019 men were more active in leadership than women, but in 2020 women and men's activeness in leadership was more similar.

Safety, Justice and Dignity

Women's **experiences of safety, justice and dignity** are indicators of practical needs and empowerment changes.

Figure 9 below shows changes between 2018 and 2020 in women's ratings of their sense of safety (very safe, in the middle, not safe at all), justice (experience a high level of justice, in the middle, no experience of justice) and dignity (treated with high level of dignity, in the middle, treated with no dignity). Overall there is a shift towards improved ratings from women for all three indicators.

7 out of 24 women responded they had increased experiences of **safety** over the 2 years. Reasons given by women for rating their situation as 'very safe' included the management of section and camp leaders; camp committee; security; and community-based organisations. Those who rated their situation 'in the middle' were concerned about fire risk in the camp; intrusion of people in their home; and lack of security/protection when going outside the camp.

11 out of 24 women had increased experiences of **justice** over the 2 years. Reasons given by women for responding they 'experience a high level of justice' include experiences of fairness with the services and jobs they receive; no discrimination; and a positive experience of gender equality. Women who rated their experience of justice 'in the middle' described a range of reasons with no key themes emerging.

9 out of 24 women had increased experiences of **dignity** over the 2 years. Reasons given by women for responding they 'experience a high level of dignity' include respectful and polite behaviours from others; positive treatment; no discrimination; maintaining self-dignity and one woman responded *"I am a member of an organisation so people treat me well"*. Women who did not experience dignity at all or rated it 'in the middle' explained that having illness or lack of skills prevented them from working which affected their quality of life, and other people judged and humiliated them.

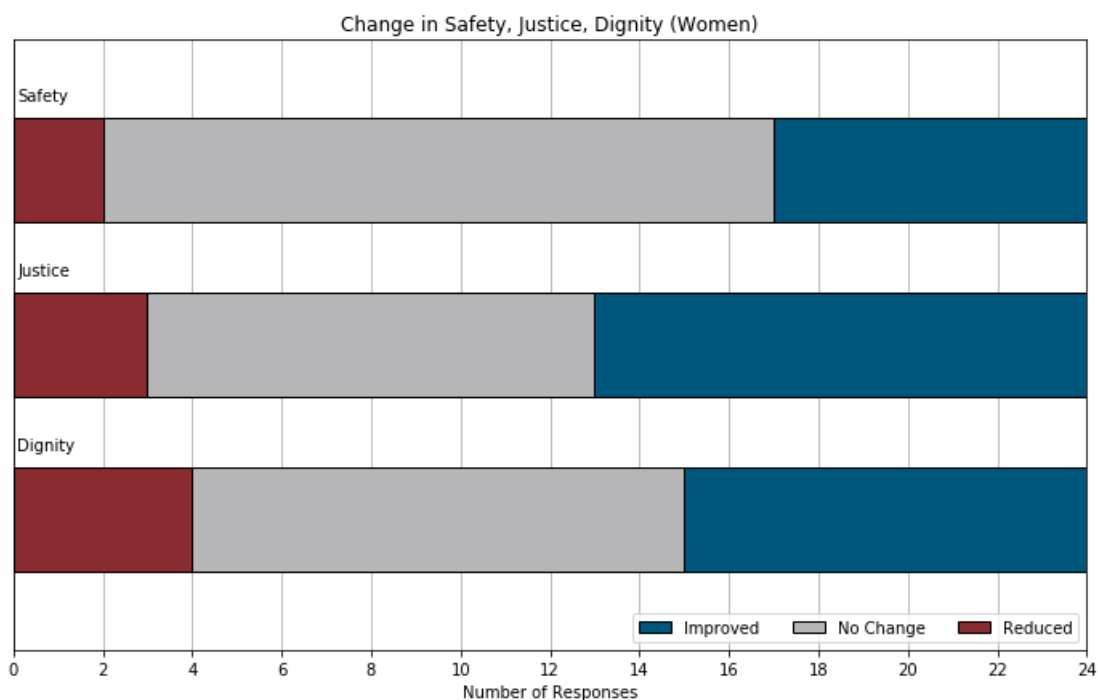


Figure 9: Change in women's responses for sense of Safety, Justice and Dignity between 2018 and 2020 in Thailand

Refugees' experiences during 2020 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 10 shows that in most cases men and women indicated that the impacts were the same for both. Refugees were not able to leave the camps and had restricted livelihood opportunities. However, the qualitative responses revealed there were some particular gendered impacts. One woman responded that during the lockdown of camps due to

COVID-19 risks, men stayed at home and increased their consumption of alcohol. Another woman mentioned more arguments in the household because there was no money for necessities.

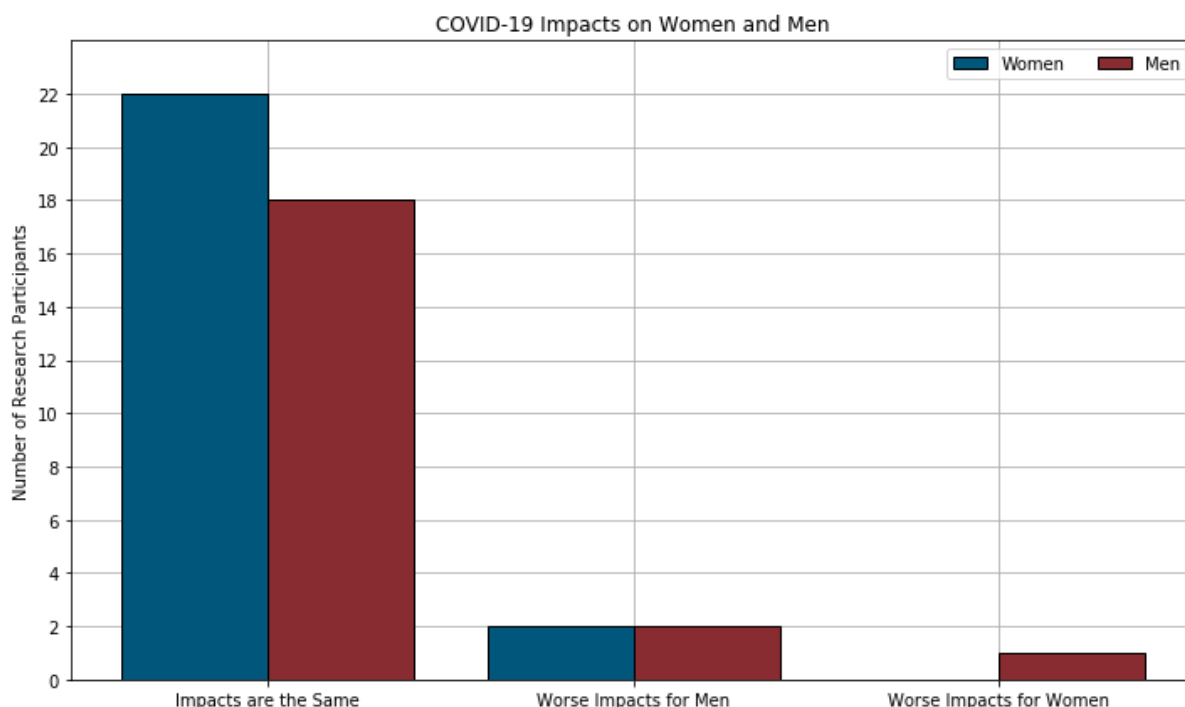


Figure 3: Difference in severity of COVID-19 impacts between women and men in Thailand

Decision-making about the future

Increased confidence in **decision-making about the future** is an indicator of empowerment.

The research found changes in responses about **where women plan to live in the future**. In 2020, 13 women said they expected to be living in a third country, 8 didn't know where they would be living, 2 responded they expected to live in other parts of Thailand and 1 expected to live in the camps in Thailand.

Comparison of responses between 2018 and 2020 show a shift towards expecting to be living in a third country. In 2018, four women said they didn't know where they would be living, but now think they will be living in a third country. Similarly, in 2018, three women expected to be living in Myanmar, but in 2020 they now think they will be living in a third country.

Related to the 'I'm Prepared' objective for women to be empowered to make informed decisions about return / reintegration, the majority of women (21 out of 24, 88%) reported that both men and women together made the **decision about where they live in the future** in their household. The responses of 2 women shifted from not being sure who was making the decisions in 2018 to now responded that both men and women make the decisions together.

Women were asked to nominate **who or what⁸ supported their decision** about the future. Most women described family and themselves as supporting their decision.

Women were asked to rate their **confidence in their decision where to live in the future**. In 2020, 9 participants responded they were 'very' confident, 8 were 'in the middle' and 6 'not at all' confident. Comparison to 2018 shows a small increase in confidence, 4 women were 'not at all' confident in decisions in 2018 but now are 'very' confident.

⁸ Options for support were 'myself', 'family', 'UNHCR', 'leaders', 'livelihood opportunities', 'don't know', 'other'.

In 2020, the majority of women (19 out of 24, 79%) said that decision-making about the future was affected by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of these women, 2 responded that they wanted to go to a third country but their plans were suspended due to the pandemic.

Women described a diverse range of **actions to achieve their decision** for the future. For moving to a third country, women planned to go to the UN office and wait until they could apply, and they also told their doctor and asked for help from relatives. For other parts of Thailand, they would follow the rules/regulations.

Research Question:

What impact do changes to gender equality and women's empowerment have on women's and men's' decision making in return / reintegration (since Year 1)?

The response to this research question presents analysis from the research findings, within the context that at the time of data collection in 2020 and writing the report in 2021 the geo-political environment in Myanmar is not conducive to refugee return.

Women's access to information increased which may support women to make an informed decision about return / reintegration. Women had a high level of access to information on 'Voluntary repatriation', 'Resettlement to third country', 'Return and reintegration', 'Peace process and political situation in Myanmar', and 'Thai government policy towards refugees'.

Women reported applying learnings from the protection training (which aims to provide women with information relevant to voluntary return) in their family to increase their preparedness. They shared learning with their family and immediate neighbours about preparing for returning to Myanmar or for closure of the camps. They encouraged others to attend training to build their knowledge on protection and livelihood skills. A group of refugee leaders trained as trainers in the 'I'm Prepared' protection trainings organised and delivered five protection and return-preparedness trainings in the other five refugee camps; these follow-up trainings were delivered on a voluntary basis and without project funding, indicating the value refugee leaders found in the training.

Women reported the same access to rations and food support, and health and education services, while access to Livelihoods training, Counselling and Justice and Legal services increased. This is indicative of positive changes in gender equality and may inform decisions about return / reintegration.

Research findings show some indications of economic equality between men and women in 2020 which may have a positive impact on women's decision-making in return / reintegration. Within the constrained context of livelihood opportunities in the refugee camps, there is little disparity between men and women's income earned. There was a positive change in gender roles in household decision-making, shown by the finding that in 2018, 10 women indicated that 'women decided how money is spent' separately, while in 2020 responses from these same women shifted to 'both men and women together decided how money is spent'.

Our analysis on livelihoods showed a decrease in confidence in livelihood opportunities, which may influence women's decision-making about return / reintegration. In 2020, 17 out of 24 (71%) women responded they were "not at all confident" in livelihood opportunities. This drop in confidence in livelihood opportunities was also experienced by men. This may be the result of COVID-19 and also worsening security situation in Myanmar. Livelihood training was appreciated by women in building their skills for livelihood activities in the camps.

Women also saw value in the gender training which they reported supported their awareness and empowerment at the household level. The most common learnings recalled were related to activities on gender roles, who decides the resources, and the concept of gender equality.

Women's roles and activeness in leadership is an indicator of empowerment. As described in more detail above, women's responses in 2020 show an increase in their activeness in leadership activities, and similar levels of leadership between women and men.

Rating of sense of safety, dignity and justice in 2020 indicate an overall trend towards improvement in women's empowerment, which may have a positive impact on decision-making about return / reintegration. 7 out of 24 women responded they had increased experiences of safety, 11 out of 24 women had increased experiences of justice and 9 out of 24 had increased experiences of dignity.

The research findings which relate to decision-making about where to live in the future found a shift in women's future expectations to be living in a third country, and also among a large portion of women who were not sure about their future plans. The findings also indicate that women are involved in decision-making about return / reintegration, together with other household members. Comparison to 2018 shows a small increase in women's confidence in their decision about the future, four women were 'not at all' confident in decisions in 2018 but now are 'very' confident.

The women who participated in 'Go and See' visits to Myanmar (n=6) reported a range of learnings related to livelihoods, education, health and the current situation in the villages. Although most women did not describe how they applied the learnings, they reported sharing information with their families and immediate neighbours which may have influenced decision-making about return / reintegration.

Research Question:

What learning from Year 3 research can inform future projects of partners and women's empowerment and resettlement in other contexts?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the theory of change of the 'I'm Prepared' Project and more specifically the objectives related to Knowledge; Economic empowerment and Leadership, as well as consideration for the long-term (goal) outcome. Whilst 'I'm Prepared' project is due to end, the findings are offered to inform ongoing community-based protection programming.

Knowledge

Objective 1 of I'm Prepared Project relates to 'knowledge and preparedness in camps'.

- The research findings show that women's access to information and services increased during the project. This change indicates that resourcing TBC/KNWO to disseminate information was an effective strategy to empower women to be more informed and meet their practical needs.
- Women living in camps in Thailand shared information from the 'I'm Prepared' training mostly with family members and neighbours and these close-knit trusted relationships should be valued.
- As learning was not shared to a great extent with camp leaders, participants were not necessarily engaging to influence them. As protection training contains strategic approaches for community-based protection and gender equality, it could be strengthened with more leaders being engaged in the training.
- Women's responses highlighted that illiterate participants found it harder engage with 'I'm Prepared' activities and research. Tailored methods of training and communication need to be used to support these marginalised participants to engage.

Economic Empowerment

Objective 2 relates to 'enabling environment and economic empowerment for return'.

- While the research findings show there is relative equality between women and men in their income earned in the constrained context of the camp, in 2020 women experienced greater variation in the range of income and the income median decreased for women. It is important in future livelihood projects to recognise there are differences in the type of work activities between women and men and due to these differences, they will be affected differently by shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic. A gender-sensitive approach is needed for livelihood projects for be planned and implemented to contribute to gender equality.
- Many women and men's livelihoods have been affected by COVID-19, and the project should continue to monitor women's income levels and if livelihood opportunities increase once the short-term impacts of COVID-19 are addressed.
- Women's responses highlighted that different confidence in livelihoods was informed by women's abilities, age and health. Older women were less confident in their livelihood skills and opportunities than women who perceived themselves as able-bodied, young and healthy. In future livelihood projects it is important to consider intersectionality in overlapping or compounding characteristics of

marginalisation such as gender, age, ability, and socio-economic context, so that activities are implemented with this diversity in mind.

- Although women reported benefiting from livelihood training, their confidence in livelihood opportunities decreased. This indicates the economic environment is very disabling for refugee women and there may be value for refugee protection projects to focus on advocacy to address the structural issues.
- Considering that women intend to stay in the camps in Thailand rather than return to Myanmar, livelihoods projects might focus on appropriate livelihoods for subsistence and household self-reliance.

Leadership

Objective 3 relates to 'social and political empowerment'.

- The research findings showed an increase in women's activeness in leadership. Women's role in community leadership should be acknowledged along with men's, and continued to be championed in refugee empowerment projects. There should also be attention to encouraging rotation of leaders to build capacity of different individual women, rather than just a few.
- Women participants who benefited from gender training have requested more training for other women and for men in their families / communities. Project implementors should continue responding to this appetite for positive changes in gender relations with further activities.
- Women's responses indicate they build their own capacity by learning from other participants. Gatherings of women in a forum to exchange knowledge may be a relevant approach to empower women.

Return and reintegration – Long-term outcome (goal)

- The research findings confirm the original project design focus on the importance of enabling environments for safe return of refugees. Throughout the course of the 'I'm Prepared' project the social and political context in Myanmar has changed several times and deteriorated overall. Informed decision-making regarding return, and preparedness for return, should not be implemented as a means of promoting return but rather to support refugees to access information and services to determine whether returning is or is not the right decision for them, and if so, at what time and under what conditions.
- Participants' responses suggest that refugees may benefit from reassurances on provision of protection in the camp. Project implementors might update information about donor's support and share it regularly.
- Many women responded they 'don't know' about their decision for the future which reflects the uncertainty of their context. Project partners should continue to undertake advocacy for systems-level change and longer-term durable solutions for protection of refugees.

5.2. India

What are women and men's experience of change in the fulfilment of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?

What mechanisms within the theory of change (program interventions) influence change?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the sections of the interview guide which are relevant to practical and strategic needs of women, gender roles and access and decision-making related to income.

Practical needs of access to information and services

Increased access to information⁹ and access to services¹⁰ is an indicator of practical needs being met, in order to improve living conditions and wellbeing.

The research findings show a positive change in women’s access to all six types of **information** (Figure 11). The highest level of access to information was for livelihood opportunities in Sri Lanka; Government of Sri Lanka support on return; the security situation in Sri Lanka and the ferry service to Sri Lanka.

Women participated in **protection training** and some of the main learnings they reported were related to the process for obtaining official documents; women and child safety; preparedness for return and skills to develop to reduce their threats and vulnerabilities.

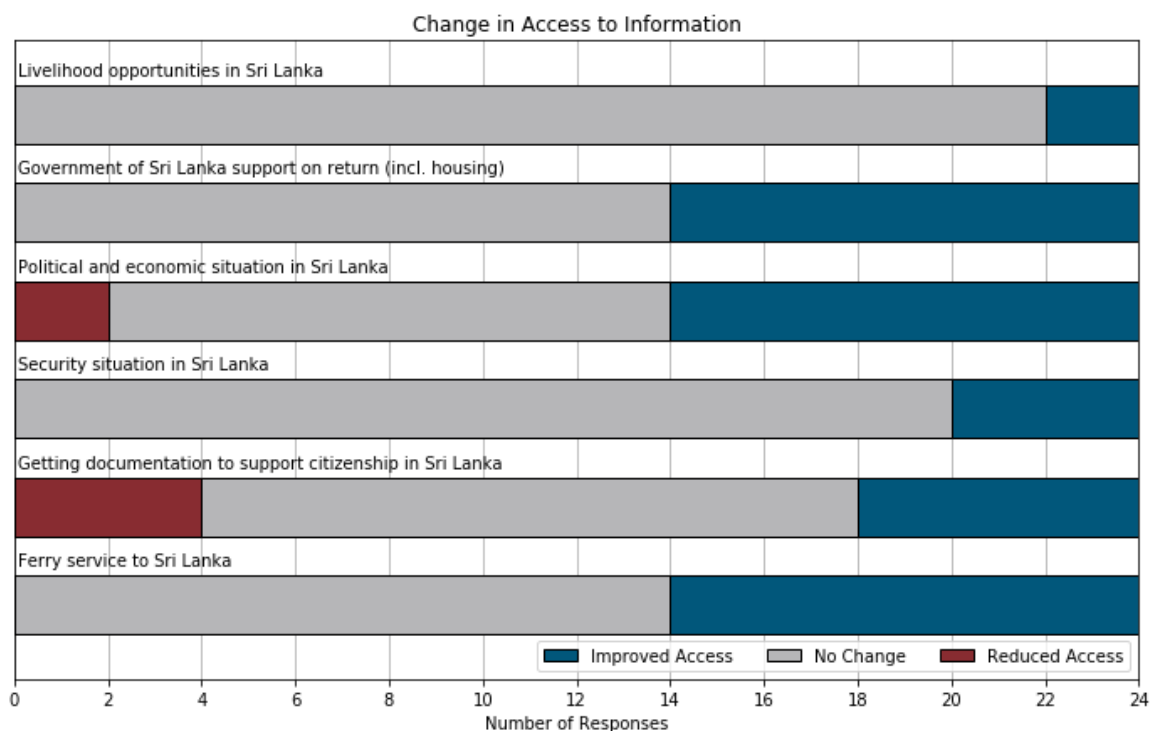


Figure 11: Change in the number of information accessed between 2018 and 2020 in India

The comparison of women’s access to **services** in 2018 and 2020 had mixed results for different types of services (Figure 12). ‘Counselling’ is the only service where all women now access, including those that did not access previously in 2018. Conversely ‘Travel documentation and Expenditure for flights’ which was not accessed by 18 women in 2020, was previously accessed by 12 in the 2018. The other three types of services had similar numbers of women changing their responses from ‘No Access to Access’ as ‘Access to No Access’, indicating no real shift across the entire cohort. As with access to information, this may be due to the services no longer being required (this has been noted for at least one response regarding not accessing Documentation) especially regarding travel and flight expenditure during the COVID-19 border closures, or for other reasons.

⁹ Types of information are: livelihood opportunities in Sri Lanka; support from the government of Sri Lanka on return; political and economic situation in Sri Lanka; security situation in Sri Lanka; documentation to support citizenship in Sri Lanka; ferry service to Sri Lanka.

¹⁰ Types of services are: counselling; documentation for citizenship; access to return and reintegration information; travel documents and expenditure for flights; livelihoods training.

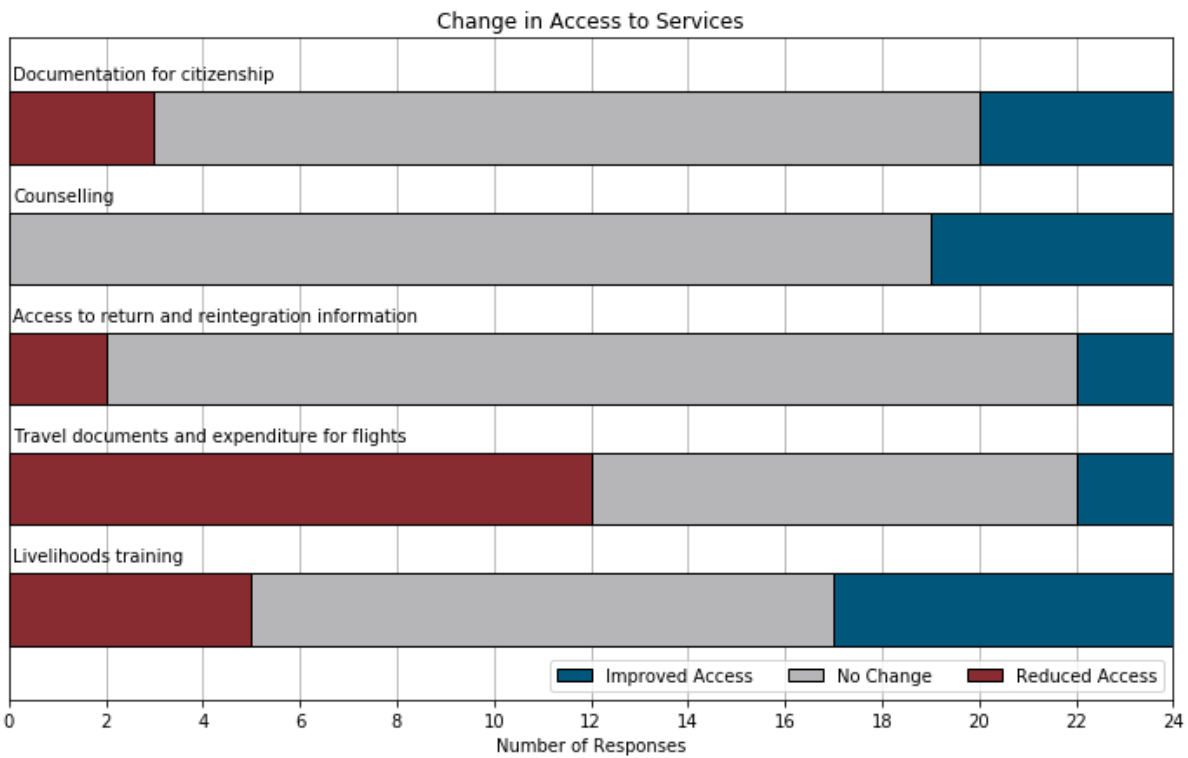


Figure 12: Change in the number of services accessed between 2018 and 2020 in India

Access and decision-making related to income

Increases in **women's income** is an indicator of economic empowerment. Figure 13 shows there is no significant differences in income levels between 2018, 2019 and 2020. Comparison of women's reporting of men's income and their own self-reported income confirmed that the majority of women have less income than the men within their household.

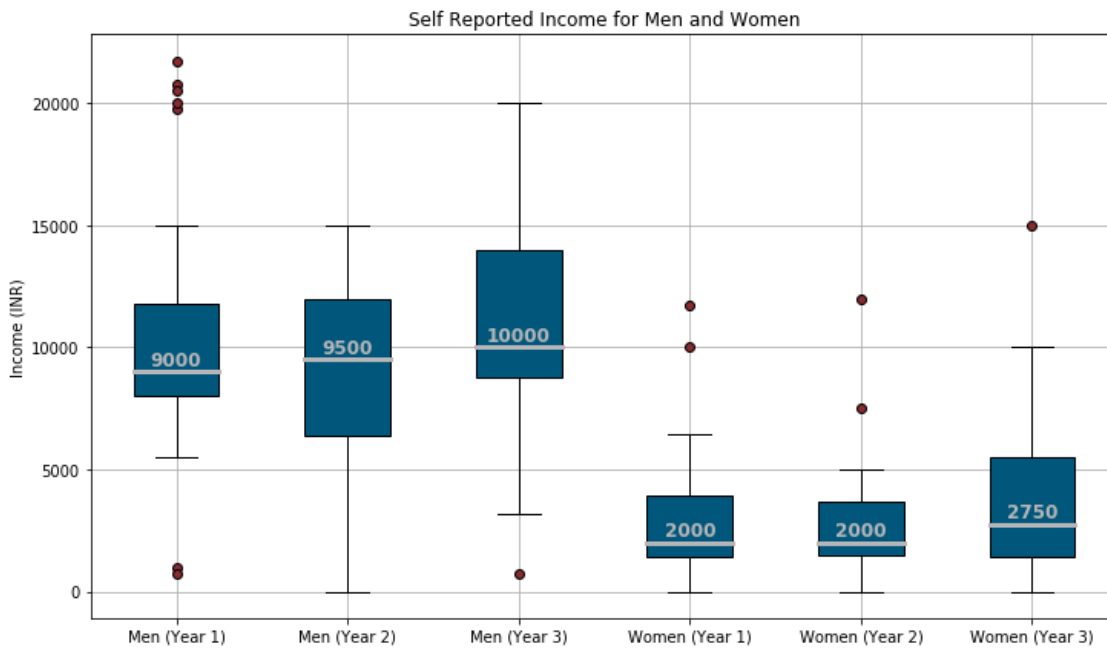


Figure 13: Boxplot of self-reported income between men and women from 2018-2020

Equal decision-making and **control of resources** is an indicator of strategic needs being fulfilled. Despite the difference in income, most women indicated that decisions for how money is spent is now shared between both men and women. In 2018, seven women indicated that ‘women decided how money is spent’ separately, while in 2020 responses from these same women shifted to ‘both men and women together decided how money is spent’.

Livelihoods

Increased confidence in **livelihood skills and opportunities** is an indicator of empowerment.

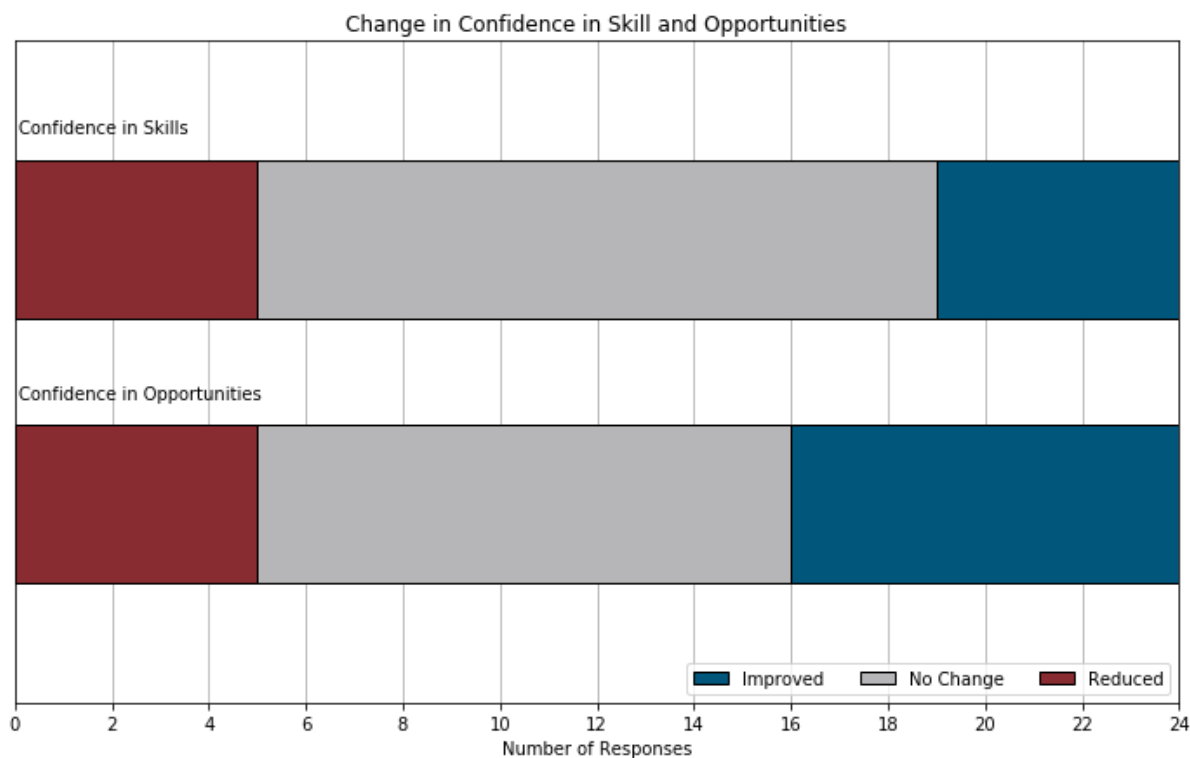


Figure 14: Change in responses for confidence in livelihood skills and opportunities between 2018 and 2020 in India

Comparison between 2018 and 2020 shows no overall improvement in **confidence in skills**, with an equal number of positive and negative changes (Figure 14). Although our analysis of the closed question rating (quantitative measure) showed no overall improvement, open question results (qualitative measure) show positive changes experiences by women. Women describe livelihood skills they have gained such as catering, tailoring, basket weaving, raising livestock and agriculture.

16 out of the 17 women who participated in the **Livelihood training** found it valuable. They reported learning from the training including information how to deal with customers, how to earn more income in a low-investment business, and how to approach bank loans, business programs and schemes. 13 out of 17 women had applied the learning from the training to livelihoods in India. 14 of the women had shared the learning – the majority shared within their family and with immediate neighbours, and to a less extent with other people in the camp, camp leaders and friends.

Comparison between 2018 and 2020 shows a slight positive shift for **confidence in opportunities** (Figure 14). Reasons given by women who were ‘very confident’ in livelihood opportunities described confidence in information shared by their relatives in Sri Lanka about job opportunities; loans available through self-help groups; and increased confidence of being able to apply skills learnt in livelihood training to take up opportunities.

The findings above are likely to be linked to the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the large majority of women (22 out of 24, 92%) responded that their livelihood was affected by their experience of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Most reported that there were no employment opportunities, both for women and men, which lead to financial hardship during the pandemic period. From the two women who responded their

livelihoods were not affected, their reasons were they had savings that sustained them, and they ran a petty shop in the camp (which gave them income).

Gender Roles

Changes in gender roles, with women and men being more equally involved in leadership roles, is an indicator of women’s empowerment.

In 2020, women were more active in **livelihood and economic activities** than men. More women indicated they engaged ‘a lot’ (21 out of 24, 88%) compared to men (17 out of 24, 71%). The research results show similar levels of activeness between 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Similarly to previous years, both men and women engaged in **social/cultural activities** in 2020. Overall 100% of women and men rated their engagement ‘A lot’ or ‘A little’. More women indicated they engaged ‘A lot’ (13 out of 24, 54%) compared to men (10 out of 24, 42%).

In 2020, a significant number of women engaged in **leadership** roles, with 22 of 24 (92%) women rating their engagement ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’. Similarly 22 of 24 (92%) men engaged ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ in ‘leadership roles’. More women rated their activeness in leadership ‘A lot’ (15 out of 24, 63%) compared to men (10 of 24, 54%).

The research results show an increase in men and women’s activeness in leadership. In 2019, 21 of 28 (75%) women were engaged ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ in leadership roles. 20 of 28 (71%) men were engaged ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ in leadership roles.

Activeness in leadership	2019	2020
‘Not at all’	25% (7 out of 28) women	8% (2 out of 24) women
‘Little’	35.7% (10 out of 28) women	29% (7 out of 24) women
‘A lot’	39.3% (11 out of 28) women	63% (15 out of 24) women

Safety, Justice and Dignity

Women’s **experiences of safety, justice and dignity** are indicators of practical needs and empowerment changes.

Figure 15 below shows changes between 2018 and 2020 in women’s ratings of their sense of safety (very safe, in the middle, not safe at all), justice (experience a high level of justice, in the middle, no experience of justice) and dignity (treated with high level of dignity, in the middle, treated with no dignity). There are mixed results for women in India in their ratings of safety, justice and dignity.

Our analysis shows an improvement in rating of safety from ‘in the middle’ to ‘very safe’ for four women, while there was a greater negative change from ‘very safe’ to ‘in the middle’ for seven women. Reasons given by women for rating their situation as ‘very safe’ include support from family members; neighbours and government; sense of protection living in the camp during the COVID-19 pandemic; and feeling comfortable to approach authorities for help. Women who rated their situation ‘in the middle’ shared concerns about community violence increasing in the camp; ‘problems frequently in the home’ due to alcohol addiction; strict government officers constraining mobility and women’s insecure status as a refugee.

Out of the three indicators, a sense of justice improved the most. Only four women indicated lower scores from ‘a high level of justice’ to ‘in the middle’, compared to nine who had improved ratings of justice from ‘not at all’/‘don’t know’ to ‘in the middle’ or ‘in the middle’ to ‘a high level of justice’. Reasons given by women for responding they experience ‘a high level of justice’ include being treated equally by government authorities and camp leaders; and confidence in own abilities to solve problems and make informed decisions. Women who rated their experience of justice ‘in the middle’ described challenges in accessing rights because of living in the refugee camps or their economic positions.

Our analysis shows an improvement in rating of dignity from 'in the middle' to 'treated with a high level of dignity' for six women, and a negative change for five women from 'treated with a high level of dignity' to rating their dignity 'in the middle'. Reasons given by women for responding they 'experience a high level of dignity' include receiving respectful and polite behaviours from others, developing dignity and self-discipline through skills training, and others asking their opinions. One woman responded people have a good opinion of those who had worked as a counsellor for OfERR. Women who rated dignity 'in the middle' described a range of reasons with no key themes emerging.

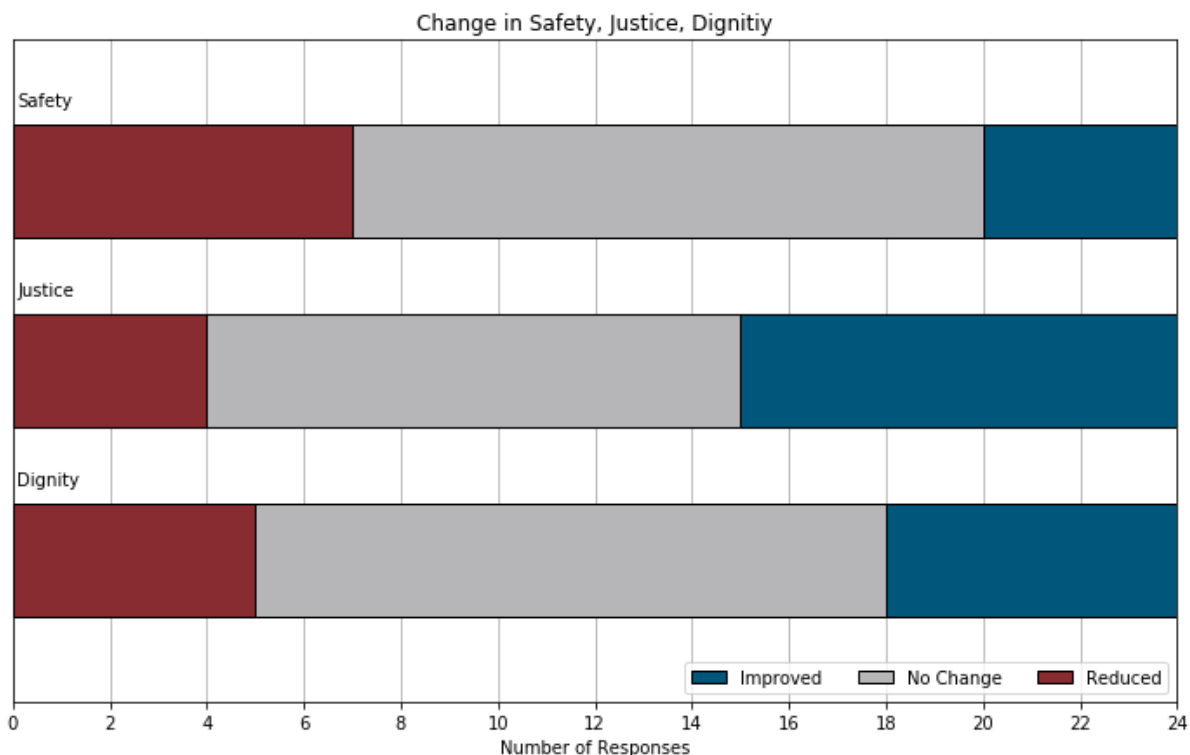


Figure 15: Change in responses for sense of Safety, Justice and Dignity between 2018 and 2020 in India

Refugees' experiences during 2020 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 16 shows that the majority of women (13) and men (18) responded that impacts were the same for women and men. However five women responded that there were worse impacts for women, and described the difficulties of meeting household needs without an income, and women holding more responsibility than men for this.

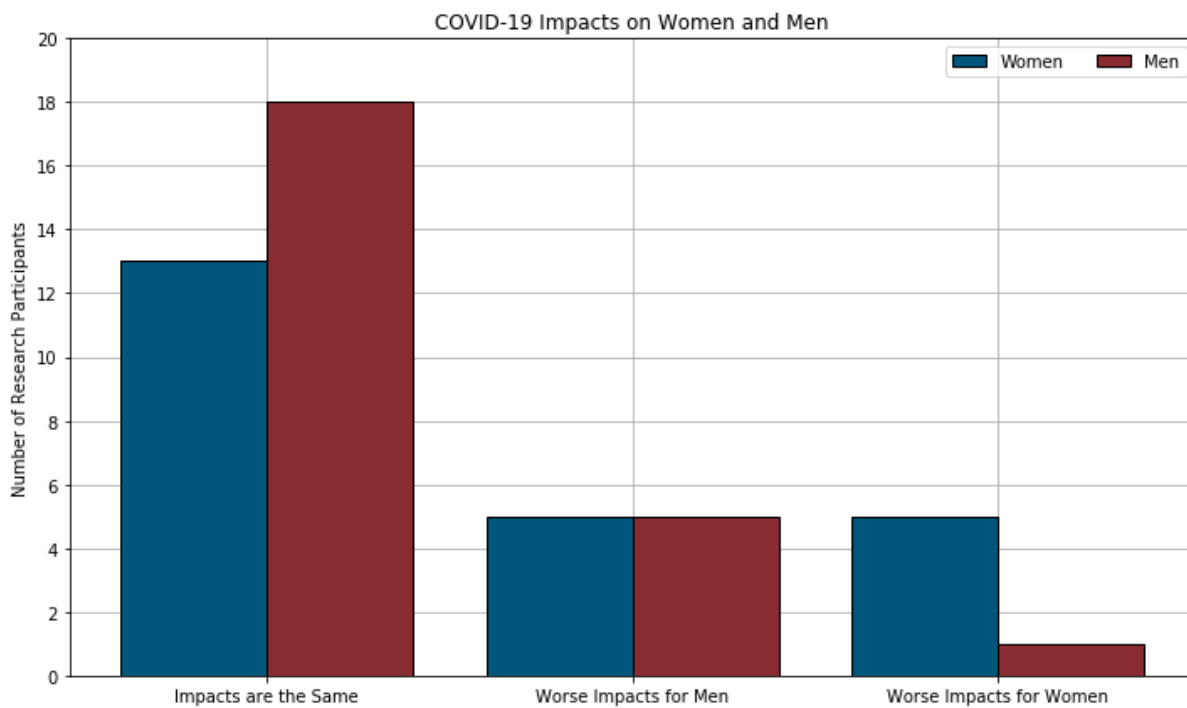


Figure 6: Difference in severity of COVID-19 impacts between women and men in India.

Decision-making about the future

Increased confidence in **decision-making about the future** is an indicator of empowerment.

The decision around **where to live in the future** and reasons women provided about their decision were similar between 2018 and 2020, with the majority (20 out of 24) describing their plans to return to Sri Lanka. Two women said they would stay in India because they had no land in Sri Lanka and in India their husband had a steady income. Two women said they 'didn't know' because of the impact of COVID-19, the ferry service hadn't started, and her son married an Indian woman and planned to stay in India.

Related to the I'm Prepared objective for women to be empowered to make informed decisions about return / reintegration, the majority of women (21 out of 24, 88%) reported that both men and women together made the **decision about where they live in the future** in their household. The responses of three women shifted from making the decision themselves in 2018 to now indicating that men and women make the decisions together.

Women were asked to nominate **who or what**¹¹ **supported their decision** about the future. Most women described family and themselves as supporting their decision. UNHCR and OfERR also played a supporting role.

Our analysis shows women's **confidence in their decision where to live in the future** slightly decreased from 2018 to 2020. Four women shifted from being very confident to indicating their confidence was 'in the middle'.

In 2020, only 8 women said that their decision-making about the future was affected by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, while 15 women said it was not affected. Women who were affected described delay in relocating to Sri Lanka due to the air flights being suspended, concerns about medical services in Sri Lanka being worse than India, and their economic and mental resources being drained by their experience of the pandemic.

Women who planned to move to Sri Lanka planned actions such as preparing official documents, sorting financial matters and learning about the security and livelihood situation in Sri Lanka.

¹¹ Options for support were 'myself', 'family', 'UNHCR', 'leaders', 'livelihood opportunities', 'don't know', 'other'

Research Question:

What impact do changes to gender equality and women's empowerment have on women's and men's decision making in return / reintegration (since Year 1)?

Women's access to information increased, and overall there was a high level of access to information on Government of Sri Lanka support on return, the security situation in Sri Lanka, the ferry service to Sri Lanka and livelihood opportunities in Sri Lanka. This may have had a positive impact on women's informed decision-making.

Women's access to counselling services, documentation for citizenship and livelihood training increased, which indicate increase in preparedness for return / reintegration to Sri Lanka.

Women's income levels did not increase during the project and the inequality in incomes relative to men may negatively influence women's empowerment. However there was a positive change in women sharing decisions with men about how money is spent.

There was no overall increase in confidence in livelihood skills, though women who participated in the livelihood training valued their learning. There was a slight increase in confidence about livelihood opportunities in Sri Lanka, which may influence decision-making in return / reintegration.

The research findings suggest that participating in Women's Networks may have supported women in accessing services for protection and preparedness for return. Women's reported learnings related to individual benefits as well as how they applied the learning to support other members of their communities. Their positive experience in the Women's Networks may have supported women's empowerment.

The research findings are mixed for women's ratings of safety, justice and dignity. Out of the three indicators, women's sense of justice improved the most and some women recognised an increase in their own ability to make informed decisions.

Women's responses showed the majority of men and women together made the decision about where to live in the future. Women described a range of actions to achieve their decision for the future and accessed support from family members, UNHCR and OfERR. Comparison to 2018 shows a small decrease in women's confidence about their decision for the future, and as some women's decision-making has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, their confidence is expected to increase in the future when the impacts of the pandemic have lessened.

Research Question:

What learning from Year 3 research can inform future projects of partners and women's empowerment and resettlement in other contexts?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the theory of change of the 'I'm Prepared' Project and more specifically the objectives related to Knowledge; Economic empowerment and Leadership, as well as consideration for the long-term (goal) outcome.

Knowledge

Objective 1 of I'm Prepared Project relates to 'knowledge and preparedness in camps'.

- Participants reported continued and increased access to information to support women's empowerment and decisions about return. This indicates that OfERR's tactic has been successful in sharing information to some individuals who then share that information to other people in the camp (information-sharing clusters). This approach is more resource-efficient than going door-to-door to share information, and perhaps then there is resources available for other priorities.
- Participants in 'I'm Prepared' activities in India had good recall of learnings. This engagement in the knowledge-building activities may have been enabled by strong literacy and education levels in the camps.

- Within participants of the women's network, there was a strong theme around women learning how to approach government for their needs, such as obtaining official documents. This suggests a women-only space is important for women to share with each other how to overcome barriers and build confidence.

Economic Empowerment

Objective 2 relates to 'enabling environment and economic empowerment for return'.

- During the Project, disparity of income between women and men hasn't been addressed. As economic empowerment is a complex and long-term change process, it is challenging for the Project to engage at the systems-level. The Project livelihood activities operate in a context of the camp economies and the broader Indian economy which is segmented by gender, meaning women have more limited opportunities and low-wage options than men.
- Project partners should continue to promote linking of women (refugee) entrepreneurs with businesspeople and markets through Community Economic Development Forums, as a set of integrated activities, to remove barriers for women's participation in local markets. Other approaches include Women's Networks meeting government officials and other actors to undertake advocacy, or the project collaborating with a woman-led initiative that is working on systems-level economic change. An example of a strategic initiative would be advocating for changes to state laws to improve women's labour rights and working conditions.
- It is important for livelihood projects to recognise that livelihood training can reinforce gender norms in types of activities. For example, building women's skills in sewing/tailoring, home gardening, and raising livestock, while building men's skills in mechanical, management roles and higher-waged work. Future projects should continue to use market assessments to inform livelihood activities and consider the extent to which subsistence livelihoods can influence women's economic empowerment. On the other hand, women can value flexible work from home that allows them to manage their family caring responsibilities.
- Livelihood training which focused on building entrepreneurial capacities of women was valued. Project partners should continue to focus on business skills which may be transferrable to different contexts and assist refugees to monetise livelihood skills, that would increase the likelihood of income generation.

Leadership

Objective 3 relates to 'social and political empowerment'.

- Women are highly involved in leadership roles in the camps in India, and this involvement has increased since 2019. OfERR's focus on women's leadership during the 'I'm Prepared' Project and as part of other interventions outside of the Project may have influenced this aspect of women's empowerment. It is important to value and utilise women's leadership roles in their communities.
- A potential implication of women's activeness in all three areas of socio-cultural community roles, leadership and livelihood and economic activities, could be women's burden of work increases although this not identified in the research. It is important to maintain equality with men and ensure women's roles are valued and rewarded equally.

Return and reintegration – Long-term outcome (goal)

- Protection training was highly valuable for participants of the 'I'm Prepared' project, evidenced by many women applying the training to get official documents and engaging in other preparedness activities. Women also applied the learning to increase protection and preparedness for their community members.

- Women’s responses showed there is a trajectory in decision-making towards relocating to Sri Lanka in the future. This suggests that informed decision-making and preparedness continues to be an area to focus on for refugee protection projects in this context.

5.3. Sri Lanka

What are women and men’s experience of change in the fulfilment of practical and strategic needs of women in the project areas?

What mechanisms within the theory of change (program interventions) influence change?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the sections of the interview guide which are relevant to practical and strategic needs of women, gender roles and access and decision-making related to income.

Practical needs of access to information and services

Increased access to information and access to services is an indicator of practical needs being met, in order to improve living conditions and wellbeing.

Figure 17 shows women who have relocated to Sri Lanka from India reported improved or no change in access for five types of information¹². The greatest increase was for government of Sri Lanka support on return (including housing).

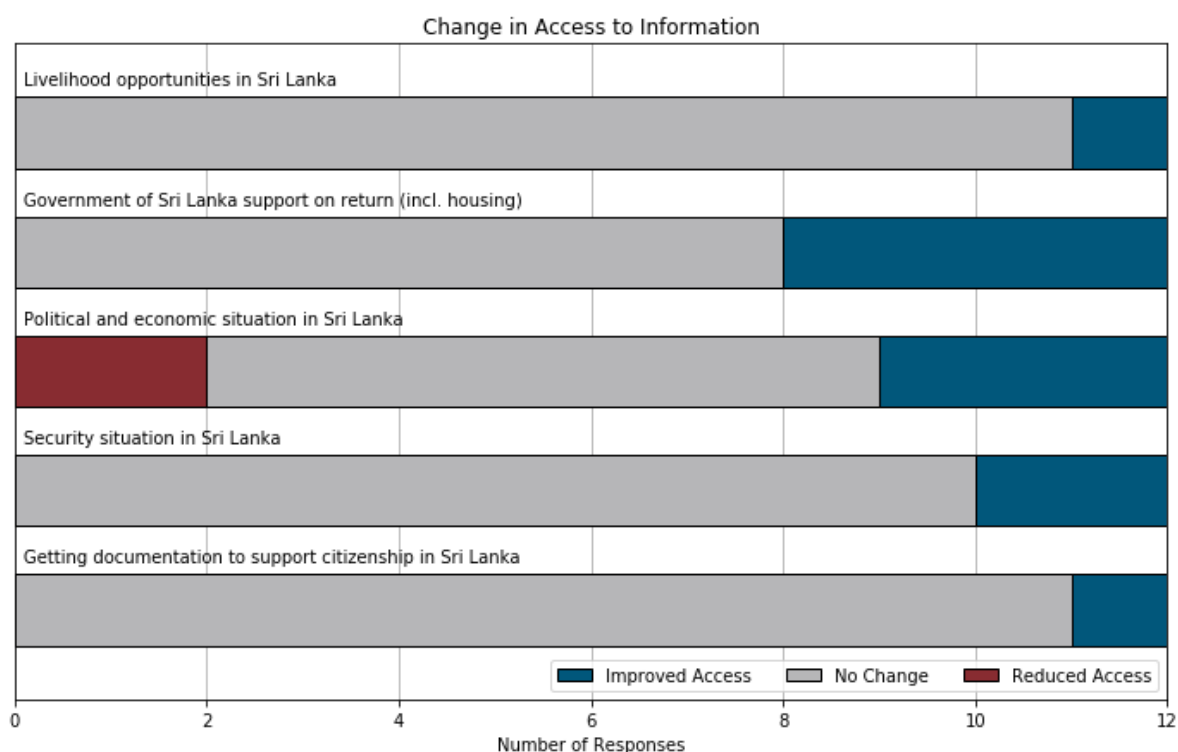


Figure 17: Change in the number of information accessed between 2018 and 2020 in Sri Lanka

Women reported improved access or no change to three types of services (Figure 18). Four women had reduced access to livelihoods training, which could be explained by these women having access in India previously and then moving to locations in Sri Lanka where they did not access livelihoods training.

¹² Types of information are: livelihood opportunities in Sri Lanka; support from the government of Sri Lanka on return; political and economic situation in Sri Lanka; security situation in Sri Lanka; and documentation to support citizenship in Sri Lanka.

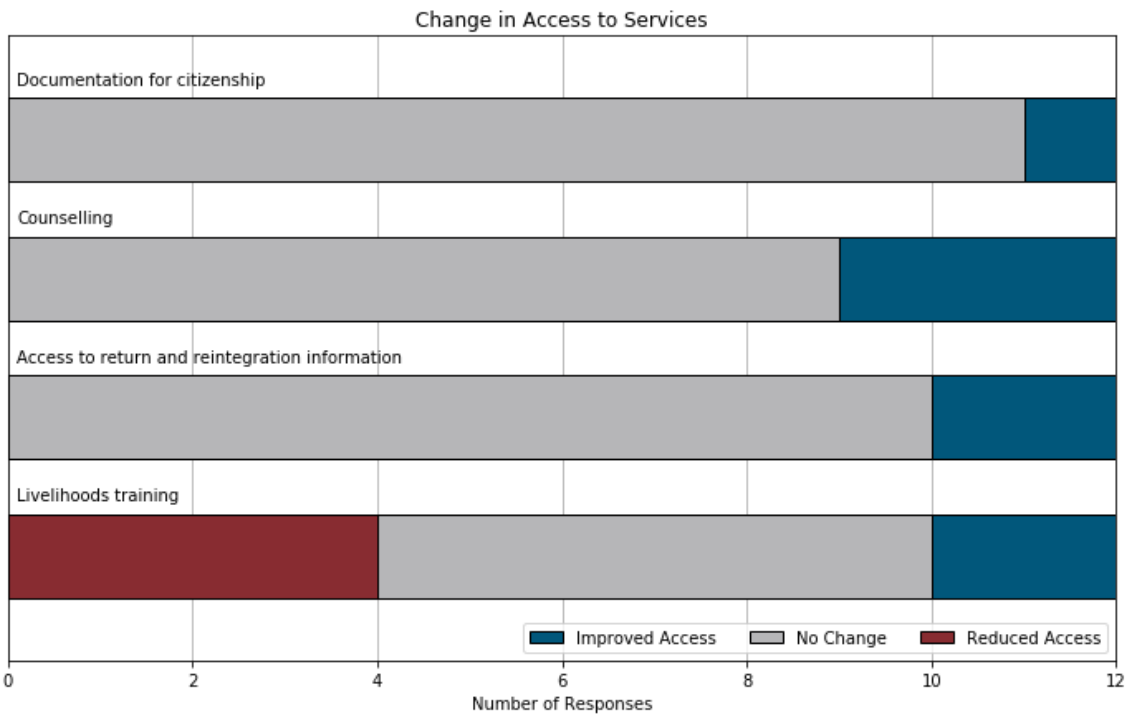


Figure 18: Change in the number of services accessed between 2018 and 2020

Access and decision-making related to income

Increases in **women’s income** is an indication of economic empowerment. Comparison of women’s reporting of men’s income and their own self-reported income shows that the majority of women have less income than the men within their household. Since relocating to Sri Lanka, most women reported not earning any income (the median income is 0).

Figure 19 shows that both men and women’s incomes have decreased between 2018 and 2020. This finding is likely to be linked with the impacts of COVID-19, as the majority of women and men returnees stated that their livelihoods had been affected by the impacts of COVID-19 in 2020. Women who were previously doing tailoring, labouring, or running retail or catering businesses may not have had these opportunities in 2020 due to the impacts of COVID-19 (this is described in further detail on page 39).



Figure 14: Self-reported income for men and women between 2018 and 2020 in Sri Lanka

OfERR staff responded to the finding about the gender disparity of income, explaining that at the period of reintegration in Sri Lanka usually men pursue outside work whereas women take the responsibility for meeting family needs such as access to services and schemes, children’s education, family’s civil and legal documentation, and process to apply for reintegration benefits. As they are occupied with these reintegration activities within the first 12-18 months after return, they are not available for income-generating activities. When women are more established, it is expected their employment and income will increase.

While these results do not show women’s economic independence within the three-year period of the study, changes in women’s incomes might be measured within a longer time period.

Equal decision-making and **control of resources** in an indicator of strategic needs being fulfilled. Despite the difference in income, most women indicated that decisions for how money is spent is now shared between both men and women. In 2018, five women indicated that ‘women decided how money is spent’ separately, while in 2020 responses from these same women shifted to ‘both men and women together decided how money is spent’.

Figure 20 shows women were more likely to indicate they could access **financial resources for investment** compared to men. A woman described saving some money and borrowing money from other people to develop her shop, and two women expressed confidence in accessing a bank loan to start a business. However, one woman reported there was no investment support for livestock raising and another woman did not complete her loan application to purchase a goat. Women’s responses indicate that some women are not able to access financial resources, which may be a barrier to their empowerment.

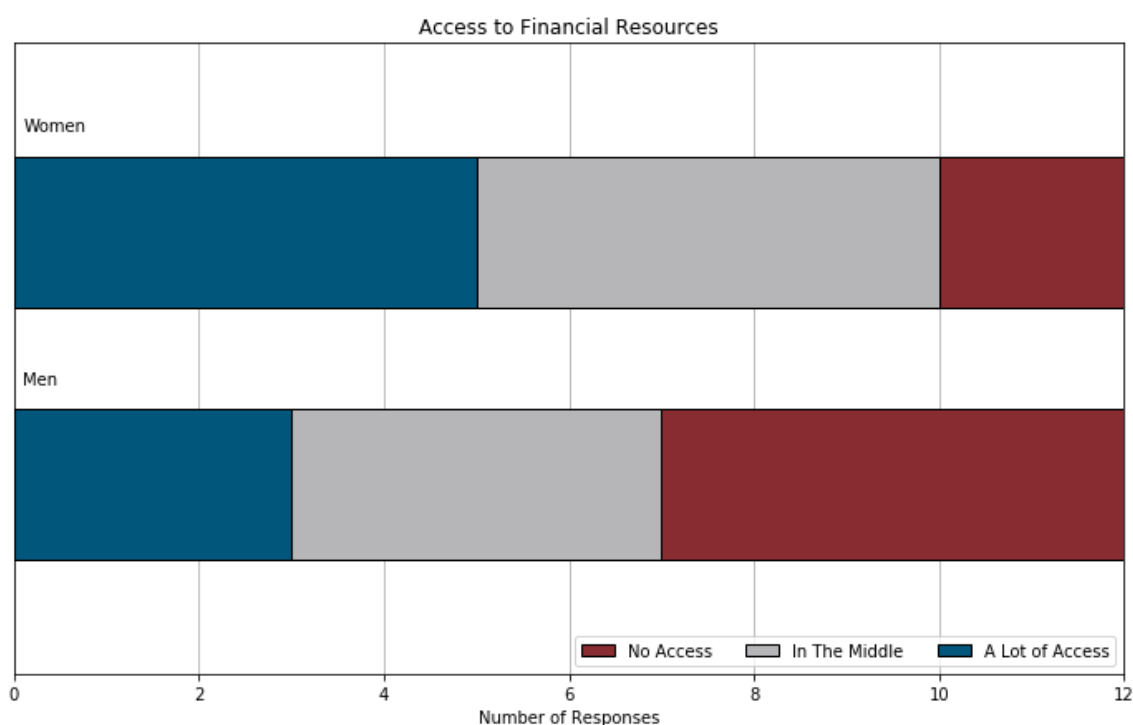


Figure 20: Access to financial resources by research participants in 2020 in Sri Lanka

Livelihoods

11 women were provided with **livelihood assistance**¹³ by the ‘I’m Prepared’ project in Sri Lanka which may have supported their practical needs. Women described a range of ways they had applied the benefits of the Livelihood Assistance, such as growing food in gardens to consume and sell, building a house, and earnings

¹³ Types of livelihood assistance (as reported by participants) included home garden, fishing material and nets, goats, poultry farm, small shop and tailoring equipment.

from livelihood activities supporting their family expenses. Women shared the gains from the livelihood assistance to a large extent within the family, and with immediate neighbours. To a lesser extent learning was shared with other people in the village, perhaps due to women having recently relocated and not being very familiar with people in the village. Women shared the livelihood assistance by sharing information, skills or giving work opportunities.

Increased confidence in **livelihood skills and opportunities** is an indicator of empowerment. All women in 2020 indicated they had 'high' or 'in the middle' confidence for livelihood skills and opportunities.

Our analysis showed four women were more **confident in skills** in 2020 compared to 2018, and no women had decreased (Figure 21). All nine women who had participated in livelihood training in India found it valuable and the majority of women shared learnings within their family and with immediate neighbours. To a lesser extent learning was shared with other people in the village. Women may have shared with members Self-Help Groups, Women's Economic Development Groups or Welcome Groups, but this data was not captured in interviews. Women shared skills according to the type of livelihood training they completed i.e. sewing, home gardening and raising livestock, marketing and financial training.

The research findings highlighted varied experience of **confidence in livelihood opportunities**. Four women had less confidence after relocation to Sri Lanka in 2020, while two had more confidence (Figure 21). Challenges described by women to access livelihood opportunities included being perceived as an outsider; lacking tailoring-related machines for tailoring businesses; department officials not allowing her to start a restaurant during the COVID-19 pandemic; being fully allocated to taking care of children while her husband went to work. As mentioned earlier, the majority of women (10 out of 12, 83%) responded that the COVID-19 pandemic had affected their livelihood, mostly due to loss of employment, customers and income.

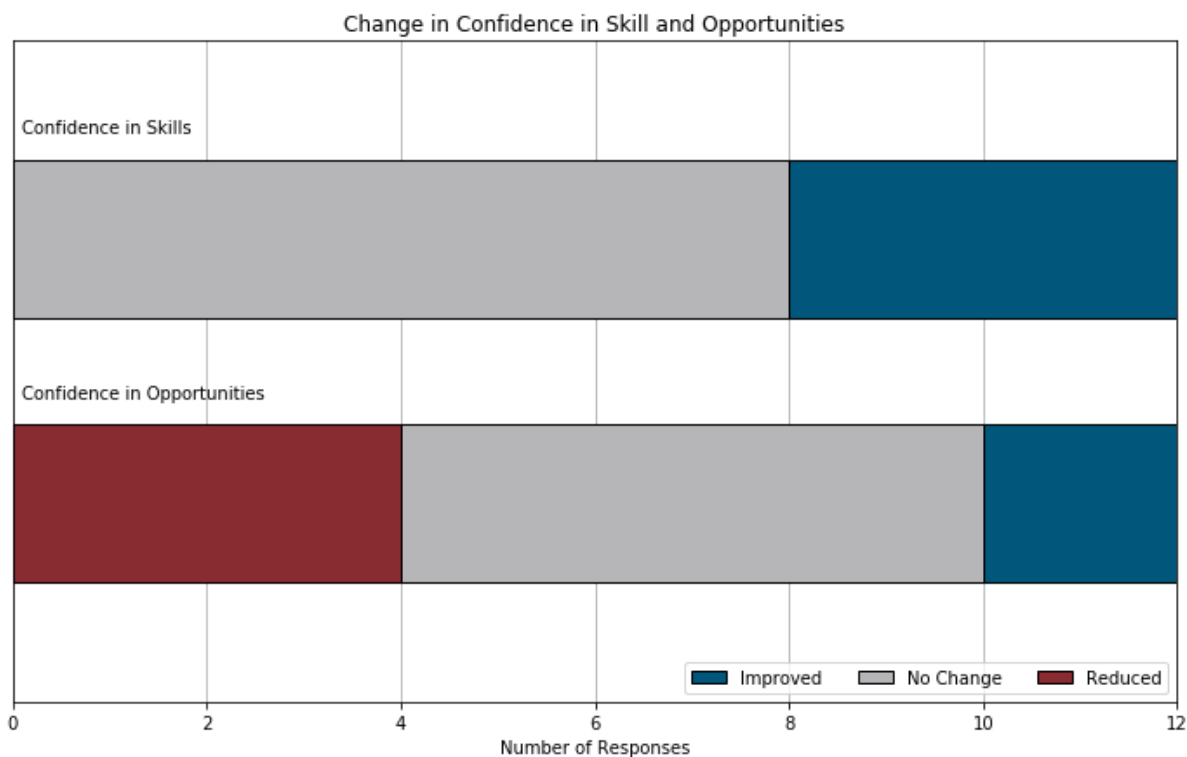


Figure 21: Change in responses for confidence in women participant confidence in livelihood skills and opportunities between 2018 and 2020 in Sri Lanka

Refugees' experiences during 2020 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 22 shows that equal numbers of men responded that there were worse impacts of COVID-19 on men as impacts being the same. While three women responded there were worse impacts on men due to their employment outside the home being affected, there was a higher number of women (n=9) who responded impacts were the same for both men and women.

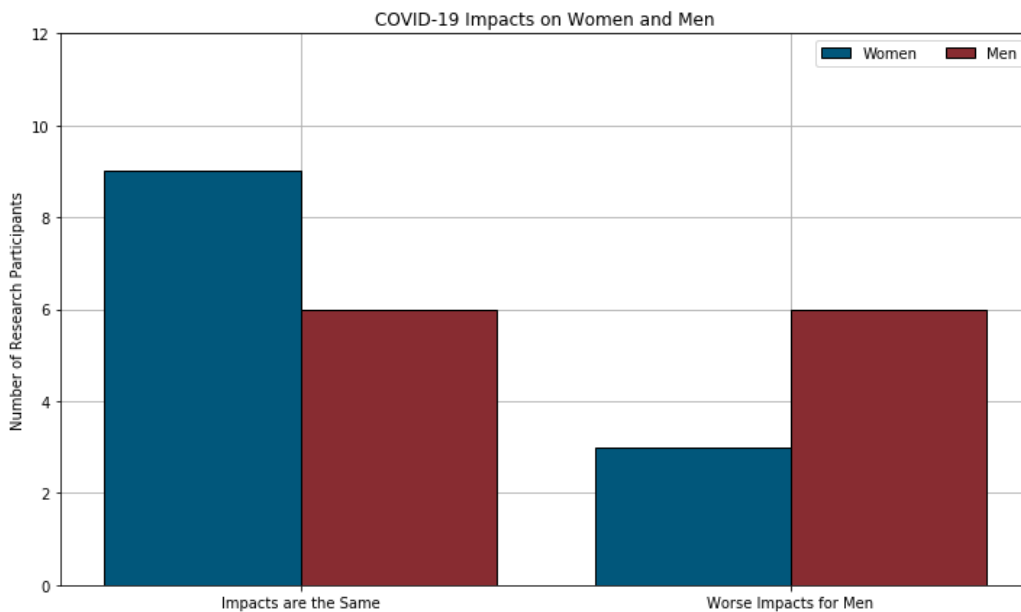


Figure 22: Difference in severity of COVID-19 impacts on men and women in Sri Lanka

Gender Roles

Changes in gender roles, with women and men being more equally involved in leadership roles, is an indicator of women’s empowerment.

In 2020, all women and men indicated activeness in **livelihood or economic activities** as ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’. The research results show that activeness in livelihood and economic activities was similar between 2018, 2019 and 2020.

For **social/cultural community activities**, women were slightly more active than men in 2020. 11 of 12 (96%) women and 9 of 12 (75%) men rated their engagement ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’ in social and cultural community activities. Comparison with 2018 results shows little change for women in social/cultural activities, while men reported a small decrease in men’s social/cultural activities.

Women reported a similar rate of **activeness in leadership roles** with men, after relocating to Sri Lanka. In 2020, 6 of 12 (58%) women were not active at all, 5 of 12 (42%) women were ‘a little’ active and only 1 of 12 (8%) woman was ‘a lot’ active. 7 of 12 (58%) men were not active at all, 2 of 12 (17%) men were ‘a little’ active and 3 of 12 (25%) men were ‘a lot’ active.

The table below compares the cohort of women living in India in 2019 with the cohort of women living in Sri Lanka in 2020, rather than showing a direct comparison of the same women. For example, 58% of women in Sri Lanka in 2020 are not active at all, compared to only 25% of women in India in 2019.

Activeness in leadership	2019 (In India)	2020 (In Sri Lanka)
‘Not at all’	25% (7 out of 28) women	58% (6 of 12) women
‘Little’	35.7% (10 out of 28) women	42% (5 of 12) women
‘A lot’	39.3% (11 out of 28) women	8% (1 of 12) women

These findings indicate it is likely there has been a decrease in women’s activeness in leadership since women relocated to Sri Lanka. OfERR responded to these findings with consideration that since some of the women were born in India and some have lived in refugee camps for the last 30+ years it may take some time before they are recognised and ready for leadership roles in Sri Lanka. Political instability and announcement of elections in 2018, resulted in curtailing movements of returnees to explore, attend community meetings and cultural events, and build an understanding of the local context. This understanding of the local context is necessary to effectively take up leadership roles. It is expected that once returnees have been in Sri Lanka and reintegrated in their local areas, they will have more opportunities for leadership.

Safety, Justice and Dignity

Women's experiences of safety, justice and dignity are indicators of practical needs and empowerment changes.

Responses indicated that women had a middle to high rating for all three indicators in 2020. Figure 23 shows changes between 2018 and 2020 in women's ratings of their sense of safety (very safe, in the middle, not safe at all), justice (experience a high level of justice, in the middle, no experience of justice) and dignity (treated with high level of dignity, in the middle, treated with no dignity). For all three indicators there was a higher number of women who experienced a positive change compared with a negative change.

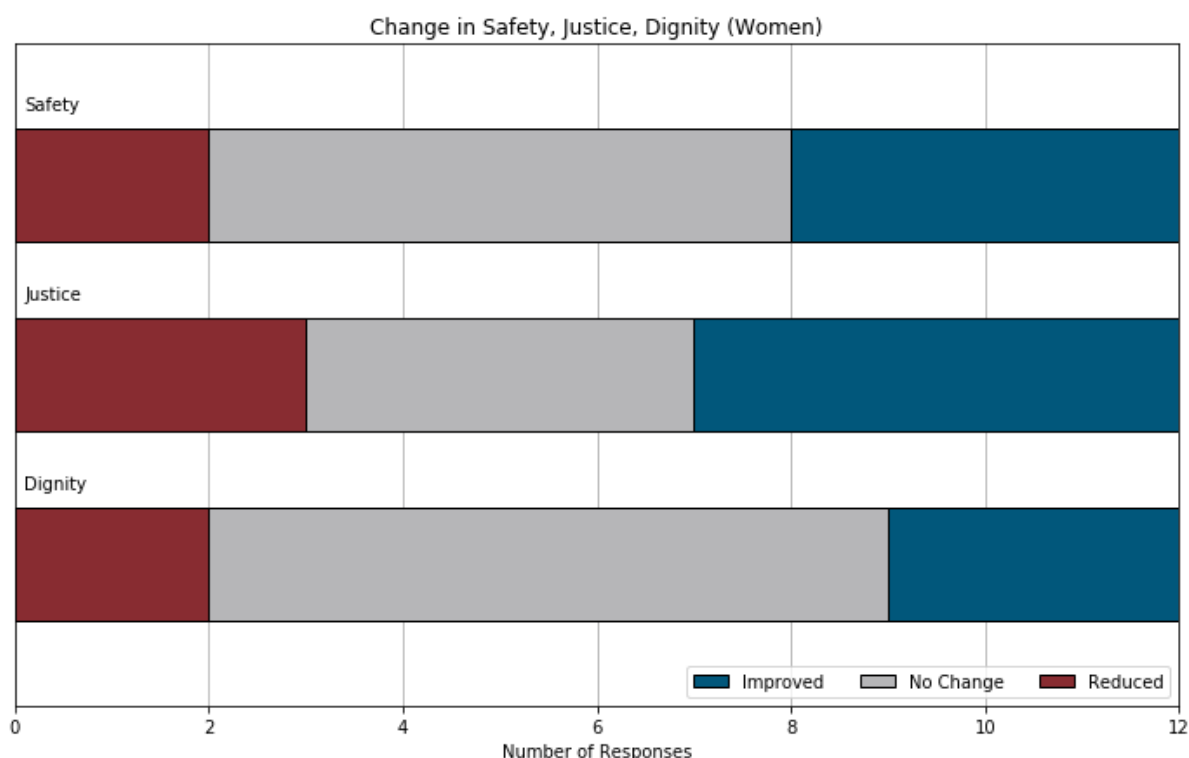


Figure 23: Change in responses for sense of Safety, Justice and Dignity between 2018 and 2020 in Sri Lanka

Our analysis shows an improvement in rating of safety from 'in the middle' to 'very safe' for 4 women, and a reduced rating from 'very safe' to 'in the middle' for 2 women. Reasons given by women for rating their situation as 'very safe' include being able to walk outside safely at night; no need to carry a national identity card when moving around; good health conditions; temporary shelter provided; and living in a connected, supportive community. Women who rated their situation 'in the middle' were concerned about theft in nearby houses; their detached house being close to the forest; and biases of government staff.

There were similar improvements in sense of justice. 4 women considered their sense of justice 'in the middle' in 2018 but experienced a 'very high' level of justice in 2020, and 1 woman shifted from 'not at all' experiencing justice in 2018 but a 'very high' level of justice in 2020. Reasons given by women for responding they experience 'a high level of justice' include being given priority for government schemes to meet their needs; positive responses to letters of request to the government; available land and house; and opportunities for self-employment. There was a reduced rating from a 'very high' level of justice to 'in the middle' for 3 women. Women who rated their experience of justice 'in the middle' described some discrimination in government schemes and delay in requests for assistance, lack of fairness and sense of vulnerability.

Our analysis shows an improvement in rating of dignity from 1 woman 'don't know' and 2 women 'in the middle' to experiencing a 'very high' sense of dignity. Reasons given by women for responding they

'experience a high level of dignity' include their experience of having needs met; living on own land; having employment/livelihood; and receiving a positive attitude and assistance from others due to being a returnee from India. 2 women reported a reduced rating from 'very high' sense of dignity to 'in the middle', but their qualitative responses indicated satisfaction with their self-employment and income.

Decision-making about the future

Increased confidence in **decision-making about the future** is an indicator of empowerment.

Women generally indicated a high level of **confidence about living in Sri Lanka**. Overall eight women were 'very confident' in their future living decisions, while four were 'in the middle'. No women indicated they were 'not at all confident'. Comparison to 2018 shows that two women increased in confidence from 'in the middle' to 'very confident', and two women decreased in confidence from 'very confident' to 'in the middle'. Women who were high in confidence described being near relatives, having property rights, employment and training opportunities, livelihood assistance to support their reintegration, and not having refugee status. Reasons given by women who rated their confidence 'in the middle' included low career opportunities, low income and high commodity prices.

Related to the 'I'm Prepared' objective for women to be empowered to make informed decisions about return / reintegration, the majority of women (10 out of 12, 83%) reported that both men and women together made the **decision about where they live in the future** in their household. Comparison of these results show little change between 2018 and 2020.

Women were asked to nominate **who or what**¹⁴ **supported their decision** about returning to Sri Lanka. Women described family as the most influential in supporting their decision, followed by themselves, UNHCR and livelihood opportunities.

In 2020, the majority of women (10 out of 12, 83%) reported that their decision-making about the future was affected by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reasons given included disruption to children's education, barriers to relocating their children from India, delays in their house being built, delays in expanding business and livelihood activities.

Welcome Group activities were provided by the 'I'm Prepared' project for eight women research participants. They reported applying a range of learnings, such as doing a legal registration process after relocating, accessing assistance programs from government and non-government organisations, obtaining documents and citizenship, registering children for school, and linking with returnees in appropriate places. Women shared the learning to a large extent within the family, and to a lesser extent with immediate neighbours, other people in the village and friends.

Women described a range of **plans for the future** now they are living in Sri Lanka. Their plans included buying land and building a permanent house, improving their livelihoods, creating career opportunities, and supporting more family members to relocate to Sri Lanka.

Research Question:

What impact do changes to gender equality and women's empowerment have on women's and men's decision making in return / reintegration (since Year 1)?

The increase in women's access to information may have had a positive impact on women's informed decision-making. There was a high level of access to information on livelihood opportunities in Sri Lanka, support from the government of Sri Lanka on return, security situation in Sri Lanka, and documentation to support citizenship in Sri Lanka.

Women reported improved access or no change to documentation to citizenship, counselling services and access to return and reintegration information, which may have supported women's decision making in return / reintegration.

¹⁴ Options for support were 'myself', 'family', 'UNHCR', 'leaders', 'livelihood opportunities', 'don't know', 'other'.

Women's income levels did not increase during the project and the inequality in incomes relative to men may negatively influence women's empowerment. However women were involved in decision-making together with men about how money is spent. The majority of women said their access was 'a lot' or 'in the middle' to financial resources for investment, which might enable economic empowerment in the future.

Related to the Project's goal of women's economic empowerment supporting women's return / reintegration, women's confidence in livelihood skills increased and they reported benefits from livelihood training in India and livelihood assistance in Sri Lanka. Our analysis showed a slight decrease in confidence in livelihood opportunities once women had relocated to Sri Lanka, though their opportunities are expected to increase after the initial reintegration period. In the short-term, many women reported their livelihoods being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Women experienced a middle or high level of safety, justice and dignity in 2020. For all three indicators there was a higher number of women who experienced a positive change compared with a negative change, which may have influenced women's decision making in return / reintegration.

Women's responses showed the majority of men and women had together made the decision about where to live in the future. Women reported a high level of confidence about their decision to live in Sri Lanka, though some of their plans related to reintegration were affected by their experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women who participated in Welcome Group activities reported it was valuable, which may have positively impacted their reintegration experiences.

Research Question:

What learning from Year 3 research can inform future projects of partners and women's empowerment and resettlement in other contexts?

Response to this research question is presented in line with the theory of change of the 'I'm Prepared' Project and more specifically the objectives related to Knowledge; Economic empowerment and Leadership, as well as consideration for the long-term (goal) outcome.

Knowledge

Objective 1 of 'I'm Prepared' Project relates to 'knowledge and preparedness in camps'.

- The Year 3 research findings indicate that women's learning about protection and preparedness for return was retained by them and used in their relocation journey to Sri Lanka. Women's responses to 'key learnings' and 'how they have applied their learnings' confirmed the effectiveness of the training in supported their informed decision-making.
- Women showed a willingness to share learnings from the 'I'm Prepared' activities within their close-knit circle of family and immediate neighbours. To a lesser extent, women shared learning with other people in the village. As projects work within limits of resources how many participants can be reached, it may be worthwhile to consider a clustering approach where particular women are trained as focal points and encouraged to share learning within their network. In this way project implementors may be able to reach a broader geographic spread of refugees/ returnees.
- The 'I'm Prepared' project was structured through coordinated planning, communication and project work between OfERR in the Tamil refugee camps and OfERR Ceylon with returnees. The continued engagement of 'I'm Prepared' participants and trust with OfERR demonstrates the value of this project approach.

Economic Empowerment

Objective 2 relates to 'enabling environment and economic empowerment for return'.

- The research results indicate that when women relocate countries, they may experience a decrease in their employment / income during the process of setting up a new life for themselves and their families. This implies that adapting their livelihood to a new country context and establishing their economic security is a medium-term prospect (longer than the one to two-year period reported on in

this research). Support for women's empowerment in reintegration needs to continue for a longer-term period.

- Many women and men's livelihoods have been affected by COVID-19, and the impacts are gendered because of the different types of work and social roles that men and women play. Thus, any project to address livelihoods needs a strong gender analysis at the outset and general gender-sensitive approach.
- Women's responses in this research reveal an awareness of both formal and informal financial investment strategies. Women's experiences in Women's Networks and Self-Help Groups may have sensitised them to possibilities of savings and lending schemes, which projects to support returnees can build on.

Leadership

Objective 3 relates to 'social and political empowerment'.

- The research findings showed a decrease in women's leadership in 2020. Leadership roles that women were playing in India may not have been offered to women when they relocated to Sri Lanka. Future projects to support returnees could focus on leadership training for women and creating an enabling environment for women's leadership in the Sri Lankan host communities. Welcome Group activities could strengthen their focus on women's leadership (strategic needs), in addition to meeting their practical needs in reintegration. Project partners should continue supporting women-led advocacy initiatives.

Return and reintegration - Long-term outcome (goal)

- Participants of the 'I'm Prepared' project suggested the activities provided to them to be extended to other refugee women relocating to Sri Lanka, and women in the home community. Future refugee protection projects might provide similar activities to a broader demographic of women although it is noted that budgetary constraints and targeting criteria play a role here.
- The research findings confirm the project design focus on enabling environments for return in Sri Lanka (and Myanmar) which benefit non-displaced community members and the wider society / economy so that this will hopefully in future provide a more positive reintegration environment for returnees.
- Women have ideas about what is useful to them in terms of ongoing support. For example, women request basic assistance including loans for returnees be provided in a timely manner. Project partners should continue supporting women's networks in Sri Lanka for long-term self-reliance and peer support, such as saving and loans groups of the Women's Empowerment Groups and Continuation of counselling / coaching services could also support women's empowerment in return / reintegration.
- Women reported a range of plans they have for their future reintegration and challenges to achieve these. This indicates it would benefit future projects to continue to listen and respond to women's priorities and opportunities within their contexts.

5.4. Summary Reflections on 'I'm Prepared' Project Research Findings

This section provides summary reflections on the research findings for the 'I'm Prepared' project. This longitudinal research provides learnings from the different country contexts of Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. It does not provide a country comparison, since that is not helpful to inform local programming and inappropriate to compare research findings across different contexts. Nonetheless, summary comments are helpful to synthesise learning from the unique contexts for refugees in the research countries, informing refugee protection programming in similar contexts.

In all country contexts, the research identified that women who participated in the 'I'm Prepared' activities found value in participating over multiple years. Women recalled a diverse range of learnings, and applied these learnings to improve their lives and those of their families and neighbours. Women in Thailand

reported the activities increased their knowledge and understanding, while women in India described building their capacity to contribute to their community. Women living in Sri Lanka felt their livelihoods, security, leadership and self-esteem had improved through being involved in the project activities in Indian refugee camps and on return in Sri Lanka.

Participants in the 'I'm Prepared' research valued the opportunity for self-reflection. Through being interviewed multiple times, participants reported observing a change in themselves over time and were able to reflect on how they applied the learning from the project activities. This reflection on what they had achieved further increased their motivation for future actions.

There were positive changes related to meeting women's practical needs in access to information. Women's access to information increased in Thailand, India and Sri Lanka during the three years of project activities. Changes in access to services were more varied across the three country contexts. Women's access to 6 types of services increased in Thailand, with the exception of shelter-related support. In India women's access to 4 types of services improved or stayed the same, and decreased for travel documentation and expenditure for flights. Women's access to services in Sri Lanka improved or had no change for 3 types of services, and access to livelihoods training decreased. However, women who had relocated from India to Sri Lanka benefited from livelihood assistance, which supported them in meeting basic needs and establishing subsistence and economic activities during reintegration.

Across the three country contexts, there was a general trend towards increased safety, justice and dignity experienced by women. In Thailand and Sri Lanka, there were more women who increased than decreased their ratings of safety, justice and dignity. Women in India reported a decrease in safety, but an improvement in sense of justice and dignity.

Regarding the strategic needs of women, there was variation but no substantive changes in research findings from 2018 to 2020. Across the three country contexts, project activities aimed at women's economic empowerment haven't translated to changes in gender roles in economic activities. While there was some evidence of the project intervention influencing the types of livelihoods that women implemented, overall women's income stayed the same or decreased. This highlights the broader constraining context of the economy in the research countries where the labour market, conditions and roles are segmented by gender. In the case of Thailand, gender training was delivered to women and men to address the barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment. Women participants valued the gender training, but also emphasised the need for more gender training to be delivered to women and to a broader group of men (as its reach was limited in the 'I'm Prepared' project).

For changes in women's activeness in leadership roles, different research findings highlight the unique country contexts and different gendered relations. In Thailand, research findings show an increase in women's leadership from 2019 to 2020 and it is at a similar level to men's leadership. In the India context where women are well established in the camps, their activeness in leadership has increased from 2019 to 2020. More women are engaged 'a lot' in leadership roles compared to men and overall their leadership is at the highest level of the three country contexts. Comparing the cohort of women from when they were living in India in 2018 to when they had relocated to Sri Lanka in 2020, their activeness in leadership reduced significantly, along with men who relocated. This may reflect that women are most likely to prioritise 'family set up' on return including ensuring that children are settled into school. This finding suggests that leadership roles of returnees in their communities, especially women returnees, need to be championed over a longer time frame for their strategic needs to be met.

Research findings about decision-making for the future highlight the broader context in which the 'I'm Prepared' project was implemented. Women and men are both involved in decisions about where to live in the future, with a slight shift in responses during the 3 years of research, from women and men separately making decisions to joint decision-making. There were changes in Thailand, with more women in 2020 being unsure or identifying their camp to live in the future, compared to those who planned to return to Myanmar in 2018. In India, women's decision to move to Sri Lanka in the future remained stable, though they reported some delayed plans due to the impacts of COVID-19 and other factors. For women who did relocate and reintegrate to Sri Lanka, their confidence in the future about their lives and those of their families increased. In addition to support from relatives, community leaders and other agencies, the research findings highlight there needs to be a safe and enabling environment for refugees to return to their home countries.

6. Program Logic for ‘I’m Prepared’: Equality for Refugee Women in the Return and Reintegration Context

7. Detailed Analysis

For detailed analysis of interview responses for Thailand, India, and Sri Lanka see attachments (separate reports) to this report.



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