

ReDSS brief – CRRF update

Implementation of the CRRF in East Africa: Supporting a ‘whole of society’ approach

Displacement context in the East and Horn of Africa

Displacement in Eastern Africa is predominantly of a protracted nature. At the end of May 2018, there were almost 12 million people displaced in the region- with the majority of displaced coming from or inside South Sudan and Somalia, and at least half are children. Although most have been displaced for years, few have durable solutions prospects - returning to their home, being integrated into their host communities or settling elsewhere. These three durable solutions options are processes; they are not solutions in and of themselves. The ultimate goal for all is sustainable (re)integration.

The CRRF processes in the region present a unique opportunity to work together as a ‘whole of society approach’ bringing displacement affected communities, authorities, humanitarian, development and peace building actors, but also diaspora and private sector. We have a collective responsibility to challenge our structures and systems to do more and better together in the search for durable solutions for displacement-affected communities in the region and this brief summarises key progress and challenges to date, while highlighting some recommendations moving forward.

Progress, challenges and opportunities to address displacement and durable solutions under Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) processes in East Africa

Since the New York Declaration in 2016, the CRRF has been rolled out in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Uganda, and most recently Kenya. In addition, the IGAD Plan of Action for Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees is the operationalisation of the CRRF for the Somali situation. In late 2017, Tanzania withdrew from the process and it is hoped that the decision will be re-considered given the country’s tradition with refugee hosting.

Ethiopia and Uganda have functional national CRRF structures led by government with representation from humanitarian and development actors. Displacement affected communities are represented in the Uganda steering group and NGOs have seconded a staff to the CRRF Secretariat who is playing a key role to ensure that NGOs are engaged in the process. Djibouti has finalized the start-up of its steering committee however; more needs to be done to ensure sufficient representation of host community actors, civil society and line ministries.

CRRF processes in the region are contributing to positive changes with a stronger focus on a self-reliance and resilience, integrated refugee-host community programming, engagement of development actors and a commitment to support stronger participation of refugees and host communities in programming and policy processes.

But a number of challenges remain to be addressed, with the most important ones being:

- **a disconnect between policies processes versus operational realities** with policies changing faster than implementation
- **a disconnect between capitals and districts/ counties level** with the urgent need to strengthen and invest into locally led processes
- support **‘whole of government’** approaches to bring line ministries and displacement within national development plans as opposed to processes being solely led by Refugee Agencies
- ensure that **displacement affected communities** are engaged in planning and programming
- address **right to work and freedom of movement** as core components of self-reliance and resilience programming as without those, refugees won’t be able to become self-reliant
- essential **to effectively integrate host community relations and social integration** as a core part of Durable Solution strategies
- ensure that **protection remains at the core** of our work including in development programming

Invest into locally led Durable Solutions planning and programming informed by a common framework with collective outcomes

Progress to date

- **Collective outcomes and long-term multi sectorial funding:** In Somalia, there are new four years multi sectorial multi actors' durable solutions consortia funded by the EU, DFID and Danida. Each consortia has agreed on common durable solutions outcomes and programming principles such as enhancing government leadership, access to integrated services for displaced and host, and area based planning as opposed to sectorial and clusters planning. The different consortia are supporting a common vision through joint learning and collective outcomes.
- **Integrated access to services and sector policies:** In Uganda, the recently adopted Education Response Plan shows the way for integrated service delivery planning with the Ministry of Education in a leading role. Learning from the education sector will now inform forthcoming plans in the sectors of water, health, environment and livelihoods.
- **Area based planning:** In Ethiopia and Somalia, operational agencies are using 'geographic areas' as the main entry point for interventions rather than a sector and displacement affected communities inclusive of host communities. Such approaches have led to better coordination and support for local governance by building capacities of local administrations and investing in district led plans such as in Kismayo, Baidoa, Mogadishu in Somalia.
- **Displacement Affected Communities planning:** In Somalia, there are several examples of community driven durable solutions programming. Ethiopia will start too but those examples are the exception not the norm.
- **Support to national NGOs:** In Uganda, NGOs are supporting a strategic approach to localization as part of the CRRF process and a specific strategy has been developed¹. Furthermore, national NGOs are equal implementing partners in durable solutions consortia funded by the EUTF in Uganda and Somalia and emerging lessons learnt are being captured.

Challenges

- The lack of engagement in planning and programming of the displacement-affected communities themselves has been an important concern – locally led solutions processes are vital to ensure sustainability and ownership. Refugees and host communities for instance have not been included in CRRF processes beyond a few elected representatives in governing bodies.

Opportunities and recommendations

- **Develop common frameworks at country level with collective outcomes** to support joint accountability and analysis
- **A participatory process** is key to support return and reintegration processes in order to make solutions lasting, locally relevant and supportive of **social cohesion**
- **Increase support to displacement-affected communities** through a richer understanding of their perspectives and the roles of the people, networks and institutions that are important in shaping their lives in displacement
- **Support the inclusion and engagement of local NGOs, Community and faith based organizations** (and cultural leaders): in order to enhance a better understanding of the main concerns and issues faced by host communities. Further attention to be given to the quality and methodologies of inclusion to ensure authenticity in engagement with displacement affected communities.
- **Invest in the education and participation of youth and children.** They are the majority of the displaced in the East Africa region - 62% of refugees in Uganda are children. They have specific needs and vulnerabilities that need to be addressed.

¹ E.g. Oxfam is currently taking this forward on behalf of the NGO community with the support of the CRRF Secretariat.

Support government, local authorities and municipalities to lead and coordinate Durable Solutions processes

Progress to date

- **In Ethiopia**, the government released its 10 year National Comprehensive Refugee Response (NCCR) which is the key reference for the roll out of the CRRF, However, it will be important to invest in engagement and ownership of the regions.
- **In Djibouti**, the National Action Plan has been a good starting point, but further efforts are needed to ensure its implementation.
- **Support local authorities and municipalities to lead and coordinate: In Uganda**, the Office of the Prime Minister recently made the Ministry of Local Government the co-chair of the CRRF steering group in order to overcome coordination challenges between refugee response and development planning. Furthermore, in a number of settlements (e.g. in Arua, Kiryandongo, Kyegegwa, Yumbe), district technical focal points regularly participate and chair settlement coordination meetings.
- **District led processes: In Somalia**, the international community is investing in strengthening local government capacities to be able to play a leadership role in reintegration of displacement-affected communities for example World Bank engagement with local authorities in urban planning in Baidoa, Midnimo's pillar (project led by IOM and UNHABITAT) on strengthening local authorities capacities
- **Dialogue around local integration and transitional solutions, moving away from return processes only to address right to work and freedom of movement:** a good example in East Africa is the role played by IGAD in creating space for Member States to talk about displacement and solutions and learn from one another.

Challenges

- CRRF rollouts have been too process- and capital- heavy: There is a gap between policy processes and actual changes on the ground with regard to implementation. The process itself is a critical success factor and this takes time.

Opportunities and recommendations

- **Whole of government approach and participation:** For solutions to be durable, they must be locally owned and driven. It is essential to not only involve refugee agencies but also all relevant line ministries and local governments. Development actors such as the World Bank play a key role in enhancing the institutional and technical capacity of local governments to implement sustainable and integrated development-oriented refugees' responses
- It is paramount to **strengthen the technical knowledge on solutions and protection of local municipalities and district authorities**. ReDSS and its members for instance, have been working closely with local municipalities in Somalia to increase knowledge and understanding about durable solutions processes. The aim is also to ensure that we all contribute to a common vision with similar approaches and outcomes indicators

Invest in new approaches and partnerships bringing together humanitarian/ development/ peace building/ diaspora and private sector actors

Progress to date

- **New partnerships bringing together UN, NGOs, private sector and diaspora: In Ethiopia and Somalia**, UN agencies and NGOs joint partnerships/programmes have ensured complementarities and avoided duplications. Good examples include the EU funded REINTEG programme in Somalia, ReDSS-UNHCR collaboration in Ethiopia, national NGO as equal implementing partners in consortia etc. Furthermore, there have been immense investment in new partnerships with peace building actors and diaspora for example in consortia like the Somalia Durable Solutions Programme. The focus on contribution towards a collective vision instead of attribution has been essential in moving together

- **In Somalia**, NGOs are investing in co-creating solutions programmes and creating shared value to engage with private sector in a meaningful collaborative approach. A good example is engagement with WYG in Durable Solutions Programme (DSP). The private firm is part of the solutions consortia and designing a spatial plan in Baidoa and Kismayo to address urban planning in Somalia
- **In Uganda**, as part of developing a private sector engagement strategy, the CRRF secretariat organised a meeting with line ministries and partners to discuss Smart Communities Coalition's public private projects aiming to advance connectivity, digital tools and energy access in some of the settlements. And the CRRF Secretariat is developing a financial tracking tool to track all development and humanitarian contributions and investments made in refugee hosting districts. This will allow to monitor commitments but also to identify gaps in humanitarian and development.

Challenges

- **Effective ways of engaging a wide range of actors are still needed in CRRF rollouts:** refugees, host communities and local actors, including local authorities, continue to be largely excluded from designing and co-creating comprehensive refugee responses
- **Inadequate capacity to respond to emergency needs and little space to think about early solutions from the onset:** in Uganda operational agencies are in a constant state of emergency mode to respond to the massive need and have very little space to think about medium to longer term issues and lack the adequate capacity to do so.

Recommendations and opportunities

- **Leveraging the expertise of different actors** should be the basis for strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus focusing on comparative advantages within a common framework to work under at country level. A transition to development approaches will also require changes in organizational mind-sets and approaches, skills-sets and funding, as well as capacities to adapt approaches based on learning.
- **Early solutions: involve development actors from the onset of the emergency to complement humanitarian interventions** by bringing development specialists to support the collective effort and inform medium to longer term programming.
- The development and business communities must work together to catalyze changes that positively impact both refugees and host communities through innovative solutions, jobs creation and public private partnership.
- At the same time, it is essential to maintain a strong focus **on protection within economic growth and job creation programs led by development and private sector actors**, for example in the new industrial zones in Ethiopia.
- **Documentation of emerging new practises and partnerships:** This is to ensure exchange of learning on best practises, which can also be replicated elsewhere. For example, innovation programming such as private sector in Somalia, In Uganda,

Making social cohesion a more strategic objective in solutions programming

Progress

- **Inclusion of conflict management and peace building actors in durable solutions planning and programming:** In Uganda and Somalia, NGOs have established a peace building and conflict sensitivity working groups to ensure that conflict management and peace building inform displacement programming. Similarly, in Somalia the Midnimo project led by UNHABITAT and IOM as part of the peacebuilding fund has integrated conflict sensitivity approaches into its project.

Challenges

- A key challenge that has arisen in most CRRF rollouts in this region is **how to foster social cohesion and mitigate rising social tensions between displaced and host communities.**

- Although operational actors acknowledge the importance of social cohesion, there is limited evidence and experience in addressing social cohesion. Solutions programming needs to intentionally adapt activities that contribute to building social cohesion among displaced and host communities. **Uganda's** progressive refugee policy for example hinges on the hospitality of hosting communities, but there is insufficient attention and action regarding rising tensions in refugee-hosting districts.
- **Urban response:** according to [ReDSS 2018 analysis on solutions programming in urban contexts](#), both host and displaced populations in urban centres risk being marginalized and excluded from essential services. There is a constant struggle to adjust to long-term social, economic and demographic shifts and pressures associated with urban displacement. A key challenge that arises with such situations is how to foster social cohesion and mitigate rising social tensions between urban displaced and host communities. It therefore remains critical to understand the proximate, structural, systemic factors that contribute to social cohesion/social stability in order to ensure effective urban responses to displacement.

Opportunities and recommendations

- **Reframing of displaced populations as a 'benefit' as opposed to the 'burden':** It is widely recognized that the displaced can bring a range of assets to urban economies, stimulating consumption and innovation and offering employment to local people. By issuing work permits, recognizing skills and helping people access jobs and training, it will be possible to recognize the potential contribution of displaced populations and reduce the damaging impact of higher levels of unemployment and sub-employment
 - It is paramount to recognize that **displacement affected communities have the right and the capacity to participate to any decision** impacting their life to make solutions **locally relevant and supportive of social cohesion.**
 - **Social cohesion should be more proactively promoted in urban programming** and urban responders should be supported to develop adequate 'social change' skills
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To conclude, in order to truly support a whole of society approach, more systematic approaches are required to mobilise and engage with a wide array of actors to find solutions and to give the millions of displaced a chance of a better life with dignity and self-reliance.

It is our hope that CRRF processes will increase support to countries and communities that host refugees in improving asylum space, integrated access to services, inclusive economic opportunities and infrastructure for all.