



Self-reliance and resilience for displacement affected communities in Somalia

Focus on return and reintegration

Context

As of 15 May 2017 and since December 2014, a total of 63,535 Somali refugees from Dadaab were assisted to return to Somalia, including 24,221 in 2017 alone. Returnees are mainly going back to Kismayo (87.7%), followed by Mogadishu (6.7%) and Baidoa (4.7%), all regions dramatically affected by a severe drought.

Due to the existing dire conditions in areas of return, [the lack of absorption capacities](#) and the lack of reintegration support beyond the return package, there is a high likelihood that most of the returnees will head to the already overstretched and under-resourced IDP camps.

The majority of the returnees are not going back 'home' but to urban centres. IDPs and returnees are highly vulnerable to drought due to their lack of connectedness and so difficulty to borrow and to access markets, little social cohesion and connection to host communities, part of minority clans, etc.

According to UNHCR PRMN data, more than 700,000 have been displaced internally since November 2016 due to the drought. Drought turning into famine means a massive displacement crisis in the making with influx of refugees and IDPs on top of an already dire situation with more than a 1 million IDPs and almost 1 million refugees. And contrary to 2011, Dadaab refugee camp is not an option for affected populations to seek refuge.

Case study from Somalia: bring the self-reliance/ solutions and resilience agenda together and adopt consortium approach

Return is not a solution, reintegration is and to be successful, reintegration needs to build on self-reliance and resilience programming.

The key question here is how to support self-reliance and resilience of returnees and displaced communities in Somalia in the current situation? And this is a relatively new topic, so we have limited lessons learnt and best practices to build on. But we do have quite a lot of learning from the resilience agenda to build upon.

So my intervention will focus on a number of key learning and approaches that are currently being tested and adopted in Somalia and that I organized within 4 recommendations.

First here are some definitions so as you know what I mean when using these concepts as very often, of us will have different interpretation and understanding.

Resilience is the ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

Self-reliance is the **social and economic ability** of an individual, a household or a community to **meet essential needs** in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a program approach, refers to **developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern**, reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian or external assistance.

Early solutions planning encompasses steps to build the self-reliance and resilience of returnees and host communities in the early stages of [return](#).

Recommendations

1. Need for better data and analysis to inform self-reliance and resilience programming to support return and reintegration – away from a care and maintenance approach

It is critical to improve the generation and availability of relevant data and analysis to better understand and operationalize complementary humanitarian and developmental approaches in support of (re)integration and self-reliance plan and to mitigate against secondary displacements which can adversely affect urban centers in Somalia, neighboring countries and lead to further migration flows within and beyond the region.

There are quite a lot of available data and needs' assessments but most of them don't have a displacement component. So different type of data and analysis are required, building on what exists, to have better 'profiling'/ understanding of displaced and host communities (*skills assessments, environmental/ urban assessments, economic and market/ private sector analysis, absorption capacity of different sectors, clans and conflict analyses...*).

- **Urgent need to better understand the profile and skills of the returnees** to inform self-reliance programming
- **Majority of returnees are women and youth**- critical to have better gender data and analysis to inform self-reliance programming
- Developing **area based Solutions analysis (localization of aid)** in Somalia to inform safe and dignified (re)integration modalities in support of self-reliance and resilience is paramount due to limited absorption capacity, limited access to basic services, shelters and livelihoods opportunities, prevailing protection concerns, and persistent security, safety and access issues. This is what the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) is doing, working in close collaboration with all relevant actors.
- While 'solutions' districts' **analyses (material, legal and physical safety to support self-reliance and reintegration)** contribute to identify and prioritize 'immediate' (re)integration needs for displacement affected communities, by **involving development actors from the start**, these analyses also contribute to inform medium to long term sectorial priorities for development programming complementing humanitarian interventions, in support of self-reliance and resilience.
- **Improving knowledge and self-reliance and resilience programming in urban context:** the majority of returnees go to urban centers and many IDPs living in urban areas will not return to their rural areas of origin. This highlights the increased need to provide self-reliance and resilience support in urban environments and to better understand urban dynamics.

2. Strengthen self-reliance and resilience for both displaced and host communities factoring in appropriate economic, environmental and social considerations – away from care and maintenance approach

Early solutions planning and programming needs to support initiatives that strengthen self-reliance and resilience of returnees, IDPs and host communities building on the resilience agenda and architecture in Somalia. Resilience programming mainly focus on **material safety** in durable solutions language, so it is critical to build on that and add legal and physical safety components that are key elements to support (re)integration and self-reliance.

Equally important, **by having development actors involved from the start¹**, it is a key opportunity for them to include displacement related vulnerabilities in their programming and analysis, but also to complement humanitarian interventions by bringing development specialists² to support the collective effort and inform medium to longer term planning, creating the space required **to address self-reliance and resilience from the onset of return** (*Emergency deployment of non-emergency people to support early recovery, urban planners, community engagement specialists, market analysts, economists, etc.*).

- This requires a multi- stakeholder and sectoral, rights and needs based programming approach for both displaced and host communities. Therefore self-reliance and resilience process must be viewed as a collective action rather than mandate driven based on an inclusive, participatory and consensus building

¹ World Bank, EU, UNDP...

approach - our common goal being to give the millions of displaced persons a chance of a better life with dignity and self-reliance.

- **NGOs have come together to start consortiums to be able to respond to return, reintegration and resilience (3R) needs. And donors, such as DFID and the EU are providing multi actors multi sector multi year's grants such as the EU REINTEG fund to be able to address self-reliance and resilience of displacement affected communities (returnees, IDPs and host communities).**
- **Value added of consortium approach**
 - Develop joint learning and research agenda: common knowledge management, best practices, etc
 - Build on expertise and value added of each member of the consortium
 - Common framework, objectives and outcomes to measure self-reliance and resilience

3. Engagement of displacement affected communities and accountability to communities – learn from resilience agenda

- Critical to support the **safe and meaningful involvement of displacement affected communities** in decisions that affect their own lives, so as to ensure their ownership and support in order to make self-reliance programming lasting and locally relevant.
- We have to place our **collective accountability to displaced populations** at the center of our action.
- It is essential to adopt a '**displacement affected communities**' approach- inclusive of refugees and host communities – supporting integrated programming for both displaced and host communities, factoring in appropriate economic, environmental and social considerations (legal, material and physical safety). **Community engagement is critical to inform self-reliance programming.**

4. Role of governments and local authorities

- **The Federal Government of Somalia, regional administrations and local authorities have the primary responsibility to support return and reintegration** and they need to be supported to be able to play a leadership and coordinating role.
- It is essential to strengthen their capacity and to support the implementation of the displacement pillar under the National Development Plan (NDP) to sustain self reliance and resilience programming.
- We must collectively **invest into capacities to sustain solutions locally and nationally**. Such investments will strengthen national institutions and partnerships that can sustain locally owned solutions and support self-reliance and resilience.
- **The Somalia Durable Solution Initiative** is a good example where humanitarian and development actors came together under the leadership of the government and the UN Resident Coordinator, developing joint Solution analyses to inform areas based action plan.

To conclude, **new approaches are needed for effective humanitarian-development coordination** to find solutions to protracted displacement and give the millions of displaced a chance of a better life with dignity and self-reliance.

Part of these new approaches is the engagement with private sector in order to stimulate innovative solutions, jobs creation, and public private partnership. Humanitarian, development, diaspora and business communities must work together to catalyze change that positively impacts both returnees and host communities.

A comprehensive refugee response (CRRF) won't involve a one-size-fits-all solution, it must be a multi-stakeholder approach that improves the business-enabling environment for everyone—returnees, IDPs and host communities alike. A CRRF approach recognizing and leveraging the unique insights and contributions of all actors is necessary and private sector solutions are an essential component.

The international community should provide **adequate long-term and predictable political and financial support** in such ways that **improve inclusive access to services, economic opportunities and infrastructure for all**.

We have a collective responsibility to challenge our structures and systems to do more and better together in support of self-reliance and resilience for displacement affected communities in Somalia. This is why the CRRF process and IGAD Regional Response to Somali Refugees are critical to ensure that we address displacement and solutions differently in support of self-reliance and resilience.