IDP and Host Community Consultations

- Submitted to the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement -

September 2020

IDP Family in Kismayo © IOM Somalia 2019

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Secretariat of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement requested support in organizing consultations with IDP and host community members to inform the Panel's work and build on the Panel's workstreams. Suggested themes and questions were provided to structure the interviews.

Methodology

Given the current context with COVID-19, the information was collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) over the phone. The interviews were conducted in a protection-sensitive manner by ensuring discussions were confidential, age appropriate, and that notes are anonymized. The key informants were identified through protection monitors and local organizations and participation was entirely voluntary.

Key informant interviews

To ensure interviews were conducted with a diverse range of individuals from the IDP and host community, key informants were selected from the following groups:

- Female youth (14-17 years) / Male youth (14-17 years)
- Women (18 – 59 years) / Men (18 – 59 years)
- Female older persons (60+ years) / Male older persons (60+ years)
- Female Persons with disabilities (any age) / Male Persons with disabilities (any age)
- Individuals from Minority Groups

A total of 35 interviews (19 female, 16 male) were conducted in the following areas: Banadir (4); Bay (2); Galmadug (4); Hiran (2); Hirashabelle (3); Jubaland (5); Lower Shabelle (4); Puntland (4); Somaliland (4); Southwest (3).

THEME 1: Durable Solutions

The respondents were interviewed on expectations regarding their future, questions posed included: expectations of their life in 5 years? Where IDPs would like to settle? What has been the impact for host communities to host displaced families? If there are specific needs for a positive relationship between IDPs and host communities?

IDPs yearn for a better life, others prefer to return home provided there is peace there and if they get support, others looking to settle in the area they are displaced. For this to happen, the interviewee cited that the following pre-conditions need to be laid out beforehand i.e. security, assistance from government actors, job opportunities and housing.

> *"I will need resettlement and create job, since all my property destroyed by conflict and to get safe place and peace area. I would like to go back my home, if this do."*
> *Male IDP youth*

Figure 1: Word cloud of themes from "(For IDPs) what do you hope your life will look like in five years? Will you have returned home? Settled in this area? Moved somewhere else?"

Host communities reported that there are two main issues pertaining to the hosting of IDPs the first being hygiene related issues due to overcrowding in common places and job sharing.

When asked about their hopes for the future, members from the host communities conveyed that they expect better livelihood standards, jobs, housing and security, this response is similar as to that offered by IDPs. However, for this to be achieved, some respondents (from the host communities) underscored that support from the government and humanitarian agencies is much needed.

To better the relationship between IDPs and host communities, respondents were quoted in saying that the quality of life and ability to cope with basic needs need to improve. However, they also referred to the need of education, integration awareness, community meetings and to a smaller extend commend of Host Community hospitality.

> *"Yes, the steps that would need to be taken to support positive relationships are*
> *•Improve Security in the area*
> *•To provide land for IDPs*
> *•To ensure equal distribution of resources such as livelihood activities for both IDPs and host communities.*
> *•Engage more community dialogue and awareness session to improve community involvements in peaceful activities and encourage community engagement events.*
> *•Conduct peace and conflict training that would be invited to both host communities and displaced persons."*
> *Male adult from the host community*

THEME 2: Prevention

IDPs were interviewed on steps the government or others could have taken to enable them to remain safely in their home. For the host communities, the question targeted what the government or other actors could do to ensure people are not forced to flee their homes in the future.

The replies from both IDPs and host communities were similar and mostly focusing on security through peace buildings and the presence of police stations. Land property tenure has been also quoted as an important step.

> *"Yes, if government deployed enough army to our area of origin to restore peace, we could remain safely in our homes. "*
> *Male IDP with disability*

> *"To work together to restore stability and security – this can be achieved by supporting government forces logistically and financially."*
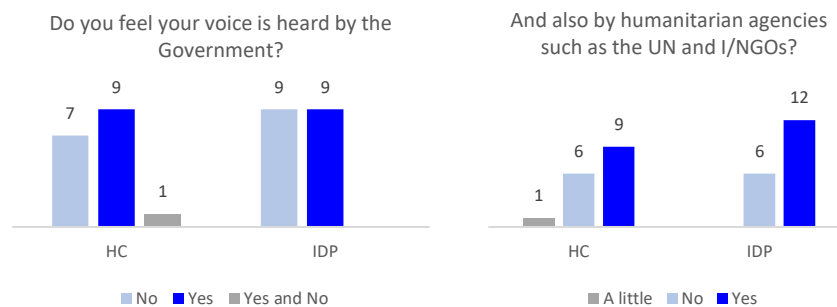> *Female youth from the host community*

THEME 3: Participation and Accountability

The respondents were asked if they feel that their voice is heard by the government and by humanitarian agencies such as the UN or I/NGOs.

Both IDPs and host community responses were, balanced between yes and no when quizzed if they felt the government heard their voices. When it came to humanitarian agencies, a majority of IDPs and host community respondents felt that their voices were raised high enough.

The respondents were asked in what ways they would like to have a say and be part of decision-making at their location or at other levels such as within your community, municipality, or state. And how this could be organized so that it happens on a regular basis?

All the respondents indicated they would like to have a say and be part of decision-making, and often to represent the category they belong for example youths, older persons, persons with disabilities. Most of them suggested committees or meetings between all part of the society and local authorities and agencies. Some of them highlighted that freedom of speech must be assured.

> *"I would like active committees be formed that fight for our rights as persons with disability."*
> *Male with disability from the host community*

> *"[this could be organized] by constant awareness, active participation and inclusion of community members, strengthen community coordination structure, ensure Government to respect the views of the people."*
> *Male adult from the host community.*

Interviewees were also asked if they think that they or other community members are sufficiently involved in the design and implementation of programs or relevant policy process that affect their community. And if they feel that they have opportunities to safely raise feedback or complaints about government, response organizations or others.

Three-quarters of the respondents think that they are not sufficiently involved in the design and implementation of programs or relevant policy process. Possible reasons for these insufficiencies are security issues, lack of knowledge of such activities and illiteracy.

A small majority feel that they have opportunities to safely raise feedback or complaints, especially to organizations through a hotline. Letters and helpdesks are two other ways used. For those who do not feel to have the opportunity to raise feedback, the need of security and of a more inclusive system came up.

> *"Raising complaints about government is a bit hard as this may sometimes lead to arrest."*
> *Female adult IDP*

Figure 3: Word cloud from themes of "Do you feel that you have opportunities to safely raise feedback or complaints about government, response organizations or others? If yes, how do you do this? If no, how could this be achieved?"

THEME 4: Coordination

In regard to coordination, the respondents expressed their perception on how they feel towards humanitarian agencies, such as the UN and I/NGOs, are coordinating and communicating effectively with one another and if they feel involved in the various coordination meetings that humanitarian or government authorities usually have.

A third of the respondents declared not knowing how the coordination and communication relationships are between humanitarian agencies are. However, for the remaining two thirds, a majority felt that agencies coordinate well because they work on different projects or because funds can come from different organizations. For those who do not feel that agencies coordinate well, one reason raised is the duplication of the same action. For example, foods distribution can be conducted by two different agencies at the same place, whereas another needing place will receive nothing.

Around two thirds of the respondents do not feel involved in the various coordination meetings that humanitarian or government authorities usually have. They would like to be informed and invited to the meetings, and usually represent the group they belong to (IDPs, women, elders, etc).

> *"I don't have any idea about their relationship [between humanitarian agencies]. I don't think I am part of it even I don't know when and where meetings are held."* Male adult from the host community

Figure 4: Word cloud from themes of "Do you feel involved in the various coordination meetings that humanitarian or government authorities usually have? How would you want to be engaged or involved in relevant coordination meetings?"

THEME 5: Protection

IDP and host community members were asked about how safe they feel in their current location, if particular groups feel less safe than others and whom to go for help in case of any security issues. IDPs and host community members were also asked about their relationship with each other and what has contributed either positively or negatively. Lastly, key informants were asked about freedom of movement as well as any issues of discrimination (age, gender, clan) observed in the community.

Despite the security challenges faced by the local Somali population and humanitarian workers to access and provide services, particularly in the South Central Somalia, the majority of IDPs and host community members interviewed reported that they feel safe and can freely move in the areas of habitual residence, including in IDP sites, due to cooperation between communities and local authorities, and presence of security units. A few of the key informants highlighted that children, women, and persons with disabilities are less safe than others due to physical vulnerability or the lack of information on who to contact in situations of insecurity or where help is based on clan affiliations.

Access to security forces, local administration, NGOs, camp leaders and community elders within reach have provided opportunities for cases to be reported, even though police posts are not in proximity in some locations.

The relationship between host community and IDPs is largely positive due to a shared cultural, religious background, blood relations, and awareness raising efforts. However, a small number of host community members have the feeling that humanitarian assistances are only given to IDPs and they are not equally considered.

A feeling of inequality is high within the community (among the host community, within IDP communities and between IDP and host communities) due to clan, gender, and disability. Minority groups lack full participation in decision making processes and at times denial of resources.

> *"Women and minority groups feel less safe here than others as they have less protections."*
> *Female adult IDP*

THEME 6: Humanitarian-Development-Peacebuilding Nexus

IDPs and host community members were asked if there is a balance between the emergency assistance you receive (food, shelter, etc.) and assistance or services aimed at longer term recovery and development (reconstruction, livelihoods, etc.). Additionally, respondents were asked if there is a need for peacebuilding or reconciliation services in the community and if so what would be the most effective method.

Over 95% of key informants do not feel that there is balance between emergency assistances received and services aimed at longer term development. Interventions by humanitarian organizations do not correspond to the enormous needs of communities. There is a reported shortage in humanitarian assistances and lack of sustainable programs. These shortages are coupled with high rates of unemployment, declining institutional support and widespread economic decline, have continued negative impact on livelihoods and is linked to low resilience and solutions. For the most part, both host community and IDPs have indicated that the limited developmental support does not equally assist groups and in particular minority clan communities are not included. Most of the key informants emphasised the urgent need for skills building and job creation opportunities.

A mixture of feelings reported on the need for peace and reconciliation were reported. A significant number of IDPs and host community members feel there is still a need for peace-building programs. In comparison a smaller number report they have peace and community capacity to solve conflicts.

Clan tensions that result into conflict such as clan revenge and resource disputes do exist. Since IDPs originate from different regions and states there is a need for peaceful co-existence with host community.

Locally established/existing community structures that conduct grassroot level reconciliatory consultations has always been fruitful and therefore programs that support such efforts at the community level are considered valuable. Each dialogue has created a deeper social understanding and bridges the differences within the community and encourages deeper social understanding.

Presence of NGOs supporting peace building, conflict resolution and reconciliations have been noted. However, the government's capacity in prevention is limited but such efforts are required to be jointly and ongoing. Most community members do not have knowledge of developmental services in their areas of dwellings, as well as their political rights such as the right to participate in public affairs and the right to participate in economic activities.

While majority of IDPs reside in both public and private lands, they often worry of forced evictions and sufficient notice to vacate is rarely given. Due to developments in the private business sector and political economy, land is getting more value especially with the return of more Somalis from abroad. IDPs feel they are constantly pushed out of their settlements, at times facing a series of secondary

displacement in the absence of alternatively allocated lands or housing arrangements. Such situations have raised concerns by IDPs in urban areas which is an obstacle to their lifelines because it holds back progress on integration as well as undermining humanitarian and development investments.

THEME 7: Specific Needs and Capacities

Persons with specific needs were asked how their experience is unique and if assistance takes into account specific needs and capacities of individuals. Additionally, key informants with specific needs were asked if they feel as if they are treated equally in the community and if they have any specific concerns with their community and if so what should be done differently.

Many of persons with specific needs reported they are treated equally and have no concern with their neighbours. Unlike others, older persons, and persons with disabilities from minority clans (both IDPs and host community) in Lower Shabelle region feel different from the other community members for being marginalized and voiceless and they sense they are not equally treated and thus remain excluded. Minority IDP women also think they are differently treated for being displaced persons and that makes them feel uncomfortable, while the youth perceive that they do not have a role in their community and are left out.

Women expressed reservations in taking up roles that are customarily believed to be meant for men especially leadership and decision makings, therefore, most women accept they are discriminated against on the base of their gender.

On accounts of their experiences, although attitudinal issues exist, many of those with specific needs lack mobilization and participation in community forums and therefore suggest that adopting proactive measures will improve their inclusion and participation in meetings, discussions, and distribution of humanitarian assistance.

One of the key issues raised by minority IDPs and marginalized groups is social stigma.

Full access to humanitarian assistances is an essential and fundamental pre-requisite to effective humanitarian action, persons with specific needs have raised several concerns in not addressing and taking into consideration their specific needs during distributions. Minority and marginalized communities feel discriminated against from accessing humanitarian services.

A significant number of adult IDPs reported the need for educational opportunities for their children. With limited or lack of income, families are struggling to feed their children, but still they are worried about educating their children. Older and disabled women from both host community and IDPs have reported the need for proper shelter, food, and user-friendly latrines.

Key informants suggest community-based reforms and effective consultations with older persons, persons with disabilities, persons from minority clans, so that their specific needs are realized by the broader society to allow them to get the necessary attention they require and take into consideration their abilities, skills and knowledge. It was also recommended to initiate specific detailed assessments that will specifically address the needs of all at risk groups and prioritization that facilitates integration within communities.

> *"Persons with disability are always left out and excluded. To support persons with disabilities you need special support/attention to ensure equality."*
> *Female adult from host and minority community*

THEME 8: COVID-19

IDP and host community members were asked about their main concerns in regard to COVID-19 and if they are receiving information (written, verbal, and local language) about how a person and the community can protect themselves from COVID-19 and how to access help if needed. Key informants were also ask if they have any specific needs that are different from other communities.

Despite the series of awareness raising campaigns on COVID-19 through different platforms, communities report they do not observe people following the guidance, such as: frequent handwashing, mask wearing and social distancing. Lack of proper measures against COVID-19 is mainly a concern because people are not vigilant about the disease and how easily it can be spread.

Limited health facilities have contributed to the death of many, especially those in the rural areas who must travel to urban centres for treatment. Some key informants pointed out that they have become more worried whenever they hear of a death due to COVID-19. This is partly because the government does not have the capacity to conduct wide-scale testing. The majority of IDP key informants have acknowledged that humanitarian organizations are doing what they can to help the COVID-19 response.

Dissemination of information on protective measures is conducted through television, radio broadcasts, distribution of posters, verbal communication using loudspeakers, photos, and key messages in the local language. IDPs in South West requested that verbal awareness raisings to also be done in Maaymaay[1] dialect for deeper understanding of the messages as the majority of the IDPs and host community in the area are Maay speakers.

Because of the crowded conditions and congestion in IDP sites families are sharing houses and thus the risk for spreading the COVID-19 virus is high.

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[1] Maaymaay or Mai-Mai is part of the Somali language of the Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic family. It is mainly spoken in Somalia and adjacent parts of Ethiopia and Kenya. In Somalia, it is widely spoken in South West state, Jubaland state and Banadir.

Poor sanitation and hygiene have been reported in most IDP sites. With over one third of the population not having access to clean water, IDPs require the construction of adequate water points to ensure access to clean water for consumption and proper hygiene practices.

Older persons report serious concerns of contracting COVID-19 and dying due to their pre-existing medical conditions and age. Unfortunately, it is reported that no one is monitoring their special needs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Movement restrictions have limited the availability of economic activities and work opportunities. According to key informants, COVID-19 has caused closure of education centres, reduced access to job opportunities and thus reduced household income and increased vulnerability and poverty. Older persons raised concerns with shelter and shortage of food in homes as purchasing prices of commodities and supplies have greatly increased.

Key informants highlighted the dire financial situation faced by most households in their community and explained that individuals and families do not have the financial means to purchase COVID-19 preventative items such as hand soap, face masks, or other personal protective equipment.

> *"Yes. We are community that speak Maay dialects and would want all verbal messages be delivered in Maay language."*
> *Adult male IDP*

ANY OTHER ISSUES

The key informants were given the opportunity to raise any other issues in addition to the topics and questions raised above.

- **Security of tenure:** To achieve durable solutions there is a need for security of tenure. The government should take a lead role to ensure IDPs can obtain security of tenure.
- **Access to basic services:** Including health care services, education, clean drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities.
- **Governance and aid accountability:** Improve accountability through effective communication and monitoring mechanisms, and improved relations between camp managers and the government. It was reported that it is important to establish broad-based community structures to work with the government and organizations to facilitate issues on behalf of the displacement affected communities.
- **Joint planning and coordination:** Need for a coordinated approach between government, UN, international and local agencies as well as displaced and host communities to take steps towards achieving durable solutions by providing land for relocation/resettlement or reintegration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With many thanks to the IDP and Host Community members that participated in the interview.

The ideas, opinions and experiences shared during the interview resulted in a rich and diverse collection of information that was submitted to the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement to be integrated in a global report.

Website: https://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/content/consultations-affected-communities

These consultations were conducted by the **Somalia Protection Cluster** and **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster** and the following agencies: **UNHCR** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Refugee Agency), **IOM** (International Organization for Migration, UN Migration Agency) and **DRC** (Danish Refugee Council).

In gratitude, we received the following message from the Secretariat:

On behalf of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, I want to extend our sincerest thanks again for all of your hard work to consult IDPs and host communities in support of the Panel. The Panel Members were very impressed and grateful for your efforts, particularly in light of the challenges posed by the COVID Pandemic.