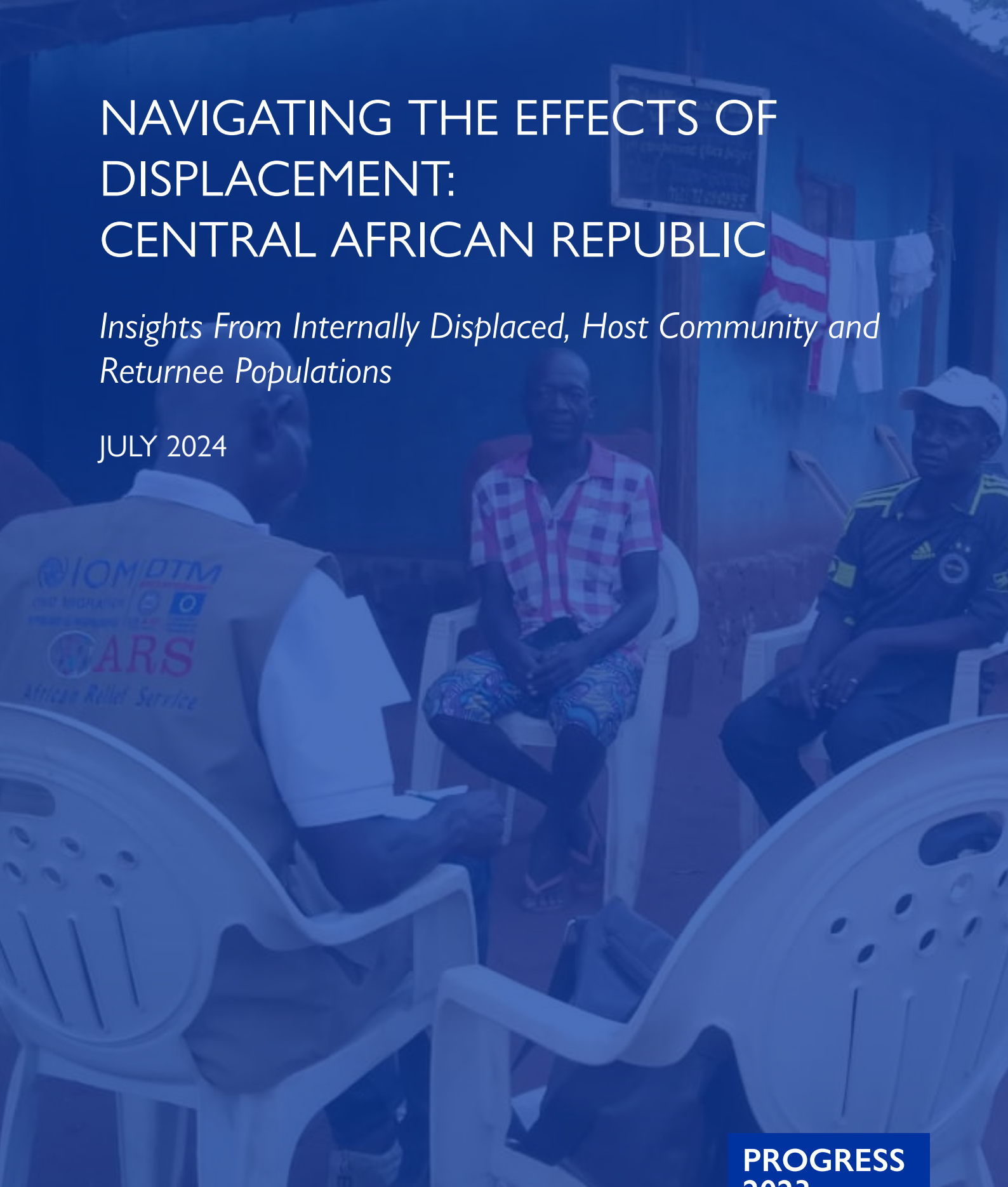


NAVIGATING THE EFFECTS OF DISPLACEMENT: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

*Insights From Internally Displaced, Host Community and
Returnee Populations*

JULY 2024



**PROGRESS
2023**

Periodic Global Report on the State of
Solutions to Internal Displacement



Effects of Displacement on Internally Displaced, Host Communities and Returnee Populations

This report presents a deeper country-specific dive into the findings of the qualitative analysis of six focus group discussions conducted between 1 and 15 August 2023 in Kaga-Bandoro, with 69 representatives of IDPs, host community, and returnees. Half of the respondents were female. Some 72 per cent of respondents were between the age of 18 and 59, and the remaining 28 per cent was equally distributed between those under the age of 17 and those older than 60 years.

IDPs

All IDPs were displaced for more than three years in Kaga-Bandoro. Local integration is the priority for IDPs, all of whom stated strong family and community ties and access to land for farming. Decisions on whether to opt for local integration were taken by each family, led by the respective heads of households and their spouses. IDPs receive support from relatives and family networks, particularly in the form of granting land plots and circulating information about humanitarian response and solutions programs.

The loss of shelter, fields and livestock were the main economic effects IDPs felt from their displacement. They considered their displacement would end when they could obtain shelter, access income generating activities, legal documentation for their children, and psychosocial support for the trauma of displacement. They shared a feeling of harmony with the host community, which shared goods and services, but still keenly felt their lack of economic opportunities in displacement. IDPs desire to be self-reliant in five to ten years, without the need for humanitarian assistance.



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If the humanitarian community supports us in income-generating activities, we will be able to improve our financial situation and find definitive solutions to end our displacement.”

Focus group discussion with male IDPs, CAR,

August 2023.

HOST COMMUNITY

Host community members highlighted that the growing population led to a perceived increase in petty crime and strained basic services, although there is humanitarian aid and emergency shelters provision in their communities. Host community members are benefiting from expanded trade opportunities and renting their fields to IDPs for farming. However, negative financial impacts have also been experienced as food reserves are consumed by families being hosted by host community members instead of being sold. Due to the strain on food resources, water supplies and sharing land for farming or for emergency shelters for IDPs, some host community members perceived a gradual deterioration of the relations with IDPs. The men in the community added that the involvement of local authorities, the government, and humanitarian actors was needed to mitigate the effects of displacement on the host community. Nevertheless, they did not feel that the presence of IDPs was a hindrance to achieving their short-term goals of higher income and better livestock farming.

Host community members noted the improvement of access to labour and support in farming with the increased population, but also more competition for resources including food and water. They said they needed support with vocational training and income generating activities to achieve financial independence, rehabilitation of their houses, donation of seeds for agricultural activities, support in the form of unconditional cash transfers, and support to keep children in school. Some host community members and IDPs have married, as stated by the all male focus group discussion.

The vision for solutions is seen as IDPs returning to their areas of origin and host community members regaining financial independence and thus having improved living conditions. This includes more land and livestock such as chickens, pigs and goats. Host community members said they wanted to resume and expand commercial activities and that they did not see IDP nor returnee presence as an obstacle to achieving this.



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Our economic situation has deteriorated a little since the arrival of the IDPs because there is more pressure on food and basic services (water, health, latrines) etc. As they also have access to our land, our agricultural income is lower since the arrival of the IDPs.”

Focus group discussion with female host community, CAR,

August 2023.

IDP RETURNEES

Men returnees in Kaga-Bandoro shared that improved security was the main enabling factor for their and others' return. However, improved security did not ensure re-integration, for which they said they needed humanitarian assistance in "almost every sector," (FGD 6, August 2023, all male returnee). Housing, psychological support for children traumatised by conflict, construction of a health centre, provision of seeds for agricultural activities, and support with income-generating activities were among the main needs mentioned. Women added that poor living conditions in the place of displacement were a driving factor as well. They said that the decision to return was most often taken as a family, although they shared a perception that teenagers were unlikely to want to return, as were "husbands who have become involved with other women in the displacement zone" (FGD 5, August 2023, all female returnees).

Women returnees prioritized access to schools, health centres, matrons and midwives to assist pregnant women during childbirth, additional boreholes, and income-generating activities as the main areas where humanitarians and others could provide support. They lost access to these basic resources due to displacement. For all returnees, the recovery of these losses in the next five to ten years would be possible through access to income-generating activities, oxen to cultivate large fields and meet their families' socio-economic needs, and having a means of transport to sell produce in the city. Societal factors such as reuniting with friends and loved ones as well as participation in societal programs, among others, influenced their sense of acceptance upon return.



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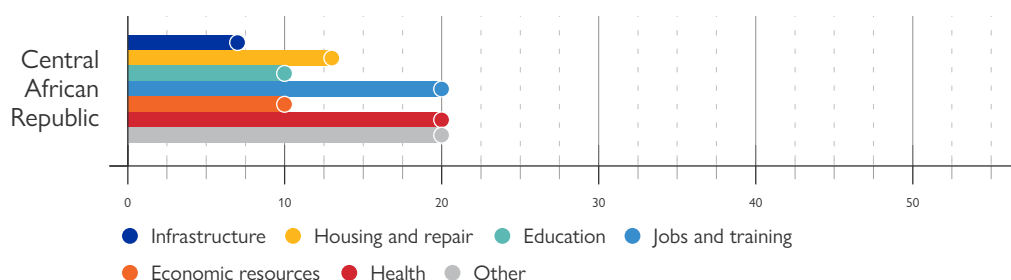
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Our living conditions were better before the move. We practised cash crop farming, which provided us with income to support our family. Since our return, we have still not regained our means of subsistence, our shelter remains in poor condition, and we lack the financial means to access basic services.”

Focus group discussion with male returnees, CAR,

August 2023.

MENTIONS OF SUPPORT NEEDED FOR SOLUTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



The chart above shows the number of times each sector was mentioned by host communities, IDPs and returnees in each focus group discussion. In CAR, the main themes that emerged were support with jobs and training, health, followed by housing and repair.

Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS 2023)

The IASC Framework on Durable Solutions acknowledges three accepted approaches for addressing internal displacement: the return and sustainable reintegration in the community of origin (referred to as “return”), integration in areas where internally displaced persons (IDPs) seek refuge (referred to as “local integration”) into local communities, or sustainable integration into another part of the country (referred to as “settlement elsewhere”). However, integration is also a fundamental part of all three solutions and overcoming displacement-related vulnerabilities; for returnees it entails becoming reintegrated in their communities, and for IDPs it signifies inclusion and access to livelihoods, jobs and basic services on par with the other members of the community.

As a contribution to addressing displacement challenges, the collaboration between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Global Data Institute (GDI) and Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM) has produced the Periodic Global Report on the State of Solutions to Internal Displacement (PROGRESS). PROGRESS aims to be people-centered and operationally relevant, providing evidence-based analysis of factors facilitating internally displaced persons (IDPs) in moving towards and achieving durable solutions. It is designed for governments, development and humanitarian actors, and IDPs themselves, offering practical steps to enhance realistic opportunities for approaching solutions. Given the global focus on resolving internal displacement, there is a crucial need for the international community to unite efforts in supporting solutions for over 70 million IDPs, a number of whom have experienced prolonged displacement.

The report focuses on 15 countries, providing an analysis of operational quantitative data, mostly collected by the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) on the challenges and opportunities faced by IDPs. It shows the importance of job creation, security, and fostering a sense of belonging within communities for overcoming displacement-related vulnerabilities and, subsequently, reduce disparities between IDPs and their host communities. In addition, focus group discussions were carried out in 10 of these countries to include perspectives of people who were displaced, had returned, or were part of communities that hosted IDPs. The published PROGRESS report highlights the commonalities across countries and regions – such as the strong focus on economic recovery and security as fundamental to durable reintegration. The conversations also exposed the range of experiences within families, communities, and national contexts. Additionally, these discussions provided a platform to express perspectives typically overlooked by conventional data collection methods, such as affected communities’ views on the cultural and gender-related impacts of displacement in their countries.



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