BEYOND DISPLACEMENT

Overcoming barriers and building resilience in the Somali Region

DRC DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

UNHCR
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1. INTRODUCTION

Background and context

The Somali Region of Ethiopia is currently home to a significant population of internally displaced persons (IDPs), well over 300,000 refugees, and communities affected by recurrent conflict, drought, and other socio-political challenges. According to the most recent data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as of 2024, over 3.45 million people are internally displaced across Ethiopia, with the Somali region hosting 1,093,745 IDPs (33% of the total).[1] Of these, 397,913 have been displaced due to drought, the highest number in the country for climate-induced displacement.

Conflict-induced displacement remains the primary driver in the region, perpetuating instability and creating both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term development challenges for displaced and host communities. Additionally, the increasing severity of climate-related events, such as prolonged droughts, has exacerbated vulnerabilities, especially for communities with limited access to essential services, livelihoods, and legal protections.

At the federal level, Ethiopia has demonstrated a growing commitment to addressing internal displacement by launching a national strategy to implement solutions pathways to internal displacement in November 2024.[2] As part of the process, several regions across Ethiopia worked on regional durable solutions costed action plans. The Somali region has been at the forefront of implementing durable solutions since its first regional strategy in 2017, followed by the 2022-2025 Regional Durable Solutions Strategy and the Menu of Options.

The Somali region's proactive approach emphasises rights-based, community-driven solutions that prioritise IDP preferences. By demonstrating strong regional leadership and fostering collaboration with humanitarian and development partners, the Somali region provides valuable lessons on advancing durable solutions for a large number of individuals. However, work remains to be done, and achieving these ambitious goals requires a comprehensive understanding of the progress made so far, and pending challenges for displacement-affected communities.

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[1] IOM DTM - SA R36 and R35
[2] FDRE, 2024, National Strategy to Implement Solutions Pathways to Internal Displacement in Ethiopia,

https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/national-strategy-implement-solutions-pathways-internal-displacement-ethiopia-solutions-internal-displacement-ethiopia-2024

Objectives and analytical framework of the study

The primary objective of this assessment was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities for achieving durable solutions for internally displaced persons in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. The study aimed to generate actionable insights to inform policy, programmatic interventions, and coordination mechanisms that support durable solutions for IDPs.

Primary data was collected in Fafan, Shabelle, Sitti, Afder, Liban and Dawa zones, including both displacement sites hosting IDPs, and relocation sites.

The study used the definition of durable solutions from the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions, which states that a durable solution is achieved when "IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs related to their displacement and can fully enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement."[3] A durable solution can be achieved through:

- Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin (Return)
- Sustainable integration in areas where IDPs have taken refuge (Local integration).
- Sustainable integration in another part of the country (settlement elsewhere in the country)

No return sites were covered in this study, as return numbers in the Somali region are relatively low, and most IDPs are pursuing solutions either through local integration (especially those displaced as a result of climate change related challenges), or settlement elsewhere in the country, carried out through planned relocations of IDPs.

The analytical framework was structured around the IASC Framework for Durable Solutions, which evaluates progress across eight criteria: safety and security, adequate standard of living, access to livelihoods, housing and property restitution, access to documentation, family reunification, participation in public affairs, and access to effective remedies. Two criteria were added to these to include social cohesion as well as gender, age and diversity considerations as a cross-cutting issue.

2. METHODOLOGY

Data collection methods

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data to achieve a comprehensive understanding of progress towards durable solutions in the selected areas. The methodological framework was community-centred, gender-sensitive, and conflict-sensitive, ensuring that the voices and experiences of various groups were included in the analysis. Data collection used multiple tools to capture diverse perspectives. These can be found in Annex 2.

Initially, a desk review of existing literature, policies, and previous assessments was conducted to contextualise the findings, providing a foundational understanding of displacement dynamics and ongoing initiatives in the region.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were carried out with government officials, community leaders, humanitarian actors, IDP representatives, and representatives from organisations working in the area. These semi-structured interviews provided in-depth insights into policy frameworks, social cohesion dynamics, and challenges related to durable solutions.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organised separately with men and women from displaced and host communities to foster open dialogue and ensure inclusivity. These discussions utilised participatory techniques such as problem-ranking and solution mapping, which helped reveal nuanced community-level challenges and opportunities. FGDs were carried out in qualitative interviews were limited to sites in Fafan, Sitti, Shabelle and Afder zones.

Altogether 890 surveys were administered to IDP households across the Fafan, Shabelle, Sitti, Afder, Liban and Dawa zones, using systematic sampling to gather quantitative data on living conditions based on durable solutions criteria. 43% of the survey respondents (responding on behalf of their household) were female. All survey respondents were above 18 years of age.

Lastly, field observations were conducted in key areas to validate findings and assess local infrastructure, service provision, and living conditions.

[[3] IASC, 2010, IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.
https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/other/iasc-framework-durable-solutions-internally-displaced-persons

The table below provides a synthesis of the data collected:

	KIIs	FGDs	Surveys
Shabelle	5	2	65
Fafan	5	2	265
Sitti	5	2	81
Afder	5	2	30
Liban	-	-	226
Dawa	-	-	223
Regional	10	-	-
Total	30	8	890

The field data collection took place between December 14, 2024 and January 16, 2025. All qualitative data (KIIs, FGDs and field observations were carried out by Agora Consulting. The surveys were administered by Agora (Fafan, Sitti, Afder and Shabelle) and UNHCR (Dawa and Liban).

Ethical considerations

Ethical principles were given utmost consideration throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, their rights, and how their data would be used, with informed consent obtained prior to any data collection.

Confidentiality was strictly maintained, with all personal information anonymised to protect participants' identities. The research team adhered to the principle of "do no harm," particularly when addressing sensitive topics such as trauma, displacement, and inter-communal tensions. Researchers were trained to engage empathetically and to minimise distress during interviews and discussions. To address potential research fatigue in communities frequently involved in similar studies, data collection tools were streamlined, and reliance on existing data was maximised to reduce the burden on participants.

Special attention was given to ensuring inclusivity, with the active participation of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. Gender-segregated FGDs helped create safe spaces for discussing sensitive issues.

Limitations of the study

The research faced several limitations, primarily due to the short timeline (December to January) and available budget, which restricted the ability to cover all relevant sites, obtain a representative quantitative sample, or conduct focus group discussions with host communities. Additionally, research fatigue in some locations and the limited educational background of certain respondents posed challenges in collecting precise technical details. These constraints were mitigated by engaging experienced local researchers with deep knowledge of the region, ensuring the collection of contextually relevant data.

3. CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

Current displacement landscape in the Somali region

The Somali region of Ethiopia continues to host a substantial population of IDPs, displaced by both conflict and environmental factors. More than half of the displacement in the region is conflict-induced, often linked to ethnic-based conflicts, particularly at the borders with Oromia and Afar regions.[4] These conflicts have created protracted displacement, with many IDPs having been displaced for six to seven years, making return unlikely due to persistent insecurity and trauma. The rest of the displacement is attributed to climate-related factors, including recurrent droughts and flooding, which severely disrupt livelihoods and force people to move. The Somali Region's climate is becoming increasingly unpredictable, with rising temperatures, increased rainfall variability, and more frequent extreme weather events, such as heavy precipitation and flash floods, on one hand, and periods of limited rainfall on the other. These changing weather patterns exacerbate drought conditions, intensify the risk of displacement, and pose further challenges for livelihoods and agricultural productivity.

In the Shabelle zone, frequent flooding of the Shabelle River destroys crops, shelters, and livestock, while also depleting soil fertility and therefore reducing agricultural productivity.

During droughts, which have been particularly severe in recent years in several parts of the Somali region, pastoralist communities often migrate in search of pasture and water, with some crossing regional or international borders. These cyclical environmental shocks contribute to significant movements both within and out of the affected zones. Among the zones covered in this assessment, this was particularly evident in Afder, while the zone is also affected by security risks that have contributed to displacement.

Clan affiliation is a major factor affecting movement patterns in the region. While seeking safety, many IDPs spontaneously move to areas where their clans are based, hoping that shared clan ties would offer protection and support. Belonging to the same clan has been key to fostering community acceptance, and as a result, IDP-host community relations are generally strong, especially in cases where shared clan affiliations exist. Further details on the relationships between IDPs and host communities will be provided in the social cohesion section.

[4] KII2, KII14
[5] KII5

Background of the research sites

Shabelle Zone (Bayahow - Relocation)

The Shabelle Zone is characterised by displacement primarily driven by environmental factors such as drought and flooding of the Shabelle River. These events often destroy crops, shelters, and livestock while degrading soil fertility, forcing communities to relocate. Additionally, a key informant noted that in the surroundings of Bayahow, there are also IDPs displaced by development-induced factors such as natural gas exploration in the Ilalo and Armale fields, which forced pastoralists to relocate from these areas.[5]

The Bayahow site, a relocation site located 4 km from the Shabelle river in Gode Woreda, hosts families recently relocated from Qoloji. Unlike the IDPs displaced within the Shabelle Zone, the IDPs in Qoloji primarily originate from XX, where they had to flee as a result of ethnic conflict. Four waves of relocation supported by the Somali Disaster Risk Management Bureau (DRMB) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) brought 2,570 individuals (524 households) to the Bayahow site in December 2024.[6] Bayahow offers housing, water, health, and education facilities and benefits from strong community acceptance due to shared clan affiliations, fostering successful integration. The relocation to Bayhow was preceded by substantial investment in the site's infrastructure and services. The estimated total investment on the site to date has been close to 20,000,000 USD.

Fafan Zone (Tuliguled – Relocation and Displacement Site; Dhurwale – Relocation Site; and Goljano – Relocation Site)

The Fafan Zone, with Jijiga as its administrative center, serves as a hub for displacement response. Three different locations in this Zone were covered by the research: Tuliguled, Dhurwale and Goljano. **Tuliguled**, in the Tuliguled Woreda, hosts IDPs displaced from Chinaksen Woreda, displaced by conflict between Jarso and Garri clans, as well as IDPs from Qoloji, who moved spontaneously to the site. According to key informants, the population size is stable (1,840 households according to IOM DTM) with no significant recent movements. The site faces significant challenges, including a lack of basic facilities. Initial aid has reduced, and the harsh climate, combined with inadequate shelter, makes conditions particularly difficult.

The **Dhurwale** relocation site is situated in Kebri Beyah Woreda. As part of the Somali Regional Government's Durable Solutions Initiative, UN agencies and their partners facilitated the relocation of approximately 600 IDPs from the Qoloji site to Dhurwale in 2022. The relocated IDPs chose to move to Dhurwale due to their clan affiliations.[7] According to the latest DTM figures, the site hosts 114 households.[8] While relationships between IDP and host communities are overall good, challenges such as land scarcity limit opportunities for livelihood activities like farming and livestock grazing. Additionally, limited access to basic services such as education, health, and water was reported as an issue in early 2024, with IDPs struggling to access basic services due to their limited capacity.

The Goljano relocation site in Goljina Woreda is home to IDPs who were displaced by conflict. Many of the IDPs in Goljano were part of a government-led relocation effort which started in 2021 after they had spent two to three years in Qoloji IDP camp.

[6] IOM, 2024, Voices of Resilience in Ethiopia's Somali region: A Journey from Displacement to Renewal https://ethiopia.iom.int/stories/voices-resilience-ethiopias-somali-region-journey-displacement-renewal
[7] UNHCR, 2022, Operational update Ethiopia, October 2022 https://data.unhcr.org/ar/documents/download/97541
[8] IOM DTM SA R35 & R36
[9] Elizabeth Stites and Abdirahman Ahmed Muhumed, 2021, Policy Brief: Livelihood Components of Durable Solutions for IDPs: Assessment of three cases in Somali Region, Ethiopia, November 2021, Tufts University. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/90030

Previous reports noted that the relocation process to Goljano was not preference-driven and lacked significant planning or input from the IDPs themselves.[9] To support their transition and integration, the government built 200 houses for families with clan ties to the host community.[10] According to the DTM, approximately 700 IDPs (125 households) currently live in Goljano.[11]

Sitti Zone (Jedane Relocation Site)
The Shinile Woreda in Sitti Zone is located near the Somali-Oromia border. The area experiences displacement driven by both conflict and environmental pressures. **Jedane** hosts approximately 500 IDP households relocated from Dire Dawa's Millennium Park in 2021 site after displacement due to the Somali-Oromo conflict. The site is organised into clusters based on IDPs' areas of origin to reduce tensions between groups. However, challenges remain in improving access to water, sanitation, and basic infrastructure.

Afder Zone (Dhirindhir Informal Settlement)
The Afder Zone is primarily affected by drought-induced displacement, which devastates pastoralist livelihoods. Prolonged droughts lasting over three years have forced many families to flee, with their livelihoods and belongings destroyed.[12] In addition to drought, the area is also affected by floods during the rainy season. For example, the Web River near Dhirindhir overflowed during the last rainy season, displacing families living nearby.[13] **The Dhirindhir site**, situated in Harghelle Woreda, houses 242 households[14], composed of pastoralist communities who have lost their livestock and migrated in search of opportunities for survival. Local communities have provided immediate support, but IDPs face ongoing vulnerabilities due to inadequate housing, food insecurity, and limited access to essential services. The IDPs in Dhirindhir are the only so-called purely "climate IDPs" in this study.

Dhawa Zone (Moyale – Informal Settlement)
Located at the extreme southwest corner of the Dhawa Zone, the Moyale District is bordered in the south by Kenya, in the west by the Oromia Region. Moyale hosts 36,476 individual IDPs from Oromia, who were displaced by ethnic conflicts between 2020-2022 in between Somali and Oromo groups. Moyale currently hosts three sites nearby urban areas, and three rural sites. Moyale faces severe infrastructure challenges, with roads regularly blocked due to Dawa river flooding, and general remoteness of the location. Assistance provision in the area is limited, with no systematic support to IDPs to support integration.

Liban Zone (Guradamole – Informal Settlement)
Guradamole hosts over 46,000 IDPs displaced by conflict in Oromia region. The host community of around 80,000 people has also been affected by ethnic violence. 71% of the population in Guramole are pastoralist, while less than 6% live in the urban areas. Disease outbreaks like measles and malaria are common in Guradamole while malnutrition is severe according to the regional nutrition cluster.

Access is also a challenge in Guradamole both due to physical infrastructure and safety. Due to this, presence of partners is limited.

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[10] Elizabeth Stites and Abdirahman Ahmed Muhumed, 2021, Policy Brief: Livelihood Components of Durable Solutions for IDPs: Assessment of three cases in Somali Region, Ethiopia, November 2021, Tufts University. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/90030
[11] IOM DTM SA R35 & R36
[12] KII29
[13] KII27
[14] There are discrepancies in reported numbers for Dhirindhir. While the DTM indicates 242 IDP households, NGOs active in the active reports the figure to be up to 650 households.

4. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 Legal and Policy Frameworks

The Somali region has been at the forefront of developing durable solutions approaches for IDPs, emphasising rights-based approaches and aligning with IDP preferences. While significant progress has been made, challenges persist, particularly regarding resource limitations, implementation gaps, weak land administration, tenue insecurity and the need for context-specific policies.

The Somali Region was the first in Ethiopia to launch a Durable Solutions Strategy in 2017, which was further developed into the Somali Region Durable Solutions Strategy 2022-2025, supplemented by the revision of the Somali Region Menu of Options 2022-2025. The strategy prioritises voluntary and dignified solutions guided by IDP preferences, including options for relocation, local integration, and return and reintegration.

Relocation initiatives have been implemented in most cases with strong government support[15] and engagement from several humanitarian and development actors. The regional government has demonstrated notable leadership, particularly through the development of a costed "Menu of Options" to address the needs of over 1 million IDPs.

However, these processes have been relatively slow to implement, and the resource requirements have been significant. [16]

In recent years, the focus has increasingly included local integration as a durable solution, recognising its potential benefits alongside relocation, particularly in urban areas where IDPs can access services and livelihood opportunities. This is also explained by resource constraints and the preferences expressed by many IDPs. To date, relatively limited funding has gone to systematically supporting local integration processes.

The below section outlines some of the key challenges and opportunities to enhance progress and overcome the barriers relating to the implementation of solutions processes.

[15] KII13
[16] KII26

4.1.1. Challenges

Funding gaps
Implementation of durable solutions, such as relocation and integration, requires significant resources. The costed "Menu of Options" estimates that nearly $200 million is needed for effective implementation. However, financial limitations have delayed essential activities, such as constructing housing, securing land, and providing basic services for IDPs.[17]

Limited capacity and multi-stakeholder engagement
While the regional government has played a key role in initiating the durable solutions strategy, including the Menu of Options and strengthening coordination mechanisms, gaps in awareness and engagement among different line ministries and also many humanitarian and development actors still affect effective coordination and implementation. Further efforts are needed to ensure long-term, sustainable engagement that can leverage the expertise and resources of all relevant actors.

Durable solutions are often perceived as the exclusive responsibility of the DRMB, reducing engagement from other development sectors.[18] This challenge is particularly evident at the local level, where kebele and woreda sectoral offices, such as health, education, water or agriculture and land offices, do not always perceive IDPs as their direct responsibility. As a result, service provision for IDPs is often deprioritised, and coordination with durable solutions efforts remains weak.

Additionally, key stakeholders such as the international organisations and NGO, local civil society, academia, the private sector and diaspora communities remains limited or even absent in many cases. Strengthening engagement with these groups could foster innovation, provide additional resources, and enhance the sustainability of durable solutions efforts. Among the humanitarian actors, priority is often given to short-term interventions, without adequate focus on building resilience and leveraging local capacities.

Further clarification of roles and responsibilities especially within the government and stronger cross-sectoral engagement through establishing durable solutions as a shared responsibility is bestowed upon the draft IDP Proclamation. The delays in passing this legal framework risk halting progress towards solutions, if not addressed through proactive regional leadership in the meantime.

Customary land ownership
Securing land is a key determinant of long-term stability and access to livelihoods for IDPs in the Somali region. Although Ethiopia's constitution designates land as government-owned, land ownership in the Somali region is often tied to clans in practice. This dynamic requires extensive negotiations with elders and clan leaders (Ugas) to facilitate both relocation and local integration efforts. These negotiations can delay implementation, create tensions, and occasionally lead to disputes.[19]

Negotiations focus on land allocation for IDPs to settle, covering both housing and livelihoods. However, challenges arise when land is provided for housing but not for productive use, limiting economic self-reliance and delaying full integration. In the context of relocation, Dhurwale illustrates this challenge: relocated IDPs were allocated land to build houses but not for livelihoods, leaving them dependent on aid and struggling to achieve self-sufficiency.

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[17] KII26
[18] KII2, KII7
[19] KII14, KII26

Limited focus on disaster displacement

While significant investments have been made to support thousands of conflict related IDPs to find solutions, those displaced due to reasons related to disasters, especially the prolonged effects of climate change, have received less attention to date.

This study only covered one site where the IDPs were primarily displaced as a result of prolonged droughts and related loss of livelihoods. While not sufficient for generalisation, the findings point to a need of systematic efforts to invest more in support for sustainable integration for this group, who are unlikely to be able to return to their past lifestyle and areas of origin.

"We have been welcomed and supported by the community, we were given land, we were given water, we were given local materials for us to build a house, and we were given utensils. This support was from the host community no one else." FGD 7, Dhirindhir

4.1.1. Opportunities

Regional leadership for enhanced coherence

The Somali Regional Government has shown commendable leadership in developing and driving forward the durable solutions strategy, and key informants praised the Somali region as a model that can be replicated across other regions in Ethiopia.[20]

The forthcoming IDP Proclamation is expected to broaden stakeholder involvement in solutions beyond the DRMB and into areas like livelihoods, housing, and infrastructure development.[21] Additionally, the recently launched National Durable Solutions Strategy (launched in November 2024) provides a framework to guide the implementation of durable solutions at both regional and federal levels.

In addition to the National Durable Solutions Strategy, other government-led initiatives such as the Resilience Strategy and the Kebribeyah Inclusion Road Map[22] also contribute to fostering durable solutions. These initiatives, which include IDPs as target groups, reflect a broader commitment by the Somali Regional Government to align displacement responses with regional development priorities. However, ensuring strong coordination between these frameworks and their implementation on the ground will be crucial to enhancing effectiveness and preventing fragmentation.

Based on feedback from durable solutions experts, the MYRP is a key initiative embedding durable solutions within broader development strategies.[23] By aligning durable solutions with ongoing regional planning, MYRP offers a framework for sustainable, long-term interventions that address both humanitarian and development needs. However, while the opportunities for policy alignment and synergies were widely mentioned at the national level, this perspective was not widely reflected in local-level discussions. This suggests a potential disconnect between strategic planning and implementation at policy level and on the ground. In addition, key informants raised concerns about fragmentation, with multiple initiatives operating in parallel rather than in a harmonised manner.

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[20] KII14
[21] KII12
[22] https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/kebribeyah-inclusion-roadmap-2023-2027-building-resilience-together
[23] United Nations Secretary General's Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, Mission Report Ethiopia 15-25 August 2023 - Summary

4. LONG-TERM SAFETY AND SECURITY

Overall, most IDPs reported feeling safe in their current locations, regardless of the solution pathways. For those relocated, the transition to new sites has provided relief from the acute threats and vulnerabilities they faced before and during displacement, especially at checkpoints and conflict zones. However, differences in safety perceptions exist across zones and sites, influenced by factors like land availability, resource competition, and the presence of security infrastructure.

4.2.1. A widely shared feeling of safety

"We were so afraid for our lives because hundreds were killed. At every checkpoint and throughout our journey, we were vulnerable and afraid. But since we relocated here [Goljano], there are no risks we are afraid of. We are all good and safe here." – FGD4, female IDPs, Goljano

In all locations visited, IDPs reported feeling overall safe. The sense of safety was largely attributed to the welcoming attitude of host communities. As emphasised by key informants and IDPs themselves, traditional clan affiliations foster protection. Elders also play an important role in ensuring IDPs' safety by sensitizing host community members ahead of or upon the arrival of IDPs. In Bayahow, where the first phase of the relocation process took place shortly before this assessment was conducted, IDPs and representatives from the host community described the ceremony organised to celebrate the arrival of the displaced, which involved the slaughtering of cattle.

Figure 1: Feeling of safety in current location

An overwhelming majority (92%) of survey respondents reported feeling safe in their current location, including all respondents who were displaced from disaster-prone areas. However, among the 8% who expressed concerns about safety (all originating from conflict-prone areas), 60% cited conflict with other community members as a primary concern, 31% feared theft, and 25% mentioned violence from state actors. Breaking this down by the sex of the respondents, 97% of female respondents reported feeling safe compared to 89% of male respondents. This difference may reflect the higher risk of men being targeted during conflicts.

Clan-based relocations, together with the warm welcome from the host community provide a sense of belonging and security, as communities share cultural ties.

In some areas, social cohesion initiatives including community dialogues and peace committees were mentioned. Traditional elders play a critical role in maintaining safety by mediating conflicts, ensuring fair resource distribution, and fostering collaboration between IDPs and host communities.

Figure 2: Feeling of safety, breakdown by sex

For instance, peace committees consisting of both host and IDP members actively resolve disputes and monitor the security situation.

4.2.2. Challenges

Most rural areas lack formal security infrastructure, such as police presence, which was raised as an issue by IDPs interviewed in Dhurwale (Fafan Zone) and Jedane (Sitti Zone). This increases reliance on community-based mechanisms, which can be beneficial for soft community dynamics, but are not always sufficient in the event of an emerging threats. In the Shinille Woreda (Sitti Zone), respondents said that requests for militia establishment remain unmet.

Lack of resources and competition over land
Competition for resources, such as water and land, can escalate tensions between IDPs and host communities, even if they are from the same clan, when resources are scarce. In Dhurwale (Fafan Zone), limited land availability compromises IDPs' sense of long-term safety, as they cannot engage in essential activities like grazing livestock or providing safe spaces for children. This situation creates a perception of instability and insecurity despite no direct threats. This was reflected in the survey, with Dhurwale having the highest proportion of respondents reporting feelings of insecurity (29%).

"While the area itself offers some level of safety and security, there are significant concerns that make us feel unsafe. One of the main issues is the limited land we have. The small size of the land prevents us from using it for grazing animals or allowing children to play freely, which are essential activities for our community. Without the space for these basic needs, we feel that our safety and security are not fully protected. If we were unable to safeguard our livestock or provide a safe environment for our children, our overall sense of security would be compromised." – FGD2, Male IDPs, Dhurwale

Lack of urban infrastructure
In Jedane (Sitti Zone), the lack of electricity and lighting at night creates risks of wild animal attacks, such as hyenas, particularly affecting children's safety. In sites like Dhurwale, isolation from nearby towns or communities, coupled with the distance from main roads, contribute to feelings of insecurity among IDPs. Tensions over land, the lack of formal security presence, and the isolation of the site may have contributed to relocated IDPs feeling less safe compared to other locations.

Gender-Based Violence Risks
Women face specific safety and security risks due to inadequate housing and essential infrastructure. For example, in Afder Zone, women sleeping without proper housing are at heightened risk, and traveling long distances to fetch water increases their vulnerability.[24] Addressing these challenges requires improved housing and the provision of essential infrastructure to reduce exposure to GBV risks.

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[24] KII27

4.3 ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

The provision of adequate living standards for IDPs in the Somali Region varies significantly across locations and sectors, reflecting disparities in access to essential services such as housing, water, sanitation, health, and education. While some sites demonstrate notable progress, others highlight ongoing gaps and challenges. Below is an overview of key findings, organised by common themes and specific zones. Overall, a significant majority of both male (86%) and female (90%) respondents reported that their living conditions are inadequate.
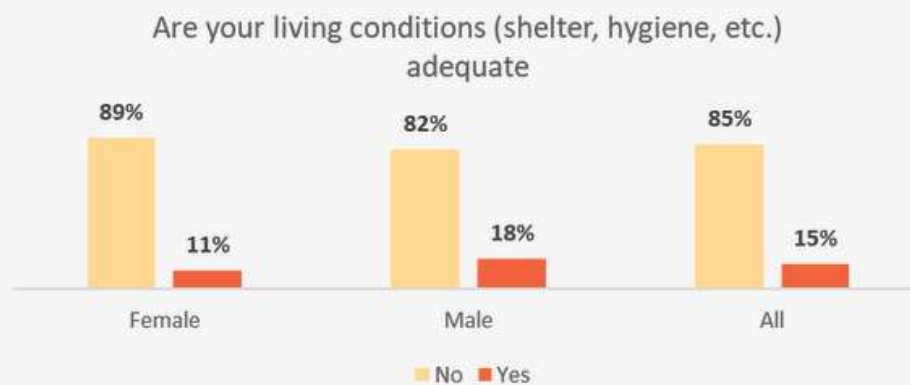
Figure 3: Living conditions, breakdown by sex

4.3.1. Housing

Quantitative data highlights the significant housing challenges faced by IDPs, with 82% of respondents reporting a lack of access to adequate housing. It is worth noting that those IDPs coming from conflict-affected areas were more likely to report access to adequate housing (18%) as opposed to IDPs from purely disaster-prone areas, among whom only 3% reported having access to an adequate lodging. This likely reflects the investment made in housing as part of the organised relocation processes. The primary factors limiting access to adequate housing include financial constraints (78%), damaged property (52%), lack of infrastructure (47%), and insufficient land availability (41%).

No access to secure and adequte housing - Main issues
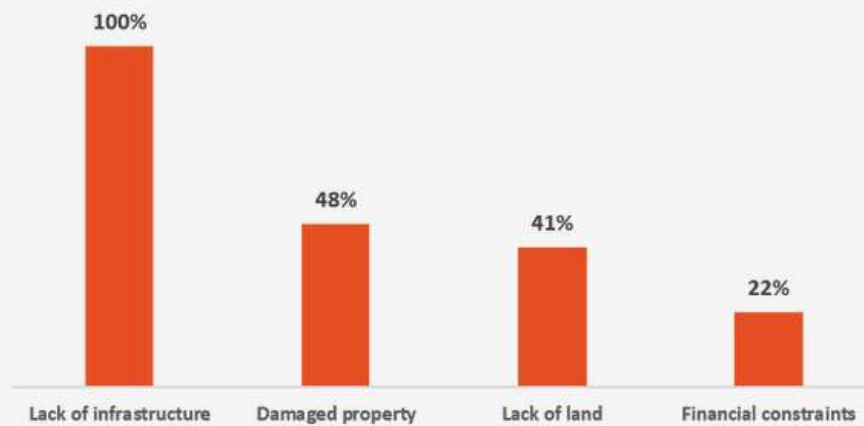
Figure 4: Main issues - access to housing

Housing conditions for IDPs differ significantly across sites. Bayahow stands out with significantly lower percentages for all challenges, particularly for lack of land (3%), financial constraints (3%), and lack of infrastructure (6%), compared to other sites where these issues are much more pronounced. This highlights the comparatively better housing and infrastructure conditions in Bayahow, underscoring the potential benefits of planning and investments made prior to relocation in this site.

Conversely, sites such as Jedane, Tuliguled, and Dhurwale face far more severe housing-related issues, particularly in terms of financial constraints and infrastructure gaps, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions in these areas.

The difficulties flagged by the IDPs included several challenges unpacked below.

Figure 4: Lack of access to housing, main issues per locations

Solid but insufficient housing

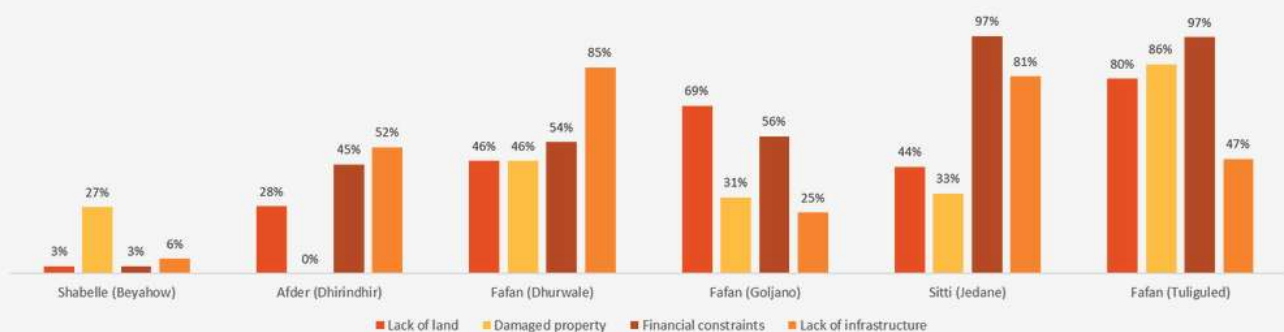In some locations, IDPs have been provided with constructed houses, such as in Bayahow and Goljano. However, respondents explained that these houses often fail to meet the needs of larger families due to the "one-room-per-family" policy used in Bayahow, regardless of the family size, which leads to overcrowding. In Goljano, IDPs noted that the number of houses provided is far lower than the number of families living on the site. Additionally, houses have maintenance issues, such as broken doors and non-functional toilets:

"We also need housing as the 200 houses they built here are not enough for all of us. We have adults who are married and about to get married soon. So, the house built here is not enough. We are around 641 families but there are only 200 houses." — FGD4, Goljano.

Fragile temporary housing

In sites like Dhurwale and Jedane, houses are perceived as poor-quality and vulnerable to collapse during harsh weather conditions, such as heavy rains or winds. This creates safety risks for residents, and many IDPs have expressed fears about the durability of these structures.

"[The organisation] built only 50 mud houses for elders. Those are mud houses and won't last. The rest of us live in these tents, temporary shelters. We are around 533 households excluding some who were not on a list when we came here. But when we add those we are more than that, yet only 50 mud houses were built for elder displaced peoples among us. We are afraid of rain, wind, sun and cold due to our life in tents." — FGD6, Jedane

Lack of housing

In several sites, including Jedane, Dhirindhir, and Tuliguled, many IDPs still live in tents or makeshift shelters, offering little protection. Overcrowding is severe, with families often forced to share limited space, exposing them to health and safety risks. In Jedane, housing is a significant concern; of the 650 IDP households, only 50 mud houses have been built for elders, leaving the majority to live in temporary shelters or tents. The extreme climate exacerbates the problem, with the area becoming unbearably hot in iron sheet houses during the day and too cold at night. In Tuliguled, IDPs similarly raised concerns about the cold, expressing an urgent need for blankets and plastic covers to improve their inadequate tukul-style shelters, which are often made of old sheets and provide minimal coverage.

"We have been welcomed and supported by the [host] community, we were given land, we were given water, we were given local materials for us to build a house, and we were given utensils. This support was from the host community, no one else" — FGD7, Dhirindhir

4.3.2. Access to basic services

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
Water scarcity is a major issue across most sites. IDPs raised concerns in Dhurwale, Jedane, Dhirindhir, and Goljano, with some households walking up to 4 km to fetch water. In Bayahow, the water system relies on a fuel-powered generator, which frequently breaks down, leaving IDPs without access to water for extended periods.

In Jedane, IDPs complained about the water quality, suspecting it to be unsafe for consumption. Those who could afford it resorted to buying mineral water. In Dhurwale, IDPs expressed desperation over the lack of nearby water sources, explaining that the time and energy spent fetching water prevents them from focusing on long-term needs, such as securing livelihoods.

In addition, insufficient or non-functional toilets were frequently cited as a major issue across sites, particularly in Bayahow, Jedane, and Dhurwale, raising serious hygiene and health concerns.

"Toilets need maintenance, and many of the houses do not have toilets at all, I think the biggest problem is un-functional toilets or lack of toilets. When there is no proper toilet, it will risk the health of the residents. I will recommend government and humanitarian organisation to come together and support fixing the toilet challenge because a toilet is a primary need." — KII22, Bayahow.

Health services
Health services are often insufficient or entirely absent across many sites, significantly impacting the well-being of IDPs. In Jedane and Hargelle, there are no local health facilities, forcing residents to travel long distances for medical care, which is unaffordable for many families.

IDPs in Jedane reported that the lack of a local health facility forces them to travel long distances for medical care, which is both costly and logistically challenging, leaving many unable to access treatment. Pregnant women face heightened risks, as there is no emergency care available. Respondents shared accounts of women giving birth in unsafe conditions, including on the way to distant hospitals in makeshift transport. Similarly, children are highly vulnerable, with parents expressing frustration and helplessness when unable to provide timely medical attention for illnesses, particularly during nighttime emergencies.

"Since we have relocated here, people have died from treatable diseases due to lack of healthcare services. For example, when people get sick, there is no available hospital or clinic. We have to go far to look for healthcare services. Even right now many people are sick and just lying in their homes, because there is no healthcare service here and they don't have money to go to the hospital. Some of our friends who have managed somehow to go to the hospital in a city by Bajaj, will stay a couple of days and get back here even before they finish the treatment." — FGD5, Jedane.

Education

Educational access varies significantly across sites, reflecting both progress and persistent challenges. In Bayahow, schools are operational with teachers deployed and student enrolment underway, though gaps in supplies and infrastructure remain. In contrast, sites like Dhurwale, Jedane, and Hargelle face significant barriers, with schools either non-existent or limited to lower grades. In Dhurwale, education does not extend beyond Grade 8, and relocation has led to school dropouts among older students who previously had access to higher grades in Qoloji. This disruption has left many youths unable to continue their education, severely limiting their future opportunities. Similar challenges were reported in Jedane and Hargelle. Female IDPs, in particular, emphasised this concern, highlighting the impact of this situation on the future of their children.

"Our children cannot continue their education beyond Grade 8, leaving them with no future prospects. The main challenges began from the initial arrival of the IDP community because when the IDP relocated from the Qoloji IDP site to the Dhurwale area, the students who has been above grade eight when there were in Qoloji IDP Sites and now in the new relocated area there is no above grade eight and those who are above grade eight ceased there education system" — KII15, Dhurwale.

4.3.3. Challenges

The challenges across IDP sites in the Somali region reveal several recurring themes but also highlight opportunities for improvement and progress.

Resource scarcity and delayed investments

Limited funding and the reluctance of UN agencies and INGOs to invest in sites before relocation remain significant barriers. This delays the availability of essential services, prolonging hardship for relocated IDPs and slowing down progress towards durable solutions. According to an informant, in some of the sites where relocations took place, investments in basic services have been introduced over time, but only after the relocation process began.[25] For instance, in sites like Gedale and Awbare, infrastructure such as water pipelines and schools were gradually introduced over time, whereas in Bayahow, essential services were established prior to relocation, easing the transition for IDPs.[26]

[25] KII1
[26] KII2

Site	% reporting having insufficient food, water and healthcare	% reporting having sufficient food, water, and healthcare	Total
Beyahow	60	40	100
Dhirindhir	100	0	100
Dhurwale	86	14	100
Goljano	81	19	100
Guradamole	98	2	100
Moyale	74	26	100
Jedane	99	1	100
Tuli Guled	94	6	100

"We were living in Qoloji and were promised a better life and livelihood. Believing in this promise, we relocated from the Qoloji IDP camp to Dhurwale. However, we are still living in the hope of those promises being fulfilled." — FGD2, Dhurwale.

Urban and Rural Disparities

Sites closer to urban centres or along major routes, such as Bayahow, benefit from better access to services compared to remote locations like Dhurwale and to a lesser extent Jedane. In Dhurwale, IDPs reported significant frustration with their living conditions, citing the lack of basic services and the site's isolation from towns and main roads as major barriers to well-being.

Beyond access to services, the remote location of Dhurwale severely limits livelihood opportunities. As pastoral activities are the primary economic option in rural areas, many IDPs initially hoped to sustain themselves through livestock rearing. However, land disagreements with the host community have made this impossible. Alternative livelihood options, such as small-scale trade, require access to markets and transportation, but the site's remoteness and distance from main roads present a major obstacle. In addition, IDPs lack the financial means to afford frequent transport to markets in nearby towns. Hiring a Bajaj for transportation is costly, making it unsustainable for daily trade or employment. As a result, many relocatees feel trapped in a cycle of dependency, with no viable path to build a future. This lack of prospects fuels a sense of hopelessness, very clearly expressed by respondents.

It seems that this has given IDPs a head-start to their integration, with IDPs in Bayahow reporting significantly higher levels of access to sufficient food, water and healthcare than the other sites surveyed.

IDPs in sites such as Dhurwale expressed significant frustration with their living conditions, particularly regarding the lack of access to basic services and the site's isolation from towns and main roads. Respondents highlighted that their previous location (Qoloji) offered better access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and markets, which are now absent in Dhurwale. The harsh weather conditions, including strong winds and extreme temperatures, further exacerbate their challenges, making daily life difficult. Many IDPs voiced disappointment toward o

"In our previous location [Qoloji], we had easy access to main roads, making transportation and obtaining food supplies such as onions, tomatoes, and other essentials manageable. In the relocation area, however, we are far from main roads and markets, making access to basic food items a struggle. We often have to seek help from the DRM office for support. Furthermore, there is no access to education, electricity, or proper health services in the relocation area. Initially, the government assured us that we would be relocated to a better area with schools and adequate facilities for our children. However, those promises remain unfulfilled. The roads, electricity, and healthcare infrastructure have not improved, leaving us to endure significant hardships. We urgently need support to address these challenges." — FGD2, Dhurwale.

Tensions over service distribution

Tensions sometimes arise between IDPs and host communities over the equitable distribution of services. Host community members often highlight that they, too, lack access to basic services, despite having sacrificed land and resources to accommodate IDPs.[27] While many host community members express solidarity with IDPs, some fear that resources are disproportionately allocated to relocated populations, leaving the host community underserved. Some host community members also noted that IDPs, in some cases, have better housing conditions compared to local residents living in "traditional huts made of sticks and mud".[28] This imbalance in service provision could potentially create social tensions, which highlights the need for an equitable approach that ensures that all communities benefit from infrastructure investments.

"These IDPs are in fact huge in number and when we are talking about the challenges regarding the service provision, they might face some challenges. For enhancing good integration, they have to share their opportunities and challenges with the host. The government and NGOs or stakeholders have to work to integrate the IDPs to the host community, and when [there is] food distribution or other services in the area, the government has to distribute [to] both hosts and IDPs equally since the host has sacrificed their land and farm[s] to the IDPs. But if the government provides the services only for the IDPs and ignore the hosting community we might have challenges." — KII5

Compounded Impacts of Climate Challenges

Climate challenges exacerbate existing issues, further straining resources and hindering service delivery. In the sites visited, key environmental challenges include:

- Harsh weather conditions, for instance in Dhurwale, including strong winds and extreme temperatures, which complicate daily life for IDPs.[29]
- Water scarcity in multiple sites, particularly in Fafan and Afder zones, where access is unreliable and, in some cases, requires traveling several kilometres to reach a water source.[30]
- Severe flooding in areas located near the Web River, in Hargelle (Afder zone), during the rainy season, which disrupts services and infrastructure.[31]

This highlights the risk cyclical nature of displacement in parts of Somali region such as Afder zone, where both floods and droughts drive recurrent movements of people. Floodings during the rainy season, affecting displacement-affected areas such as Dhirindhir, demonstrate how seasonal disasters add new layers to displacement. Furthermore, the long-lasting impact of past droughts shows how displacement is not just a temporary crisis but a protracted issue. This underscores the need for disaster-responsive planning and long-term resilience strategies, including early warning systems, climate-adaptive infrastructure, and sustainable livelihood support. Without these measures, each new flood or drought risks compounding vulnerabilities and prolonging displacement cycles.

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[27] KII5, KII9
[28] KII9
[29] FGD2
[30] KII7, KII12
[31] KII19
[32] KII14

4.3.4. Opportunities

Pre-relocation planning successes
Sites like Bayahow exemplify the benefits of pre-relocation investments, including housing, education, and health services, which facilitated smoother transitions for IDPs. This approach underscores the importance of advance planning in addressing the immediate needs of relocated populations.[32] IDPs on the site report higher levels of satisfaction across multiple indicators, even if the time lapsed since the relocation is relatively short.

Community acceptance
While IDPs and host representatives consistently emphasised strong and positive relationships, the nature of these relationships varies across sites, shaped by local context and the conditions under which IDPs arrived. In Bayahow, for example, initial tensions and concerns over resource strain gradually gave way to stronger community acceptance. This shift was largely facilitated by early negotiations, discussions, and sensitisation efforts led by elders before relocations took place. Additionally, the promise of support for both hosts and IDPs played a crucial role in securing buy-in from host communities.

However, these relationships cannot be taken for granted. A real risk of frustration remains, if support is insufficient, delayed, or perceived as benefiting relocatees at the expense of host communities. Ensuring continued engagement, equitable resource distribution, and responsive programming are essential to maintain social cohesion and prevent tensions from emerging in the long term.

Focus: Bayahow relocation site

Bayahow stands out as a positive example of relocation planning, where essential services, including education, health infrastructure, and housing, were established before the arrival of IDPs. The site offers functional health facilities with eight professionals, including nurses, midwives, and pharmacists, though gaps in medical supplies persist. At the time of the research, schools were not yet operational, but student enrolment was ongoing. Respondents highlighted the need for school maintenance and additional supplies to ensure functionality.

Complaints were raised about the houses provided—though new—as many had lock problems and were too small to accommodate families. Housing consists of one-room units per family, leading to overcrowding. Water supply is a critical issue due to reliance on fuel-powered generators, which frequently malfunction, disrupting access. However, the main concern expressed by community members was the insufficient and non-functional toilets, which raised significant hygiene concerns.

Despite these challenges, Bayahow benefits from strong community acceptance. Respondents described the ceremony organised to welcome IDPs, while the displaced explained they had been waiting for this relocation to take place. However, sustaining improvements, particularly in water and sanitation, remains a pressing need. Bayahow stands out as the site with the highest proportion of respondents (40%) reporting sufficient access to food, water, and healthcare, aligning with its recognition as a relatively positive relocation example. However, it is important to note that even in Bayahow, 60% of respondents indicated insufficient access to these basic necessities, highlighting the need to maintain for continued monitoring and support to sustainable integration.

4.4 ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS

Access to livelihoods is often a cornerstone for achieving progress in other areas of solutions. Livelihood opportunities are vital as they provide IDPs with a sustainable income, which in turn facilitates access to food, education, healthcare, and adequate housing. Without meaningful and stable livelihoods, many IDPs remain reliant on humanitarian aid and face challenges in achieving self-reliance and dignity.

This section explores the challenges, opportunities, and key insights related to livelihoods among IDPs in the areas covered by the study.

4.4.1. Access to income

Figure 5: Access to an income

Overall, only 21% of the surveyed IDPs reported having a way to earn an income or support their families, while 79% stated they have no source of income.

The availability of income-generating opportunities varies widely across sites. At one extreme, no IDPs in Dhirindhir reported earning an income, while Bayahow (6%) and Tuliguled (14%) also showed very low levels of economic activity.

On the other hand, Dhurwale (36%) and Jedane (42%) had relatively higher rates of respondents with access to income, although these figures remain low. In addition, men (25% reporting income opportunities) are slightly more likely than women (16% reporting income opportunities) to have some form of livelihood.
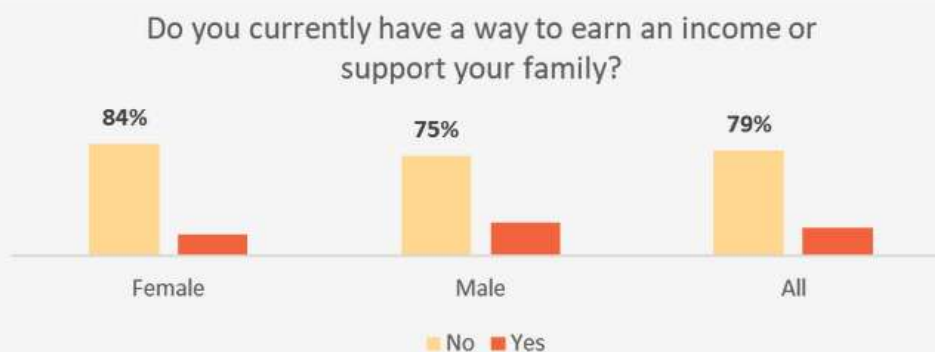

Figure 6: IDPs earning an income, by sex
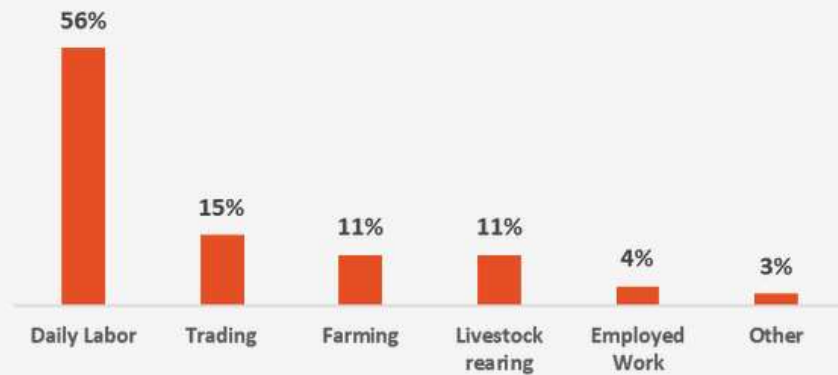
What is your main work?

Figure 7: Main type of work

Among those with income, the majority (56%) rely on daily labour, reflecting the lack of stable or long-term employment options. Other activities include trading (15%), farming (11%), livestock rearing (11%), and employed work (4%), but these are not widely accessible across sites.

4.4.2. Challenges to livelihoods

Land access and ownership

Land access is a key barrier for most IDP sites, particularly for IDPs who rely on farming or livestock rearing. In the Somali region, land is communally owned and tied to clan affiliations, making formal allocation for IDPs complex.[33] While clan affiliations can facilitate integration, land disputes and competing demands for agricultural resources remain a significant challenge, even when IDPs relocate to areas where they share clan affiliations with the host community. Negotiations between government actors and clan elders are required to secure land for relocation sites, and even when land is allocated, host communities may resist sharing agricultural resources,[34] particularly in contexts where resource scarcity is already a source of tension.

The Somali Regional Durable Solutions Strategy acknowledges these challenges under Priority Area 5 (Housing, Land, and Property), emphasising the need for area-level planning to facilitate integration, equitable land access, and dispute resolution mechanisms. While the strategy recognises the importance of securing land for housing, farming, and grazing, the implementation poses challenges in practice. In Bayahow, some land has been secured for IDPs near the highway and close to farming areas. In other sites, such as Goljano and Dhurwale, IDPs reported having no access to land for farming or business opportunities, despite clan ties.[35]

"We did not have a chance to use [the host community's] land for either the animals to graze, or the children to play. I do have practical experience [of a neighbour beating my son]. They cause of the problem is due to the problem [of the use of a the land] for grazing. FGD2, Dhurwale

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[33] KII1, KII2
[34] KII5, KII7
[35] KII13, FGD4
[36] KII2, KII7
[37] FGD4, KII13
[38] FGD5, KII18

Dependency on aid

Across sites, nearly 80% of IDPs rely on humanitarian aid to meet their basic needs.[36] IDPs in all sites explained that support has reduced over time, with food emerging as a major concern for many households. In Dhirindhir, the issue is particularly acute, with clear signs of malnutrition observed among IDP households, highlighting the urgency of consistent and adequate support.

Many IDPs expressed frustration with aid dependency, requesting cash assistance or long-term livelihood options to break the cycle and achieve independence.[37] In Jedane and Goljano in particular, respondents said they were "tired of waiting for support" and urged stakeholders to prioritise sustainable livelihood opportunities.[38]

"I would like to add that we are tired of waiting for support. We want to have livelihood options with which we can work and live like normal people, instead of always waiting for support as an IDP. We need livelihood options and housing; we need these two things desperately and I want whoever can support us to prioritise these two things for now."— FGD5, Jedane

Need for Comprehensive Support

Having lost everything, IDPs often lack the financial capital, farming tools, and seeds needed to engage in agricultural or business activities. In many sites, livelihood-related challenges were linked to interventions having been short-term, lacking consultations and adaptation to local needs, and not fully addressing the livelihoods-related challenges communities face. For instance, in Dhurwale, goats distributed by one organisation struggled to survive due to diseases,[39] exacerbated by the lack of veterinary services and medicine. Additionally, the lack of consultation with the local community meant that the animals provided were not well-suited to the environmental conditions, according to FGD respondents. In Bayahow, access to land had been negotiated, but communities lacked access to seeds and agricultural equipment to enable farming. [40],[41] In addition, many IDPs also lack professional skills suited to their new environment, limiting their ability to engage in economic activities. While they may have experience in agro-pastoralism, transitioning to alternative livelihoods without adequate training remains a significant challenge. The lack of livelihood options has left youth particularly idle and demoralised.[42] Opportunities highlighted by IDPs included skills development in sectors such as driving and ICT.

"These people used to be agro-pastoralist; 80% of the people do not know anything regarding trade and business and they do not have training for skill development. They were people living in rural areas cultivating their land, they also used to keep their livestock as well. Most of the IDPs prefer land for cultivation as they have a deep knowledge on agriculture."— KII11, Bayahow

[33] KII1, KII2
[34] KII5, KII7
[35] KII13, FGD4
[36] KII2, KII7
[37] FGD4, KII13
[38] FGD5, KII18

Market barriers

Poorly functioning local markets and limited infrastructure hinder off-farm livelihood opportunities. Sites far from towns and main roads, such as Dhurwale, face significant challenges in accessing markets or employment opportunities.[43]While UN agencies had promised training sessions aiming at supporting those involved in tree planting activities, IDPs reported that these have not yet materialised,[44] and IDPs reported feeling isolated due to the site's remoteness and lack of market access.

In Tuliguled, many IDPs travel to Jijiga to find daily work due to limited local opportunities. Similarly, in Jedane, many IDPs rely on daily labour for income but lack sustainable opportunities. Respondents in Jedane highlighted the need for business start-up support to enable them to leverage local opportunities.

Access to finance remains a significant barrier for IDPs due to multiple factors. Some lack the necessary documentation, such as personal IDs or business registration, to access formal financial services. Additionally, IDPs often do not have proof of income or collateral required to secure loans. High-interest rates further deter borrowing, particularly given the already precarious economic situation of displaced populations.

Livelihood challenges of climate-induced IDPs

The requirements, future aspirations, and needs of IDPs displaced by drought tend to differ from those displaced by conflict. As IOM DTM data shows, many express a preference for local integration. Some pastoralists who lost their livestock due to drought prefer to maintain their traditional way of life, while others see no viable future in pastoralism and aspire to transition into new livelihoods.

Consistent with this, in Dhirindhir, a research site mainly hosting IDPs displaced due to reasons related to climate change, 100% of survey respondents wished for local integration. However, to achieve this, interventions should be flexible in approach: those who wish to restore their pastoralist livelihoods require access to land, water, and livestock support, while those who wish to transition require vocational training and alternative livelihood opportunities. Currently, it is worth noting that IDPs in Dhirindhir highlighted significantly lower level of access to livelihoods (0% having a means to access an income, compared to 22% among IDPs in other sites).

"The primary challenge that the IDPs face is that they lost their way of living and could not get any support for them to create a new one. [...] IDPs are in need of education. As pastoralists they were fully dependent on their livestock, but now they do not have a direction. Even their children have no future because there is no education." — KII27, Dhirindhir

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[39] KII5, FGD2
[40] KII5
[41] While the Somali Durable Solutions Strategy itself does not explicitly mention seed distribution, the activity plan annexed to it includes seed distribution as one of the short-term humanitarian livelihood interventions (over six months).
[42] FGD5, KII18
[43] KII1, KII15
[44] FGD2, KII15

4.4.3. Opportunities for Livelihoods

Despite the challenges, key informants and IDPs highlighted opportunities to improve access to livelihoods through targeted interventions. Respondents identified access to finance (73%) as the most critical factor to improve their livelihood situation. Access to land (17%) and training (9%) were also highlighted but ranked much lower, reflecting the overwhelming demand for financial resources. Cash-based support for business start-up, farming and agro-pastoral activities, youth skill development, and cooperative models were frequently mentioned as key strategies to enhance livelihoods across sites.

This suggests that, while access to finance was identified as the most significant barrier, access to land may be a greater concern than the 17% figure indicates, and financial support alone may not be sufficient unless paired with systematic efforts to secure land tenure and access.

Some examples of comprehensive livelihoods interventions were highlighted by key informants. "Strengthening Resilience of Disaster Affected Communities through Durable Solutions" project, implemented by IOM, FAO, and UN-Habitat under the Durable Solutions Framework, for example, aims to improve socio-economic recovery and livelihood opportunities for displacement-affected communities through a combination of interventions, including on-farm and off-farm livelihood support, community-based planning, and access to housing, land, and property.[45]

However, while the programme has engaged in essential preparatory work, including conflict and gender analysis, community-based planning, and market assessments, its implementation has faced delays.

Several different models, such as farming in Bayahow, near Shabelle River, or support to livestock restocking, farming tools, and technical training in Afder zone with pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities were flagged as under-utilised opportunities.

IDPs in multiple sites have also benefited from cash-based assistance to cover basic needs – either through support from humanitarian actors or in some cases the government's safety net programme. However, the use of cash-based approaches to support small business start-ups was reported as a largely unused opportunity. Similarly, many key informants emphasised that the cooperative model presented a lot of potential.[46]

Investing in youth to unlock opportunities for self-reliance

Harnessing human capital, particularly the large youth population in the Somali region, presents a significant opportunity for durable solutions. Engaging young people in education, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and employment programmes can contribute to long-term stability and self-reliance. Investing in youth-driven initiatives and integrating them into economic development efforts can also help bridge gaps in livelihoods and enhance resilience within displaced and host communities.

Skill development programmes for youth are essential for economic independence, especially as youth frustration was palpable, most of them being idle due to a lack of opportunities.[47] Respondents in Jedane and Bayahow highlighted the need for vocational training in areas like ICT, maintenance, and crafts.[48]

"I want to add one thing that is really roaring inside me, and you didn't ask us about it. The matter is related to our students who took the grade 12 national exam and couldn't pass the exam. We can't afford to send them to private colleges. They are stuck at home and spend the entire day here with us. As a family, we are worried about them a lot. So, I would like to ask if there is any chance the government and NGOs could collaborate and arrange college payments for them or create job opportunities for youths. They are depressed and spend the entire day here with us at home, doing nothing."— FGD6, Jedane

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[45] Openaid, Durable Solutions Through Community Resilience - IOM/FAO/UN Habitat. https://openaid.se/en/contributions/SE-0-SE-6-15644#description
[46] KII19, KII21, KII27
[47] KII9, FGD6
[48] KII5, KII7, KII9

4.5 RESTORATION OR COMPENSATION FOR HOUSING, LAND, AND PROPERTY (HLP)

Restoration of or providing compensation for HLP is a critical component of achieving durable solutions for displaced populations. Access to HLP rights also ensures security, fosters integration, and supports livelihoods by addressing land access and housing ownership. In the Somali Region, HLP challenges are profound due to communal land ownership, limited access to documentation, and the inability of IDPs to reclaim lost properties. This section explores the challenges and opportunities in relation to access to land and property rights across different sites.

This section of the report mainly focuses on securing access to land and housing in relocation and local integration sites, rather than the formal restitution of lost property, which remains largely unattainable. In practice, no formal restitution mechanism exists. Instead, efforts focus on securing land and provide housing options, which requires significant investment and negotiation. While land allocation in relocation or local integration sites is not explicitly framed as compensation for lost property, for many IDPs it serves as a de facto alternative, enabling them to rebuild their lives despite the absence of formal restitution mechanisms. As the Somali Regional Durable Solutions Strategy states, although the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) obligates the state to compensate individuals for loss or damage to their property resulting from conflict, the extent of this commitment and its feasibility remain unclear.[49]

"In general people around this area own the resources collectively as a family and a clan. (...) People around the city do not have any land ownership certificate, once you settle it will be yours since the surrounding lands are the family member and there are no issues about that. These lands are free for every Somalis who want to live and cultivate, you need to ask and you will be given, if you stay it will be yours and if you leave the areas the one who gave you the property will take that land back." — KII5, Bayahow

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[49] Somali regional state, 2022, Durable Solutions Strategy 2022-2025. https://ethiopia.un.org/en/195587-somali-regional-state-durable-solutions-strategy-2022-2025

4.5.1. Challenges

Loss of previous property

Many IDPs reported losing their homes and property in Oromia, with little hope of reclaiming them. Respondents expressed a preference for integrating into their current communities rather than returning to insecure areas.

IDPs expressed feeling safer securing housing and land in the Somali Region, their original homeland. Having lost their property in Oromia, many IDPs believe returning to their previous homes would be futile and felt their investments in Oromia were "a waste of resources".[50]

"I don't personally want to relocate or return back to my old home in Oromia. To be honest, I can't even consider going back to my home, because it is not mine anymore; someone else has already taken it, and I don't feel safe to return there." — FGD5, Jedane

Quantitative data indicates that 23% of IDPs reported facing disputes over land or housing, and that 41% of these disputes were resolved. Among the resolved cases, 84% credited the government, 14% community leaders, and 2% NGOs for the resolution. It should be noted that the experience of IDPs regarding property loss varies depending on the event causing their displacement. For instance, in Dhirindhir, where displacement was primarily caused by climatic events, pastoral communities did not report disputes related to land or housing. In contrast, IDPs fleeing conflict in Oromia often lost their properties.

Documentation gaps

Most IDPs have not received formal documentation for their allocated housing or land. For housing, only 18% of respondents reported having documents to prove ownership or occupation of their former or current house, while 55% indicated they never had such documentation, and 21% said their documents were lost. For land, the proportion is even lower, with only 13% of respondents confirming they have documentation, 51% saying they never had it, and 31% stating their documents were lost. This highlights the widespread lack of formal ownership documentation in rural communities. For example, in Dhurwale, as part of the relocation, no documentation indicating housing tenure were provided due to the host community living without them as well.

"The existing [regulatory system] in the region is very minimal and needs huge investment which is beyond the capacity of the regional government hence the humanitarian partners are needed to engage in housing, land and property for IDPs."— KII13, Jijiga

While informality is common practice for the host community in the region, it may be that some IDPs come from contexts where they are used to formal titles. In Jedane, IDPs noted concerns linked to missing proof of ownership. As one respondent explained:

"We have a Kebele ID, but we don't have any proof of ownership of the land [...]. The Kebeles and community leaders know it. But we also need proof of our ownership of land, so that we can inherit it to our families. They have said it is under process, but we are still waiting for it, and we need that." — FGD6, Jedane

[50] FGD1

According to a key informant, IDPs have been provided small cards by the DRM office to signify ownership of houses allocated to them, but these are not equivalent to formal land deeds.

"The DRMB office gave them small card which has a number on it and the individual name and the same number on the wall of their respective houses, and they were telling people keep that little card it is your certificate of owning that house, I hope they change that in the future but the cards are used for now to know each person's house." — KII5, Bayahow

The challenges of informality are exacerbated by land scarcity. Securing access to land for IDPs often requires extensive negotiations over scarce resources with host communities and local leaders. This has delayed formal land allocation in some areas.

"Most of the land in the woreda belongs to the local clans or tribes, which complicates land allocation for displaced individuals. This is particularly problematic because many IDPs have experience in agriculture and related activities that require access to land. The difficulty stems from the process of land ownership and legalization."— KII8, Tuliguled

4.5.2. Opportunities

Progress achieved through advocacy, capacity building and coordination
Some organisations have undertaken awareness-raising initiatives on housing, land and property rights, including capacity-building efforts for IDPs and local authorities. These efforts aim to improve land access and documentation processes, while recognising that access does not equate ownership. Capacity building remains essential as housing, land and property rights in general, and their application in a customary system are not always well understood by stakeholders.

The most recent relocation effort to Bayahow was also preceded by significant efforts to discuss issues related to access to housing and land, which facilitated smoother transitions for IDPs and reduced tensions. This model highlights the importance of advance planning for access to housing and property rights for IDPs as part of any durable solutions process.

4.6 ACCESS TO PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION

Access to personal documentation is a critical component of achieving durable solutions for IDPs. In the Somali Region, lack of documentation not only restricts access to public services but also affects IDPs' ability to exercise freedom of movement, protect their legal rights, and access essential financial services. This includes opening bank accounts, using remittance agents, and benefiting from other basic financial services that are crucial for economic security. However, many IDPs in the Somali Region face significant barriers to obtaining these documents due to administrative inefficiencies, financial costs, and logistical challenges. While progress has been made in some areas, substantial gaps remain.

Overall, nearly half (49%) of respondents reported that they never had documentation, while 39% cited a lack of access to civil registration services (such as obtaining identity cards and birth certificates). Additionally, 31% stated that their documents were lost during displacement, highlighting the impact of forced movements on access to critical documents. A smaller proportion (13%) attributed their lack of documentation to insufficient knowledge of how to obtain it, underlining the need for awareness-raising efforts.
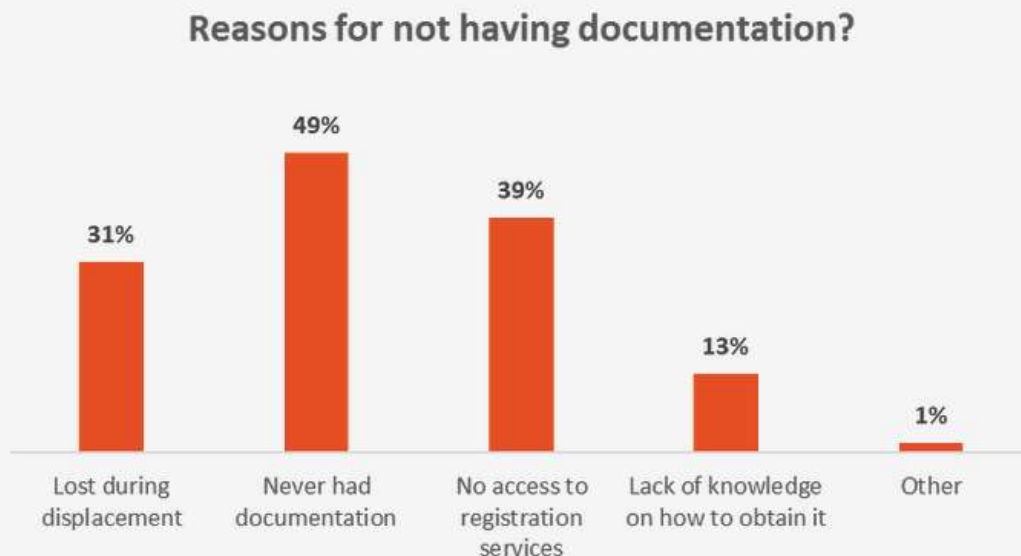

Figure 8: Reasons for not having documentation

4.6.1. Challenges

High costs and logistical barriers

Quantitative data indicates that 45% of surveyed households lack any form of official documentation, such as identification cards, birth certificates, or land deeds. The financial barrier is the primary reason preventing IDPs from accessing documentation: among the reasons cited, 36% of respondents reported that they cannot afford the fees required to obtain new or replace lost documents. The cost of securing a kebele ID can range from 500 to 1,000 Ethiopian Birr, which is unaffordable for many displaced households.[51] This is compounded by logistical challenges such as long travel distances to kebele offices. In some areas, IDPs also face security risks when traveling to obtain documentation, particularly in areas near Somalia, where they must navigate checkpoints and security protocols.[52]
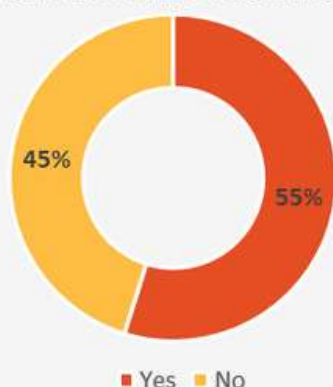
Figure 9: Household possession of official identification or documentation

Figure 10: Main obstacles - access to documentation

However, the availability and accessibility of documentation vary across sites. In Jedane, respondents - both male and female participants - generally reported better access to kebele IDs and birth certificates. This is supported by survey findings, which showed that all respondents reported having official documentation. Nonetheless, some interviewees highlighted challenges in renewing expired IDs due to financial constraints[53].

[51] KII26, KII15
[52] KII26
[53] FGD5
[54] FGD6

In Goljano and Jedane, IDPs stated that documentation is not a significant concern. This can be attributed to the widespread availability of kebele IDs and birth registration in these areas. The concerted efforts of the government and its partners to raise awareness about the importance of documentation, provide guidance on the application process, and address barriers such as covering fees have contributed to improved access. Additionally, proximity to the responsible offices has further facilitated accessibility.

Additionally, in Jedane and Dhurwale, IDPs shared that NGOs previously provided support to help families obtain documentation. However, this support has ceased, leaving many children without necessary documents, as families are unable to afford the associated costs.[54]

Site	% without Official Documentation	% with Official Documentation
Beyahew	52%	48%
Dhirin-dhir	77%	23%
Dhurwale	14%	86%
Goljano	21%	79%
Guradamole	85%	15%
Jedane	0%	100%
Moyale	45%	55%
Tuli Guled	20%	80%

Locations by percentage of respondents with and without access to official documentations

Overall, the study shows that access to documentation has not been sustainable addressed, and major discrepancies exist across locations, as demonstrated by the table below. In sites where higher numbers of people had access to documents, specific support campaigns had been organised.

[51] KII26, KII15
[52] KII26
[53] FGD5
[54] FGD6

Administrative resistance

In densely populated camps such as Qoloji, local authorities are often reluctant to issue documentation, citing concerns over administrative capacity.[55]The high number of IDPs compared to the host community has created significant challenges, as local officials have felt overwhelmed by the volume of requests. As a result, only a limited number of IDPs have received official documentation despite ongoing discussions involving legal aid actors such as DRC, UNHCR and the government.[56]

In rural areas, access to documentation is further limited due to resource constraints. These challenges affect not only IDPs but also host community members, as many rural kebeles lack the infrastructure to issue formal certificates.[57]

Efforts to address these gaps are underway in certain areas, such as in Bayahow, Jedane or Goljano, where documentation processes, including the issuance of land deeds, have started. However, the scale of the need remains substantial. UNHCR, in partnership with its protection partner DRC, has been actively working to provide local identity cards to IDPs, but the scale of the needs remains substantial and requires additional resources to meet the demand.[58] This highlights the need for increased investment and streamlined processes to ensure that both IDPs and host community members can access essential documentation.

Awareness and capacity gaps

Lack of awareness among IDPs about their rights to documentation and among officials about the importance of these documents is also a challenge. Legal information dissemination and awareness-raising efforts are needed to bridge this gap.[59] In addition, cultural reliance on informal arrangements sometimes limits the perceived importance of formal documentation.[60] Actors such as DRC, NRC and UNHCR have undertaken significant awareness-raising initiatives and legal information dissemination, aiming to empower IDPs with knowledge of their rights and facilitate access to essential legal documents.

Impact of the lack of documentation.

IDPs without proper identification often face restrictions on movement, limiting their access to justice, essential services, and opportunities outside their camps. This challenge is particularly pronounced in areas like Hargelle, where financial and logistical constraints make obtaining documentation difficult.[61] Additionally, IDPs in border areas face heightened scrutiny and frequent checks, especially along the Somalia border, which further restricts their mobility and adds to their challenges.[62]

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[55] KII1, KII2
[56] KII1
[57] KII2
[58] KII13
[59] KII14
[60] KII5
[61] KII19, KII27
[62] KII19, KII26

"So, for security issues, one of the main challenges that IDP face includes legal documentation, which is restricting them to stay in the camps. But recently, with the help of different partners, the situation is a little bit better. For example, they're implementing activities in the Sitti zone.And we have helped more than 1,000 IDPs to get kebele IDs and other essential documents." — KII26
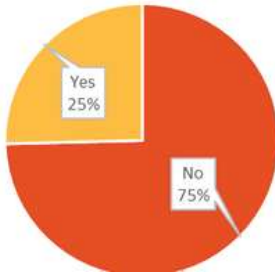
Figure 13: Difficulties because of lack of documentation

In addition to restricting movement, the lack of documentation creates significant barriers for IDPs in accessing basic services and exercising their rights. Without proper identification, displaced individuals often face challenges in securing essential services such as healthcare, education, and legal assistance.

Quantitative data reveals that 75% of respondents reported not facing challenges accessing services due to a lack of documentation. For example, informal work seems to be equally accessible for both those who hold documents and those who do not.

However, for the remaining 25%, the lack of documentation affected service access in several ways. The most frequently reported issues included being denied access (56%) or experiencing delays in service provision (54%). In rarer cases, IDPs were asked for bribes (19%) or turned away without explanation (19%).

The most affected areas include financial services, with 45% of those without documents reporting challenges in accessing banks or microfinance, 38% having challenges in accessing employment or livelihood support, and 33% struggling with access to protection or legal services. Additionally, health services (31% of those without documents reporting issues) and food assistance (23%) are notably impacted. Access to documentation also correlated with higher levels of feeling safe in one's area of residence and higher levels of participation in community decision-making.
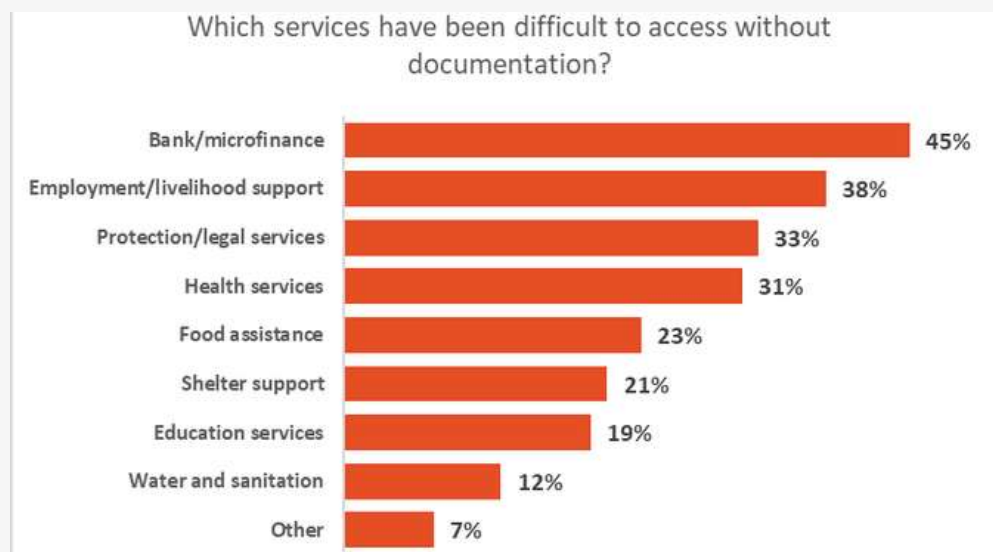

Figure 14: Challenges faced accessing services without documentation

Finally, documentation gaps also affect livelihoods. While these issues were not explicitly mentioned in qualitative interviews, survey respondents reported that the absence of documentation led to lower wages (80%) and, in some cases, exploitation (35%) or a lack of legal protection (27%). This is in line with recent research by the World Bank on the impact of access to documentation for refugees.[63]
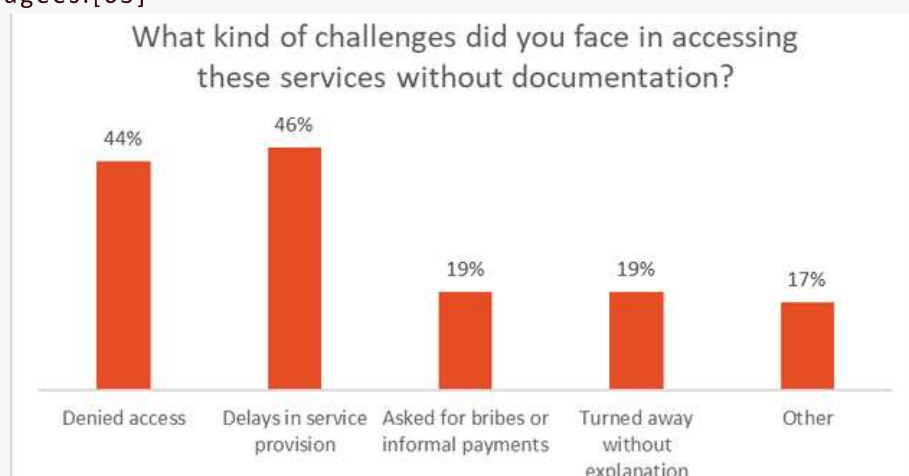
Figure 15: Lack of documentation and work

4.6.2. Opportunities

Visible progress in documentation efforts
Recent efforts by humanitarian organisations and the government have led to notable advancements in providing IDPs with access to personal documentation, with key informants confirming the positive impacts of these efforts.[64]

These initiatives have been accompanied by awareness-raising campaigns about the rights and entitlements of IDPs, and the importance of documentation. Such efforts empower IDPs to advocate for their needs and address misinformation about the documentation process. For example, in Bayahow, community leaders have emphasised aligning the documentation rights of IDPs with those of host communities, fostering integration.

The Ethiopian Government's national ID programme also presents a promising opportunity. In Afder zone in particular, local authorities are actively encouraging IDPs to register for digital IDs through standardised procedures.

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[63] Furthermore, documentation is essential for participating in formal livelihood opportunities and asserting legal protections for those working.[1]
[64] KII26

4.7 FAMILY REUNIFICATION

In many contexts, family separation is a major protection concern during displacement, making family reunification essential to achieving durable solutions. Reuniting families separated during displacement ensures emotional support, restores familial structures, and contributes to more cohesive integration within host communities. While many IDPs had been separated from their family members are some point during their displacement (see table below), currently the need for family reunification was not spontaneously mentioned by IDPs as a pressing need or concern.

Sites	% who did no separated from family members during displacement?	% who separated from family members during displacement?
Beyahew	77%	23%
Dhirin-dhir	100%	0%
Dhurwale	43%	57%
Goljano	67%	33%
Guradamole	70%	30%
Jedane	47%	53%
Moyale	50%	50%
Tuli Guled	53%	47%

This could be attributed to the fact that many IDPs displaced due to conflict left their homes several years ago, making family reunification a more pronounced concern during the earlier phases of displacement. In addition, key informants emphasised that climate change related displacement often involves families relocating together, resulting in fewer cases of family separation.

Overall, 40% of respondents reported being separated from family members during displacement. Among those, about half indicated that efforts had been made to reunite them. Support mechanisms identified by respondents include assistance with legal documentation (52%), financial support for travel (55%), and access to family tracing services (52%).

4.7.1. Challenges

Absence of formal support systems
Possibly due to the lack of substantial needs, limited services to support family reunification exist. Across most sites, efforts are to track down missing family members are often based on informal family tracing through phone calls, SMS, or social media, with little external organisational or governmental involvement.

Financial constraints further hinder reunification. In sites like Tuliguled, IDPs expressed the need for resources to facilitate travel and tracing efforts, highlighting gaps in both information and financial support.[65] Similarly, the absence of specific family reunification services was reported in areas like Goljano (in Sitti zone) and Afder Zone, where the displacement context (e.g., drought-induced displacement) made family separation less relevant but still presented logistical barriers for those attempting to reunite.[66]

Practical considerations
In some cases, reluctance to reunite stems from practical concerns. Displaced family members who remain in areas of origin, such as Oromia, may resist departing due to the assets left behind, such as land, businesses, or homes.[67]

4.7.2. Opportunities

Despite these challenges, there are opportunities to strengthen family reunification efforts. DRC and IOM have played a pivotal role in supporting reunification in certain sites, especially during the initial phases of displacement. These efforts include logistical support, financial aid, and advocacy for the integration of family tracing services into broader humanitarian responses.[68]

In Jedane and other sites, financial support and family tracing services provided by NGOs and the government have proven effective, allowing displaced individuals to reconnect with loved ones. [69] For instance, key informants in Jedane mentioned that NGOs and government initiatives included cash assistance to facilitate travel and communication, ensuring that separated family members could be informed of safety and invited to reunite.[70]

[65] KII6
[66] FGD4, KII27
[67] KII30
[68] FGD6, KII18
[69] KII28, FGD6
[70] KII28

4.8 MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

In the Somali Region of Ethiopia, IDPs have seen violence and attacks against them, their family and community members, and high needs for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services were reported especially among IDPs relocated from Qoloji to Bayahow, Dhurwale and Goljano. The MHPSS needs of IDPs who were displaced by drought and flooding, such as in Dhirindhir, should also not be neglected: the devastation felt when losing one's livestock, land, house and other belongings can have significant impacts. In some areas, such as Shabelle, Afder, Liban, and Dawa, communities have experienced repetitive cycles of displacement due to consecutive droughts and floods, forcing families to relocate multiple times. This cumulative stress further exacerbates mental health challenges and underscores the need for sustained psychosocial support. While stakeholders usually first focus on providing pressing basic services like food support, housing, or medical treatment, MHPSS is regarded as a lower-level priority.

The MHPSS needs of displaced individuals often vary depending on the factors driving their displacement, ranging from experiences of trauma due to violent attacks, psychological distress linked to the loss of livestock, family members, and a potential identity crisis, especially for pastoralists forced to abandon their traditional way of life and adapt to new livelihoods, such as daily labour.

"Three children of my family died as we were traveling because of starvation and thirst, it took us 23 days to arrive here. Most of the children who died were because of thirst." — FGD 7, Dhirindhir

4.8.1. Challenges

Figure 16: Availability of psychosocial services
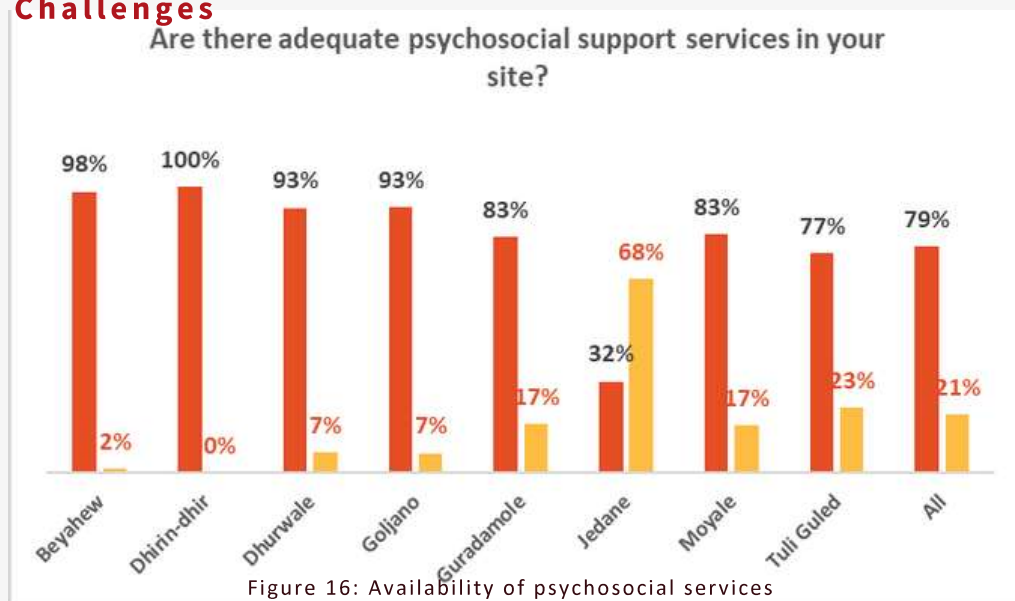
Based on the survey data, MHPSS services are only systematically offered in Jedane, where almost 70% of the respondents mentioned access to adequate psychosocial support services. In Tuliguled, Moyale and Guradamole, MHPSS services have reached some IDPs (23%, 17% and 17% respectively). In Bayahow, Dhirindhir, Dhurwale and Goljano, no systematic MHPSS services exist.

Several key informants from humanitarian and development partners mentioned the strategic objective of mainstreaming MHPSS in development and humanitarian projects in IDP sites in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. However, due to funding constraints and lack of capacity-building for staff to implement the approach, this objective has not fully materialised on the ground.[71]

The services that do exist in the research sites are mainly integrated into health and nutrition projects, encouraged by the health and nutrition sectors' encouragement to step up MHPSS efforts by making them an integral part of each sector's activities.[72] However, these efforts often fall short of meeting the significant demand for psychosocial support among IDPs. For example, while some health centres provide counselling services and incorporate psychosocial activities into their nutrition programs, some segments of society remain outside the scope. Many IDPs, particularly those affected by drought or flooding[73], continue to lack adequate access to the psychosocial care they need.

"Psychosocial support is part of the health activities. For example, there are some stressed mothers during pregnancy or economic problems. When they come to the health centre, counselling service is provided by the health centre staff, [and] some other psychosocial activities are also included in the nutrition program IYCF. There is a gap that needs improvement, the health centre is not enough to provide MHPSS, and awareness-creation is also needed" — KII9, Shabelle Zone

4.8.2. Opportunities

Even though MHPSS services are absent in most IDP sites and insufficient in others, IDPs find a certain degree of relief through the positive interactions with the host community and through their faith.

"When we came here, we were supported by the community, they shared everything they had with us, and we were fully dependent on them and Allah. Community elders were calling the community to support us." — FGD7, Dhirindhir

In FGDs, IDPs shared how the host community welcomed them warm-heartedly, how they could discuss their past traumatic experiences with them and how they could find emotional support by engaging with the host community and by practising their religion.

[71] KII9, KII17
[72] KII9
[73] KII27

4.9 PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Participation in public affairs is a cornerstone of successful integration and durable solutions for IDPs. It allows IDPs to have a voice in decision-making processes, strengthens governance, and fosters mutual trust between displaced and host communities. The study shows that across the research sites, IDPs' participation in public affairs remains limited, often due to a lack of awareness and engagement from local authorities.

In this study, only 31% of interviewed IDPs reported participating in public affairs or decision-making processes. Participation rates varied significantly across sites, with higher involvement in Moyale (44%), Tuliguled (40%), and Jedane (38%), and notably low rates in Goljano (21%), Dhirindhir (27%), and Guradamole (8%). While often overlooked when focusing on pressing issues such as food security, housing, or access to healthcare, participation and accountability are vital to ensure long-term integration and sustained access to services and rights. Female respondents were less likely to take part in community affairs (at 24% participation rate) compared to men (36%). Higher levels of education also correlated with higher likelihood of participation. Perhaps surprisingly, IDPs reporting to be living with a disability were more likely to report participation (38%) compared to those without a disability (29%).
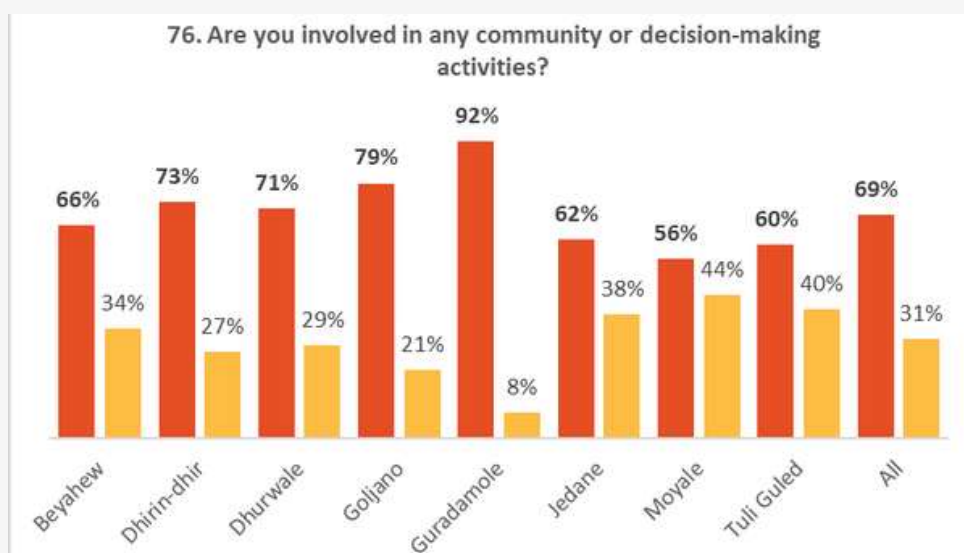

Figure 17: Involvement in community affairs

4.9.1. Challenges

Limited inclusion in governance
Relocated IDPs often lack representation in governance structures due to minimal engagement from local authorities and limited awareness of their rights. Traditional leadership structures, such as elders, continue to play a central role in community representation, but formal inclusion of IDPs in public decision-making remains insufficient. IDPs in most sites expressed a desire for greater involvement in decisions that affect their lives, particularly in relation to service delivery, safety, and livelihood opportunities.

"Enhancing IDP participation requires capacity-building initiatives for local authorities to understand their responsibilities in durable solutions, particularly regarding protection, safety, and governance." — KII2, Jigjiga

Capacity Gaps Among Local Authorities
Local authorities often lack the capacity and understanding to effectively include IDPs in governance. This gap not only excludes IDPs but also slows the implementation of durable solutions. Building the capacity of local officials to engage displaced populations meaningfully is essential.

Barriers to Participation
When asked about the challenges, lack of opportunity was cited by 64% of those not participating, followed by limited access to information (46%), social and cultural barriers (31%) and lack of time (21%). Security concerns was only cited as a barrier by 4% of all respondents.

For example, in Dhirindhir and Dhurwale, IDPs feel particularly isolated and unable to engage in public decision-making due to the sites' distance from administrative centres.

4.9.2. Opportunities

Intentional inclusion of IDPs in decision-making
In some areas, the local authorities have recognised the challenges that IDPs face in participation. For example, in Jedane, the Kebele Administration has formed committees to address issues such as safety and security issues, or health concerns.

"Yes [IDPs participate]! They are the ones who mostly participate in meetings with the government and NGOs. They work on how to integrate the IDP community into a host community so that we can understand and live with each other peacefully. They solve the issues that create tension between both communities and improve the relationships we have with the host community. So, that is a good thing we have here and it helped us to have a good relationship. FGD 5, Jedane

Dhurwale, similarly, has established a mixed community committee of 12 members—six from the host community and six from among the relocated IDPs, comprising both men and women—to regularly meet to discuss shared challenges and flag issues for attention by local authorities.

Traditional leaders can play a key role in bridging the gap between IDPs and formal governance structures. Their influence in fostering social cohesion and ensuring representation in public affairs should be harnessed through targeted capacity-building and collaboration with local authorities. Similarly, awareness-raising and capacity development initiatives are essential to empower IDPs to assert their rights and participate actively in decision-making processes. As noted in Jedane, providing information about public affairs and governance mechanisms has helped IDPs feel more included.

"Awareness among the IDPs that they have the right to participate directly, as well as the government's creation of opportunities for them to participate freely and stand up for their rights is needed." - KII30, Sitti Zone

4.10 ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE REMEDIES

Access to effective remedies refers to the ability of IDPs to seek and obtain justice for disputes or violations of their rights. This includes the availability of mechanisms to resolve conflicts, address grievances, and ensure accountability.

Overall, 49% of respondents felt they had access to justice to resolve disputes or violations (with 47% of women and 50% of men stating they had access to justice), while 51% did not. The availability and accessibility of these remedies vary significantly across different zones, with numerous barriers preventing IDPs from fully exercising their rights. For example, 93% of respondents in Jedane reported having access to justice, compared to only 3% in Dhirindhir.

Site	% of respondents who feel they do not have access to justice to resolve disputes or violations	% of respondents who feel they do have access to justice to resolve disputes or violations
Bayahow	28	72
Dhirindhir	97	3
Dhurwale	71	29
Goljano	86	14
Guradamole	70	30
Moyale	22	78
Jedane	7	93
Tuliguled	71	29

4.10.1. Challenges

Lack of awareness and knowledge
One of the most significant barriers faced by IDPs is a lack of information about the available legal resources. Many IDPs are unaware of where to go or whom to approach when seeking justice. This is particularly pronounced in rural and remote areas, where outreach and awareness campaigns have been limited.[74] Informants emphasised the need for extensive information-sharing initiatives to inform IDPs about their rights and the services available to them.

Survey data highlights the extent of this issue, with 41% of respondents who did not seek justice citing a lack of information about available resources as a key barrier.

Despite these challenges, some progress has been observed in areas where legal awareness training has been conducted. In Jedane, for instance, IDPs have benefited from training on legal aid and rights, particularly community representatives and committee members who have received capacity-building sessions on accessing legal services. A female participant explained:

"Some of us, especially the representatives and committee members have taken training related to the legal service and our rights."– FGD 6, Jedane

Distance and financial constraints
Financial constraints and distance to legal services significantly hinder access to justice. For example, in Beyahew, the nearest legal services are located 40 kilometres away in Gode, making transportation costs prohibitive for many IDPs.[1]Survey data indicates that 23% of respondents who did not seek justice for right violation cited distance to legal services as a barrier.

Similarly, 32% of respondents identified financial constraints as the reason why they did not access justice mechanisms. The inability to cover transportation costs, court fees, or hire legal representation further limits IDPs' ability to seek redress. [2]

Reliance on traditional justice mechanisms
In some cases, cultural norms and traditional practices may discourage IDPs from seeking formal legal remedies. For instance, disputes are often resolved through customary laws (the xeer system)[3] or community-led committees, which may not always align with formal legal standards.[4] While these mechanisms are accessible, they can sometimes perpetuate inequalities or fail to address more complex legal issues.

Reliance on traditional justice mechanisms and "community justice" was in particular mentioned in areas where basic subsistence was an outstanding daily challenge. For example, in Goljano and Dhirindhir, some IDPs indicated that legal services were not primary concerns for them, as they had established relationships with host communities. Instead, they prioritised more immediate needs such as food, education, housing, and healthcare.

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[75] KII7, KII22
[76] KII14
[77] KII18
[78] KII18, KII28

"Our children don't get everything they need to go to school, not even proper food. As for housing, I think a majority of the people need adequate housing because we are living with our children in the same house because it is not adequate. Documentation, access to legal services and participation in the community here, are not a problem for us, because we have an ID, and we already have a good relationship with the host community." – FGD 4, Goljano

Limited institutional capacity
The capacity of local justice institutions is often inadequate to meet the needs of IDPs. In regions like Fafan Zone, while there are initiatives such as mobile courts and legal aid partnerships, resource constraints and limited government commitment limit their effectiveness.[1] For example, mobile courts, which allow IDPs to share grievances remotely, face challenges such as poor connectivity and insufficient funding.

Limited trust in formal mechanisms
When asked whether they had sought help for any rights violations, only 34% of respondents had done so, with notable differences between men (40%) and women (25%). This difference appears to be influenced by the fact that a greater proportion of women (56%) reported not having experienced a rights violation, compared to 35% of men, rather than a disparity in access to justice mechanisms. However, this gender disparity may partly stem from differences in legal awareness, as women may be less likely to recognise certain injustices as rights violations. Additionally, cultural norms and social expectations might discourage women from identifying or reporting violations.

When asked why they did not seek justice, respondents most frequently cited lack of information, financial constraints, and distance as primary barriers. Beyond these, 18% cited a lack of trust in formal mechanisms (21% of men, 14% of women), while 17% pointed to fear of retaliation (15% of women, 20% of men). However, qualitative interviews did not provide further insights into perceptions of justice mechanisms, formal or informal, as trust issues remain a sensitive topic.

4.10.2. Opportunities

Legal aid and awareness campaigns
Recent efforts by legal aid organisations such as DRC and UNHCR have begun addressing these challenges. Legal aid services, including free representation and capacity-building initiatives to local universities providing legal aid, have been introduced in the Fafan Zone.[1] These programmes are meant assist IDPs in navigating the legal system and raise awareness about their rights and available remedies, while strengthening the capacities of local legal aid service providers. Expanding such collaborations to include other universities and institutions could further bolster the capacity of available legal services.

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[79] KII10, KII26
[80] KII13, KII14

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4.11 SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion between IDPs and host communities in the Somali Region is generally positive. This reflects the region's strong clan-based social fabric and shared cultural and religious values. Most respondents described their reception as warm and supportive, with 41% rating their relationship with host communities as "very good" and 27% as "good." However, the dynamics of social cohesion vary across sites and are influenced by resource availability, land disputes, and cultural perceptions.

How would you describe your relationship with the host community?	Answer, in %
Very good	41%
Good	27%
Neutral	13%
Poor	15%
Very poor	4%

In many sites, host communities see IDPs as brothers and sisters, a perception supported by clan ties and religious obligations to support those in need. This sentiment was particularly evident in Bayahow and Dhirindhir, where 92% and 90% of IDPs, respectively, rated their relationships with hosts as very good. From a religious and cultural point of view, host community members usually see it as their duty and responsibility to welcome and support the IDPs, who they know had been in difficult situations before their arrival. The following quote illustrates how the host community held a feast to welcome the relocated IDPs in Bayahow warm-heartedly.

Have there been any conflicts with the host community?

Yes 12%

No 88%

In Dhurwale, on the other hand, 21% of survey respondents felt the relationships with the host community were poor, and 29% experienced them as very poor. Similarly, 50% of respondents in Dhurwale reported conflicts with the host community. This can be explained by the challenges related to land access, reported by IDPs during interviews. Dhurwale IDPs initially experienced warm relations, with the host community sharing resources and supporting the IDPs' resettlement.

Figure 18: Conflict with host community

However, over time, tensions emerged, primarily due to land-related challenges, which significantly affected social cohesion. The level of conflict with the host community is reported as significantly lower in all other sites (on average only 12% of survey respondents reported that there have been conflicts with the host community). Only in Moyale (19%) and Tuliguled (15%), some level of disagreement between the IDP and host community was reported.

Figure 19: Conflict between IDP and host communities

"To celebrate their arrival the community slaughtered two camels and many goats as a feast to welcome the IDPs. The majority of the host community - whether they were men, women or youths - participated in the welcoming ceremony and started to establish friendly ties with the IDPs who have come to the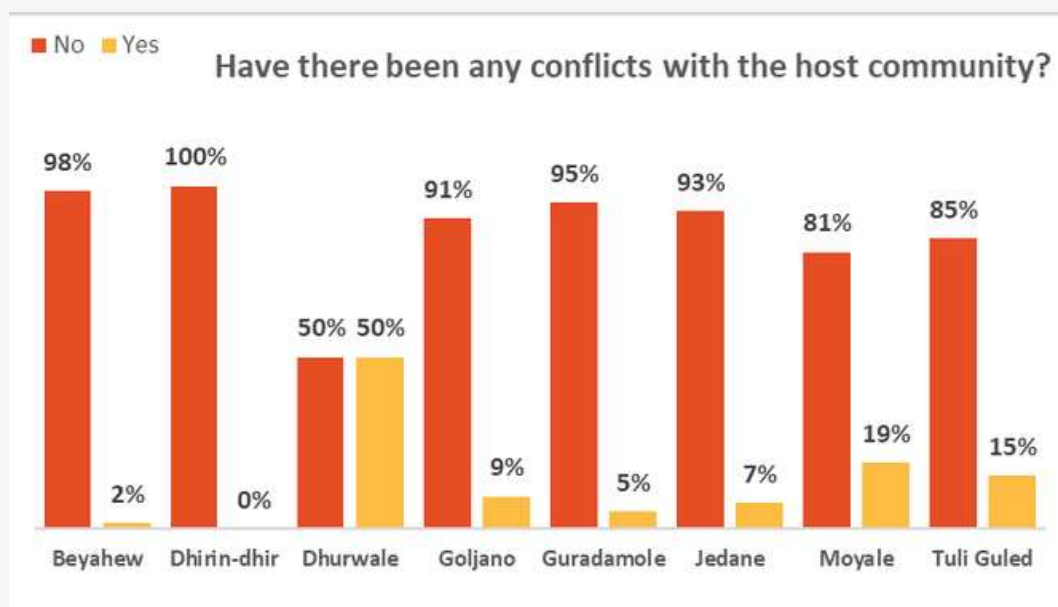ir land, families, and homes. Everybody is willing to support them, to ensure their safety and to encourage local integration." — KII5, Bayahow

Challenges

Land disputes

Land disputes are a recurring challenge, reflecting the sensitivity of land allocation in the Somali Region in a context of scarce resources. In some areas, host communities have provided land for housing or productive purposes, facilitating smoother integration and fostering social cohesion. However, in other sites, land has become a source of tension. In Dhurwale, unresolved land issues have led to frustration among IDPs and strained relations with the host community. While representatives from the host community claimed there were no issues with land allocation, IDPs strongly disagreed, emphasising that unfulfilled promises regarding land access have caused significant uncertainty and dissatisfaction.

"A major issue creating tension is the unfulfilled government promise to allocate land for us. When we arrived, we discovered that the host community did not agree to give us any land. While our interpersonal relationships with the community are positive, this land dispute has caused significant frustration and uncertainty for us." — FGD2, Dhurwale

These disputes, if left unresolved, risk undermining long-term integration efforts and increasing tensions between IDPs and host communities.

Cultural and language barriers

In sites where IDPs have integrated into areas bordering Oromia, language differences and perceptions of cultural abandonment have created subtle tensions. IDPs in Fafan zone reported feeling judged for "abandoning" Somali customs, which has occasionally affected their acceptance within the host community. However, both IDPs and key informants explained that this has improved over time as IDPs have reintegrated into cultural practices and resumed using Somali language, fostering better understanding and acceptance.

Resource pressures

Resource shortages and stressed public services due to the arrival of IDPs are other challenges mentioned by communities and key informants. In the research sites, the local population increased drastically with the arrival of IDPs. If public services, such as health centres, schools or water points are not enhanced upon the arrival of IDPs, this can lower the quality and availability of these services, which in turn may strain social cohesion with the host community.

Opportunities

The role of elders

Elders have played a major role in fostering peaceful coexistence and supporting IDPs upon their arrival in host communities. They have actively informed and sensitised host communities about the plight of IDPs, highlighting their losses and needs. By doing so, elders ensured that IDPs were welcomed with respect and provided essential support. Furthermore, they continue to intervene in resolving disputes and mitigating potential conflicts, reinforcing their critical influence in maintaining social cohesion.

"I am one of the elders who are working with both communities voluntarily to ensure that people displaced are given respect and a place to settle to keep them peace and to help them for what our host community can afford to assist, and to support for their day-to-day activities. We requested the host community to support the IDPs with food, cash, and donkey to collect water or anything else and to give them peace to live in dignity and to be allowed to collect firewood and activities that they can earn an income to get for the daily expenses. We created the awareness of the local community by explaining the current situation of the IDPs and how they lost their livestock and herds." — KII29, Afder Zone

Strong social cohesion

Clan-based customary systems, while occasionally challenging, can also facilitate consensus-building and community acceptance for relocation and integration efforts. For example, Bayahow demonstrates how leveraging these systems can foster cooperation and ensure smoother implementation of a relocation process.[81] However, tensions over land and services within and between clans can arise due to resource constraints and complicate integration efforts. Additionally, minority clans might have less influence in customary decision-making structures, which can impact their access to land and participation in local governance. Therefore, while clan structures provide a strong foundation for social cohesion and community-driven solutions, it is essential to assess how these negotiations impact opportunities for different individuals.

Intermarriage

Organised efforts to promote intermarriage have fostered stronger bonds between IDPs and host communities in several sites, such as Dhurwale, where 10 intermarriages have already been facilitated. This reflects a desire from both communities to fully integrate and build long-lasting relationships.

"We organised intermarriage among the host and the relocated community. So far, we conducted around 10 weddings, and we hope that this will create closer relationships." — KII15, Dhurwale

However, it is important to acknowledge that intermarriage as a pathway to integration can also raise protection concerns, particularly in contexts where displaced families have limited resources or bargaining power. Broader discussions on displacement-affected communities have highlighted risks related to social pressure, lack of agency in marriage decisions, and potential vulnerabilities for young women. While intermarriage can strengthen ties between communities, it is essential to ensure that such arrangements are voluntary and not influenced by economic hardship or external pressures.

Shared education opportunities
Providing joint access to schools for IDPs and host children can strengthen social ties, as evidenced in several sites. Educational integration not only fosters mutual understanding but also ensures that displaced children are not left behind.

To fully leverage these opportunities, it is paramount to ensure that school capacities are adequate in view of an often-increased number of students, and teachers and other educational staff receive the support and resourcing needed to foster the integration of children from different backgrounds.

4.12. GENDER, AGE AND DIVERSITY

The Somali Region Durable Solutions Strategy 2022-2025 makes commitments to participatory approaches, as well as gender equality and social inclusion as its guiding principles.[82] However, even though the strategic documents on the national and regional levels highlight the importance of gender-transformative programming, implementation on the ground often struggles to meet this objective.[83] NGOs are often aware of the need to address the specific needs of women and girls, but are constrained by limited budget, human capacity and cultural norms.[84]

When speaking about durable solutions, children have their own and face their own risks, as highlighted for instance in the Durable Solutions for Children Framework.[85] The specific challenges and solutions priorities for IDP children in the Somali region have been well documented by the recent study by Save the Children,[86] highlighting the importance of considering education and recreational opportunities as part of child-sensitive durable solutions in the Ethiopian context.

Challenges
The survey respondents reported several challenges disproportionately faced by female IDPs, including challenges meeting healthcare needs (78%), access livelihoods (54%), and education opportunities (51%).

Reported Challenges Female IDPs Face

Challenge	Percentage
Health Care	78%
Access to Livilihood	59%
Education	50%
Puplic Participation	42%
GBV	32%
Safety	30%
Limited access to legal support	25%
Discrimination	22%
Access to land in case of inhertance of divorce	20%
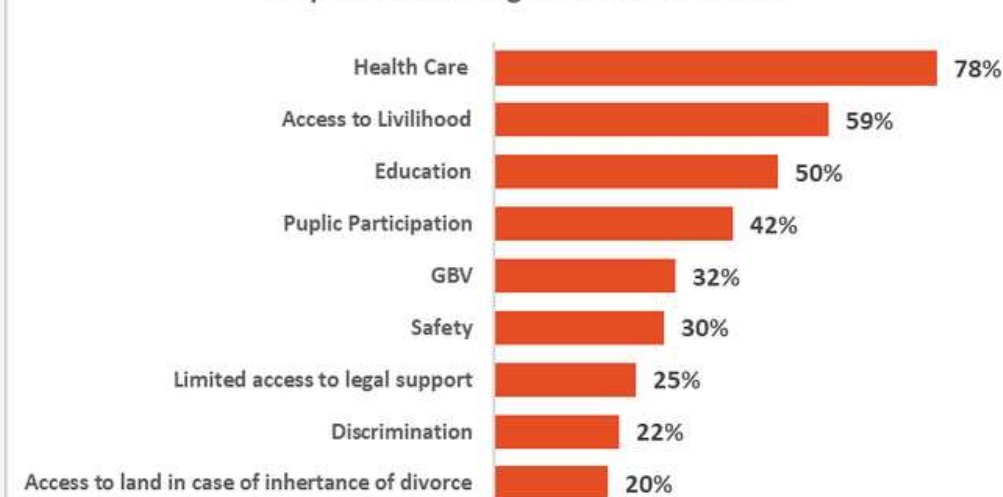
[82] Somali Regional State Durable Solutions Strategy, 2022-2025.
[83] KII2
[84] KII7
[85] Save the Children, 2019, Durable Solutions for Children Toolkit. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/durable_solutions_toolkit_sci_2019.pdf/
[86] Save the Children, 2024. Children in Displacement – What we can learn from internally displaced children about durable solutions? A participatory research study. June 2024.

It is important to note the differences between prioritised challenges for women. While both agreed on the challenges related to access to health and education, women were more likely to identify issues in relation to access to livelihoods (72% of female respondents mentioning this as a problem for women, compared to only 42% of male respondents), public participation (50% of women identifying this as a problem, compared to 36% of men), and access to land (30% of female as opposed to 15% of male respondents identifying this as a problem for female IDPs). Men, on the other hand, perceived higher risks of gender-based violence (36% of male respondents, compared to 27% of female respondents) and general safety (34% of male respondent compared to 21% of females).

Reported Challenges Female IDPs Face	Male respondents	Female respondents
Access to land in case of inheritance or divorce	15%	30%
Limited access to legal support	24%	34%
Discrimination	22%	24%
Public participation	36%	50%
Gender-based violence	36%	27%
Education	50%	54%
Healthcare	74%	84%
Access to livelihoods	42%	71%
Safety	34%	21%

Barriers to gender- and age-sensitive approaches
Perhaps in line with the reported limited access to decision-making (reported by 42% of respondents and 50% of women), from the point of view of IDPs, programmes and interventions often fall short of addressing the gender-specific priorities of women and girls. 85% of interviewed IDPs felt that there are no solutions interventions or programmes that address the needs of women and girls.

Where such programmes exist, they are inefficient in their goals: among the 15% who identified such programs, only 44% stated these programs improved their situation, while 38% felt they did not.

This highlights an urgent gap in ensuring that solutions interventions are tailored to the needs and priorities of all community members, moving beyond male-dominant approaches in consultations, decision-making and implementation.
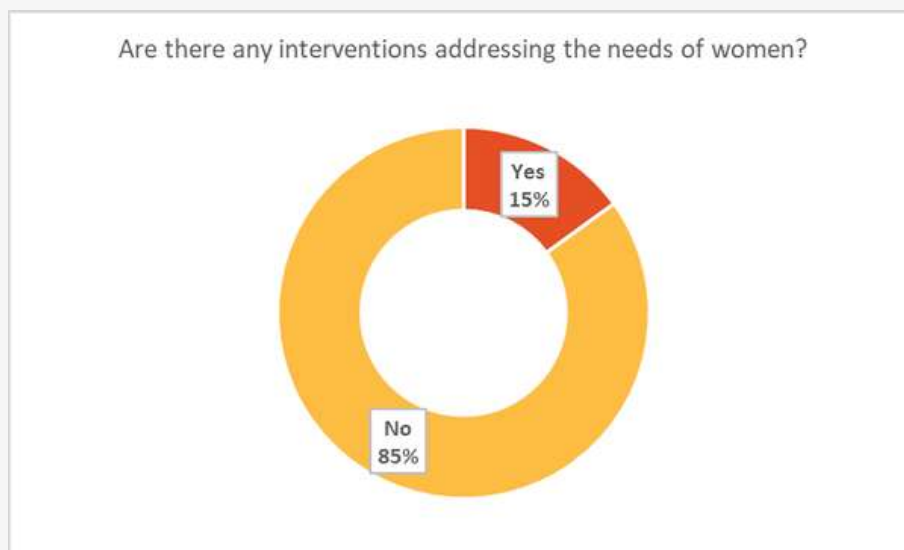
Figure 20: Interventions addressing the needs of women

Opportunities for Improvement

To address these gaps, stakeholders should prioritise expanding programmes tailored to the needs of women and girls and ensuring their meaningful participation in all stages of project design, implementation, and evaluation. Women and girls must be actively involved in decision-making processes to ensure that solutions effectively respond to their specific challenges and aspirations.

This needs to be founded on meaningful participation, whereby community members of different ages and backgrounds shape the approaches and tools that are used to engage communities, plan for interventions and monitor progress and barriers towards solutions.

4.14 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

The durable solutions architecture in Ethiopia is defined by key policy frameworks, including the National Durable Solutions Strategy and the Ethiopia Durable Solutions Initiative at the federal level. Additionally, the Somali Regional State Durable Solutions Strategy (2022-2025) provides a regional roadmap for durable solutions implementation. At the federal level, efforts are underway to adopt an IDP Proclamation, which aims to formalise legal and institutional frameworks for addressing internal displacement.

As the Somali Region of Ethiopia is the pilot region of the Durable Solutions Initiative, its regional durable solutions coordination mechanisms and working procedures are advanced compared to other regions of Ethiopia and even to the national level. At the regional level, the Somali Regional Disaster Risk Management Bureau is chairing, and IOM co-chairing the Durable Solutions Working Group. Stakeholders noted that the federal structure lacks defined roles, responsibilities, and foundational documents to guide operations.[87] This gap continues to hinder effective coordination between national and regional durable solutions efforts.

4.14.1. Opportunities

While the Durable Solutions Working Group is present at the federal level, its level of activity remains limited. Nevertheless, its establishment presents opportunities for aligning efforts. With the durable solutions steering committee, and the durable solutions working group being well established on the regional level of the Somali Region of Ethiopia, efforts are also ongoing to cascade durable solutions working groups to the zonal levels. In Shabelle and Liban zones, durable solutions working groups have been established under the leadership of the zonal Disaster Risk Management Bureaus. However, other zones hosting a significant amount of IDPs, such as Afder zone, do not have a zonal durable solutions working group yet.[88]

4.14.2. Challenges

The challenges for better coordination of stakeholders at all levels revolve around capacity strengthening, timeliness and consistency of working group meetings, as well as involvement of local NGOs and bringing all relevant interventions under the solutions umbrella instead of fragmented approaches of different initiatives (durable solutions, resilience, etc.). To cascade durable solution working groups to the local level, and to have a trusted relationship between the involved stakeholders - both vertically and horizontally – key informants highlighted capacity strengthening needs, as well as the inclusion of stakeholders from a broader government and NGO/UN constituency.

It has also been stressed that coordination should remain consistent at different stages of the durable solutions process. In Dhurwale, involved stakeholders felt that actors were motivated in the beginning, but coordination and investment faded after relocation took place.
"The stakeholders lack coordination and consistency, with the exception of some and very limited who are working from the initial up to now. Some ceased in the middle, others did not come back with their promises. Thus, the coordination [among actors supporting solutions] is rather weak." — KII15, Dhurwale

These sentiments were echoed by IDPs in Dhurwale, who highlighted unfulfilled promises and expectations that were created prior to the relocation, but not followed up with the required investments after the relocation took place.

These coordination gaps have tangible impacts on the ground. They can result in delays, confusion, and inefficiencies that hinder progress toward achieving durable solutions. In addition, some stakeholders expressed concerns that NGOs and local actors do not always have sufficient ownership over durable solutions programming, suggesting the agenda remains largely UN-driven. Ensuring meaningful participation of local organizations and community-based actors is critical to improving program sustainability and local engagement.

Furthermore, local NGOs and grassroot civil society organisations play an important role in coordination and bottom-up engagement. However, the presence of local NGOs in some of the studied IDP sites remains rather weak, due to limited financial resources available for local NGOs.

[87] KII2
[88] KII2

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While some sites show promising developments in achieving durable solutions, such as Bayahow and Jedane, others like Dhurwale and Dhirindhir face significant gaps that hinder their realization. The lack of a monitoring system to track the progress made and remaining issues has enabled significant gaps to persist in some locations. Engagement with line ministries beyond the Disaster Risk Management Bureau, as well as other development actors is needed to ensure long-term success.

The preferred durable solutions pathways among IDPs vary significantly across the surveyed zones, reflecting their experiences and the challenges specific to each area. Barries, however, were more common, including limited livelihood opportunities, gaps in housing and land access, and challenges in accessing documentation and essential services.

Additionally, across the sites, infrastructure gaps—particularly in WASH, education, and healthcare—remain a persistent issue. Lack of gender-sensitive planning and limited focus on initiatives meaningfully addressing the needs and priorities of women and girls poses a severe risk to the success of solutions initiatives.

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made to improve success of durable solutions initiatives in the Somali Region of Ethiopia:

THE REGIONAL DURABLE SOLUTIONS WORKING GROUP SHOULD:
- Invest in area-based, harmonised interventions, which take into account the priorities and needs of IDPs, host communities, and - where they are present - refugees.
- Establish a collaborative and community-led monitoring mechanism to ensure that progress towards durable solutions outcomes is tracked and barriers identified in a timely manner. This monitoring should ensure inclusive approaches that involve all segments of the IDP communities, including women, youth and children, whose priorities otherwise risk being neglected.
- With support from organisations with relevant expertise, develop practical minimum standards on participation for all durable solutions assessments, planning, implementation and monitoring for women, youth, children and other groups, and ensure that all actors involved in durable solutions processes are informed about them.
- Strengthen community-based protection mechanisms and support the establishment of conflict resolution mechanisms, including through increasing the capacities of all community segments to analyse, mitigate and transform conflict in their communities.
- Invest in initiatives that foster meaningful participation of IDPs of different diversities in decision-making at community level as well as with local authorities.
- Develop an action plan for supporting solutions for IDPs who were displaced due to climate change-related factors. Especially in communities where IDPs are willing to locally integrate, building on the progress already made spontaneously towards this by both IDPs and host communities can significantly reduce the required cost and result in significant gains.
- Invest in analysis of factors affecting access to land, as well as launching initiatives to support access to land for productive use for all, including IDPs, those from minority clans, and women. This could include:
  - Ensuring that an HLP due diligence is a minimum requirement built into all projects that require access to land.

- Working with clan elders and other decision makers on collaborative dispute resolution and ability to negotiate access to land for people in less advantaged positions, including minority clans, women, and internally displaced people.
- Pilot innovative land-use arrangements such as block farming or cluster farming, and shared cropping agreements. Cooperatives have successfully been used in other contexts to ensure access to land for those segments of the community who typically would be left disenfranchised.
- Work with government authorities to clarify the status of informal land documents ("ownership cards") issued to IDPs and engage in advocacy efforts to ensure the recognition of less formal arrangements (e.g. supporting the documentation of and adherence to verbal agreements)
- Work with organizatons such as UN-HABITAT, who have expertise in strengthening the capacity of land administration and urban governance institutions in legally pluralistic and largely customary settings.
- Make significant investments in a comprehensive climate-smart livelihoods strategy in the Somali region, which considers both the needs of those currently displaced, as well as those at-risk of future climate change related shocks that may lead to short-term or more permanent loss of livelihoods and other preconditions for sustainable life. This should take into account:
  - Establishing climate vulnerability and risk analysis as a minimum standard to inform all community-level durable solutions plans.
  - Supporting climate change adaptation for communities at risk and wishing to maintain their old ways working.
  - Supporting communities and individuals (especially young people) who wish to transform their ways of living and access new kinds of opportunities, possibly in urban contexts.
  - Supporting peaceful co-existence and facilitating inter-generational, inter-communal and gender-transformative dialogues to remove barriers.
  - Investing in climate-sensitive infrastructure, including heat resistant and high-quality housing that is able to withstand the harsh and changing weather conditions in the communities.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD:
- Ensure engagement from a broader group of actors in planning, resourcing and implementation of durable solutions, including different government bureaus and local administration at zonal, woreda and kebele levels.
- With leadership from the DRMB, which already has strong technical expertise and knowledge on durable solutions, invest in mainstreaming this technical capacity across all layers of local governance.
- Lead the development of a comprehensive action plan for communities at risk of or displaced by reasons related to climate change and capitalise on progress already made towards durable solutions.
- Ensure the prioritisation of the needs and priorities of displaced populations in local development plans and in particular urban planning and ensure funding allocations to ensure expansion of relevant basic services in communities where IDPs are seeking solutions.

- Expand legal aid and awareness programmes as well as environment-building advocacy to support initiatives that advance access to formal recognition of IDPs' right to access services and reside in their current locations of residence. This can include:
  - Expanding access to mobile courts and other methods of obtaining legal aid in remote settings with a minimal cost.
  - Awareness raising on the importance and process of obtaining documents.
  - Waiving fees for vulnerable individuals who may face financial barriers to accessing documentation.
- Coordinate efforts to address gaps in healthcare, education, water supply and food support in areas where IDPs are integrating or have been relocated to, with priority given to underserved settlements such as Dhurwale, Dhirindhir and Tuliguled.

DONORS SHOULD:
- Ensure that funding mechanisms enable effective and long-term investments in progress towards durable solutions based on the needs and priorities of affected communities.
- This requires flexibility to adapt allocations based on evolving situations as communities and local administrations advance on the solutions journey. Investments are needed in activities that strengthen local governance, sustainable service delivery, and climate-aware economic opportunities.
- Ensure that funding for livelihoods opportunities integrates aspects of inclusive, peaceful coexistence, participation, protection considerations such as access to documentation and land, as well as enable gender-transformation and positive change for youth and children in accordance with their priorities.
- Continue to provide bridging support based on humanitarian needs in communities that still struggle with basic subsistence, with the understanding that sustainable integration is a process that requires an investment from both development and humanitarian actors.
- Increase funding for anticipatory action with a no-regrets principle and long-term development funding to support initiatives that prepare communities to withstand possible future shocks.

ANNEXES

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Annex 2. Research tools
Tool 1: High-level Key Informant Interviews

Respondent type: Somali regional authorities as well as UN agencies & NGOs involved in durable solutions in the Somali region.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is [Your Name], and I am part of a team conducting an assessment focused on identifying barriers and opportunities for achieving durable solutions for IDPs in the Somali region, with a particular focus on Fafan, Shabelle, and Sitti zones.
Before we begin, I would like to assure you that:

- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to skip any question or stop the interview at any time.
- Your responses will remain confidential, and no identifying information will be shared without your explicit permission.
- The information you provide will be used solely for the purposes of this assessment to inform evidence-based recommendations for durable solutions.

Do you have any questions regarding the research?
Do I have your consent to proceed with this interview?
Do I have your consent to record this interview?

Interview questions:
1)   Please tell me about your role and how your work relates to durable solutions.

Part A. Legal and Policy Frameworks

2)   How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the current legal and policy frameworks in addressing IDP challenges?
    a)What progress would you say has been made in implementing the Somali Region Durable Solutions Strategy (2022–2025) and what are the main areas of concern? And why ?

    b)What are your views on the potential of the Durable Solutions Strategic Plan for IDPs (2024–2027)?

Part B. Actors and Coordination

3)Who are the primary actors involved in durable solutions efforts in these zones (e.g., government entities, NGOs, UN agencies, community organisations)?

4)   How effective is the coordination among these actors? Are there significant gaps or overlaps in roles and responsibilities?
    a)What are the roles of the Federal and Regional Durable Solutions Working Groups? What are their tasks, responsibilities and goals?
    b)What are the strengths and what are the weaknesses of the Federal and Regional Durable Solutions Working Groups?

Part C. Social Cohesion and Community Dynamics

5)How would you describe the relationship between IDPs and host communities in the three zones (Fafan, Sitti, Shabelle)?
    a)Do relationships between host and displaced communities, or between different groups within these communities, constitute a barrier in achieving durable solutions in these three zones?
    b)Are there successful examples of community-based (local) initiatives promoting social cohesion?

Part D. Gender-Sensitive Programming and Considerations for Vulnerable Groups

6)   How are gender-specific needs, such as protection against GBV or access to land, housing and livelihoods, being addressed in durable solutions programs?

7)   Are children's specific needs—such as education, family reunification, and psychosocial support—adequately integrated into current interventions?

Part E. Progress and gaps in achieving durable solutions based on the eight IASC criteria

I would now like to ask you about the progress and gaps in achieving durable solutions. As mentioned, we are interested specifically in understanding the situation in Sitti, Fafan and Shabelle zones:

8) **Long-Term Safety and Security:** What progress has been made in ensuring safety and security for IDPs in your area? (Note to data collectors: provide examples, such as presence of police forces; provision of lights; security checks) What threats to safety and security persist, and what measures are needed to address them?

9) **Adequate Standard of Living:** To what extent have programs improved access to basic services such as water, housing, healthcare, and education for IDPs? What gaps remain in ensuring an adequate standard of living, and how can these be addressed?

10) **Access to Livelihoods:** What initiatives have supported economic self-reliance for IDPs? Are there specific barriers to achieving sustainable livelihoods, and how can these be overcome?

11) **Restoration of Housing, Land, and Property (HLP):** How effective have efforts been in restoring housing and resolving land disputes for IDPs in these specific zones? What policies or interventions are needed to better protect HLP rights?

12) **Access to Personal Documentation:** Have IDPs been able to secure the necessary documentation (e.g., ID cards, land deeds)? What challenges remain, and what solutions could help improve access?

13) **Family Reunification:** What efforts have been made to reunite families separated by displacement? What are the key barriers to family reunification, and how can these be addressed?

14) **Participation in Public Affairs:** Have IDPs been included in decision-making processes and governance structures and what improvements could enhance their participation in public affairs?

15) **Psychosocial Support:** Have IDPs in the study areas been traumatized before or during displacement? Are there adequate psychosocial support services to meet this demand?

16) **Access to Effective Remedies:** Are there accessible and effective mechanisms for IDPs to seek justice or redress for rights violations? What measures are needed to strengthen access to remedies and accountability?

Part F. Opportunities and Recommendations

17) What do you see as the most significant opportunities for achieving durable solutions for IDPs in these zones?

a) What recommendations would you propose for addressing gaps in coordination as well as in service delivery?

2)   I have finalized my questions, however, please add if you have any questions, suggestions and additional points?

Tool 2: Zonal level key informant interviews

Respondent type: zonal or woreda level government offices, NGO and CSOs active in the area and/or community leaders

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. My name is [Your Name], and I am part of a team conducting an assessment focused on identifying barriers and opportunities for achieving durable solutions for IDPs in the Somali region, with a particular focus on Fafan, Shabelle, and Sitti zones.

Before we begin, I would like to assure you that:
- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to skip any question or stop the interview at any time.
- Your responses will remain confidential, and no identifying information will be shared without your explicit permission.
- The information you provide will be used solely for the purposes of this assessment to inform evidence-based recommendations for durable solutions.

Do I have your consent to proceed with this interview?
Do I have your consent to record this interview?

Interview questions:
1) Please tell me about your role and how your work relates to durable solutions.

Part A. Displacement context and recent movements
2) Have there been significant movements of IDPs into, within, or out of this zone recently? If so, can you describe the key factors driving these movements?
3) What are the primary challenges faced by IDPs in this zone?

Part B. Legal and policy frameworks
4) Are there gaps in the legal or policy frameworks that hinder durable solutions for IDPs here?
5) Are there local policies or customary practices that influence how displacement issues are managed?

Part C. Actors and coordination
6) Who are the main stakeholders addressing displacement and durable solutions in your zone (e.g., government, NGOs, community leaders)?
7) How effective is coordination among these stakeholders? Are there specific challenges or successful examples of collaboration?
8) Are there mechanisms to involve IDPs and host communities in planning and decision-making for programs in this zone?
9) How frequently does the Zonal Durable Solutions Working Group meet? What are its tasks and goals?
10) What are the strengths and what are the weaknesses of the Zonal Durable Solutions Working Group?

Part D. Social cohesion and community dynamics
11) Are there successful examples of initiatives that have promoted social cohesion in this zone?

Part E. Gender-sensitive programming and vulnerable groups
12) Are the specific needs of women taken into consideration in the interventions taking place in this zone? What are the main challenges displaced women and girls are facing, in your view?
13) Are the needs of children being addressed by the interventions? What are the main challenges displaced children are facing, in your view?
14) What additional measures are needed to address the needs of vulnerable groups in this zone?

Part F. Assessing progress in achieving durable solutions

Note for Interviewer: Select areas of relevance based on the profile and expertise of the key informant. You may remind the informant about the eight IASC criteria and, depending on their role and knowledge, ask them to focus on the criteria they feel most comfortable addressing.

Long-Term Safety and Security
- What progress has been made in ensuring safety and security for IDPs in this zone?
- What are the remaining challenges, and what measures are needed to address them?

Adequate Standard of Living
- How accessible are basic services such as water, housing, healthcare, and education for IDPs in this zone?
- What barriers remain to achieving an adequate standard of living?

Access to Livelihoods
- What livelihood barriers and opportunities exist for IDPs in this zone?
- How can programs better support economic self-reliance for IDPs?

Restoration of Housing, Land, and Property (HLP)
- What efforts have been made to restore housing and resolve land disputes for IDPs in this zone?
- What challenges remain in ensuring secure housing for displaced populations?

Access to Personal Documentation
- Are IDPs able to obtain necessary documentation such as ID cards or land deeds in this zone?
- What solutions could improve access to personal documentation?

Family Reunification
- Have there been efforts to reunite families separated during displacement in this zone?
- What are the main barriers to family reunification, and how can they be addressed?

Psychosocial Support
- Have IDPs in the study areas been traumatized before or during displacement?
- Are there adequate psychosocial support services to meet this demand?

Participation in Public Affairs
- Are IDPs involved in decision-making processes at the zonal level?
- What measures could improve their participation in governance and public affairs?

Access to Effective Remedies
- Are there mechanisms for IDPs to seek justice or resolve disputes in this zone?
- What are the main barriers to accessing remedies, and how can they be addressed?

Part G. Opportunities and Recommendations

15) What opportunities exist to advance durable solutions for IDPs in this zone?
16) What recommendations would you suggest for advancing durable solutions in this zone?

Tool 3: Focus Group Discussions with displaced communities

Respondent type: IDPs. Discussions with male and female participants should be held separately. All participants should be above 18 years old. To the extent possible, ensure diversity of age among participants to hear perspectives from both young displaced individuals and elders. Each group should include 4 to 7 participants, with a maximum of 7, to allow for meaningful and manageable discussions.

Hello and thank you for participating in this discussion. My name is [Your Name], and I am here as part of a team that is working to understand the challenges and needs of displaced people like you. The purpose of this discussion is to hear about your experiences, the challenges you face in your daily life, and your thoughts on how things can be improved.

We will talk about things like your living conditions, safety, access to services, and participation in the life of the community. Your opinions are very important to us, and they will help us understand how to support people like you better.

Please remember that your participation is completely voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with. Everything you share will be confidential and used only to improve the situation of displaced people in the region. If you agree, we would like to record this discussion for the purpose of accurate note-taking, but the recordings will not be shared with anyone outside of our team.

Before we start, do I have your consent to continue with this discussion?

Respondent code	Consent	Age	Gender	Years of displacement

Interview questions:

The Process of Arriving Here (Displacement, Relocation, Return)

Ask Participants:

1. How did you arrive here? What was the support you received during displacement/relocation/return?
2. What were the risks and vulnerabilities you experienced during displacement/relocation/return?
3. How were you welcomed by the host community, government offices and NGOs? Was it easy for you to start your new life here?
4. How is the relationship with the host community now? What is good? What are issues that create tension?

Preferences for Durable Solutions

Participatory Exercise 1:

The objective of this exercise is to discuss participants' preferred options for the future: staying here (local integration), moving to another place (relocation), or returning to their home. The researchers facilitating the discussion will take three pieces of paper, one for each option (as per the example on the photo below). Depending on where the interview takes place and equipment available, you can also use a flipchart, a board, or a single piece of A4 paper with 3 columns.

Give participants a coin and ask them to place the coin under their preferred option. Then, ask each of them to explain their choice and take notes of their answers. Facilitate a discussion on the reasons behind their preferences and the challenges or opportunities they associate with each solution.

Living conditions and basic needs

Participatory Exercise 2: This part of the discussion aims to understand what the main challenges are and needs IDPs are currently facing. For this exercise, participants will be asked to do a ranking of their needs and explain their choices.

Provide participants with cards listing needs
- Shelter / housing
- Food
- Water
- Access to healthcare
- Access to education for children
- Livelihood options
- Safety
- Participation in the life of the community
- Access to legal services
- Documentation
- Other (ask participant to specify)

Ask participants to rank these needs in order of importance to them.
Facilitate a discussion on why certain needs were ranked higher or lower.

Safety and Security

Ask participants:
Do you feel safe here? If not, what are the main things that make you feel unsafe?
What could be done to improve safety for you and your family?

Support received and gaps

Participatory Exercise 3: This part of the discussion aims to understand how IDPs perceive existing interventions and to what extent they address their needs.

Create a chart or visual board with categories of support
- Food
- Shelter
- Education
- Healthcare
- Family reunification
- Documentation
- Legal services (information on your rights and how to access them)
- Psychosocial Support
- Other (ask participants to specify)

- Ask participants to identify the most important types of support they have effectively received and mark these on the chart. Which organizations provided the support?

- Facilitate a discussion on which types of support were most helpful, and which areas still need improvement.

Conclusion

Ask participants:
- Is there anything you would like to add?
- Did this discussion reflect the situation you are facing as a displaced?

Thank participants for their time and trust and provide your contact information in case they have questions.

Tool 4: Survey

Sampling Guidelines for the Survey
This survey will be administered using Kobo Collect.

1. **Site coverage**
- Upon arriving at the selected IDP site, enumerators should identify zones or sections of the site to ensure geographic representation.
- Coordinate among enumerators to assign specific areas to avoid duplication.

2. **Systematic selection of households**
- Begin from a central location or a recognizable starting point in the assigned area.
- Approach every third household to request participation. If the household declines, move to the next available household and continue the pattern.

3. **Daily gender monitoring**
- After reaching half the daily target, pause to review the gender balance among respondents.
- Adjust the approach as needed to ensure an even distribution between men and women by targeting households with adults of the underrepresented gender.

4. **Respondent criteria**
- Only interview individuals above 18 years of age who are willing to participate.

5. **Ethical considerations**
- Before starting the survey, obtain informed consent and explain the purpose of the study, ensuring respondents understand their rights.
- Participation must be voluntary, and respondents can decline or stop at any time.

6. **Enumerator coordination**
- Hold a brief daily meeting with enumerators to review progress, address challenges, and ensure adherence to sampling protocols.

Survey questions:

Section 1: Demographic Information
1. Gender: [ ] Male [ ] Female
2. Age: [ ] 18–25 [ ] 26–35 [ ] 36–50 [ ] 50+
3. Educational Status: [ ] No education [ ] 1-8 grade [ ] 9-12 grade [ ] diploma [ ] degree [ ] master's and above
4. Family Status: [ ] Single [ ] Married [ ] Widowed [ ] Divorced
5. Number of family members currently living with you: _____
6. Zone/Woreda of Displacement: [ ] Tuliguled [ ] Dhurwale [ ] Goljano [ ] Beyahaw [ ] Jedane

Section 2: IASC Criteria
1. Long-Term Safety and Security
7. Do you feel safe in your current location? [ ] Yes [ ] No
8. If no, what are the main safety concerns? [ ] Conflict with other community members[ ] Violence from state actors [ ] Theft [ ] Other: _____

2. Adequate Standard of Living

9. Are your living conditions (shelter, hygiene, etc.) adequate? [ ] Yes [ ] No

10.Do you have access to secure and adequate housing? [ ] Yes [ ] No

11. If no, what are the main issues? [ ] Lack of land [ ] Damaged property [ ] Financial constraints [ ] Lack of infrastructure [ ] Other (please specify): _____

12. Do you have access to sufficient food, water, and healthcare? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   • If no, which is most lacking? [ ] Food [ ] Water [ ] Healthcare

3. Access to Livelihoods

13. Do you currently have a way to earn an income or support your family? [ ] Yes [ ] No

14. If yes, what is your work? [] Farming [] Livestock rearing [] Trading [] Daily Labor [] Employed Work [] Other _____

15. What from the following options is the most likely to help improve your livelihood situation?[ ] Access to land [ ] Access to finance [ ] Training [ ] Other _____

4. Restoration of Housing, Land, and Property (HLP)

16. Did you face disputes over land or housing? [ ] Yes [ ] No

17. If yes, were these disputes resolved? [ ] Yes [ ] No

18.If yes, were they resolved to your satisfaction and by whom (which body)?

5. Access to Personal Documentation
5A: Documentation Status

19. Does anyone in your household have identification or official documentation? Yes / No

20. If yes, what type of documents are available?

   a. Passport
   b. National ID
   c. Birth Certificate
   d. Marriage Certificate
   e. Academic Certificate/school records
   f. Other (please specify):

18. If yes how many family members have identification or official documents? ____

19. If not, what are the reasons for not having documentation?
   • [ ] Lost during displacement.
   • [ ] Never had documentation.
   • [ ] No access to registration services
   • [ ] Lack of knowledge on how to obtain it
   • [ ] Other (please specify): _____

5B: Impact of Lack of Documentation on Access to Services

21.Have you or your family faced difficulties accessing services because you don't have documentation? Yes / No

22. If yes, which services have been difficult to access without documentation?
   • [ ] Health services
   • [ ] Education services
   • [ ] Food assistance
   • [ ] Shelter support
   • [ ] Water and sanitation
   • [ ] Protection/legal services
   • [ ] Employment/livelihood support
   • [ ] Bank/microfinance
   • [ ] Other (please specify): _____

What kind of challenges did you face in accessing these services without documentation?
- [ ] Denied access.
- [ ] Delays in service provision
- [ ] Asked for bribes or informal payments.
- [ ] Turned away without explanation.
- [ ] Other (please specify):____

24.Have you sought help from humanitarian/ Govt organizations to access services without documentation? Yes / No

25.If yes, were they able to assist you? Yes / No

26.If no, what were the reasons given? ____

5C: Health Services

27.Have you or your family members been denied health services due to a lack of documentation? Yes / No

28. If yes, what services were denied?
- [ ] General healthcare
- [ ] Maternity services
- [ ] Emergency care
- [ ] Medication
- [ ] Other (please specify): _____

29.Have you tried to obtain healthcare through other means (e.g., informal networks, private services)? Yes / No

30.If yes, did you face any challenges such as high costs, discrimination, or long waiting times? Yes / No

5D: Education Access

31.Are there school-age children in your household? Yes / No

25.If yes, have any of the children been unable to attend school due to a lack of documentation? Yes / No

26. If yes, what specific challenges did you face in enrolling children in school?
- [ ] School requires official identification.
- [ ] Lack of birth certificates
- [ ] Discrimination due to IDP status
- [ ] Other (please specify): ____

27.Have humanitarian/Govt organizations provided any assistance to help with school enrollment without documentation? Yes / No

5E: Shelter and Housing Support

28. Do you/your household have documents to prove ownership/occupation of your former/abandoned or current house?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No, they got lost
- [ ] No, never had
- [ ] Don't want to answer
- [ ] Don't know.

29. Do you/your household have documents to prove ownership/occupation of your former/abandoned land and property?
- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No, they got lost
- [ ] No, never had
- [ ] Don't want to answer
- [ ] Don't know.

30. Has your household been denied shelter assistance due to the lack of documentation? Yes / No
31. If yes, what type of shelter support were you denied?
- [ ] Temporary shelter
- [ ] Permanent housing
- [ ] Rental support
- [ ] Other (please specify): ____

32. Have you been able to find other forms of shelter? Yes / No

33. If yes, what were the challenges in securing alternative housing?
- [ ] High rent
- [ ] Overcrowded conditions
- [ ] Poor shelter quality
- [ ] Lack of security
- [ ] Other (please specify): _____

5F: Livelihood and Income Support
34. Has your household faced difficulties accessing livelihood or income support (e.g., job programs, cash assistance) due to a lack of documentation? Yes / No

35. If yes, what were the challenges you faced?
- [ ] Inability to prove identity.
- [ ] Ineligibility for support
- [ ] Discrimination
- [ ] Other (please specify): ___

36. Have you been able to engage in informal work or other income-generating activities? Yes / No
37. If yes, what challenges did you face?
- [ ] Low wages
- [ ] Exploitation
- [ ] Lack of legal protection
- [ ] Other (please specify): ____

5G: Protection and Legal Services
38. Have you or your family been denied access to legal or protection services because you lack documentation? Yes / No

39. If yes, what specific legal or protection services were denied?
- [ ] Legal representation
- [ ] Reporting of violence or abuse
- [ ] Child protection services
- [ ] Gender-based violence support
- [ ] Other (please specify): ____

40.Have humanitarian/government organizations offered any legal assistance to help you obtain documentation? Yes / No

41. If yes, were they able to help you navigate the process? yes / No

42. What are the main challenges preventing you from obtaining legal documentation through humanitarian or other means?
   • [ ] Lack of access to services
   • [ ] Financial constraints
   • [ ] Bureaucratic delays
   • [ ] Distance to service centers.
   • [ ] Other (please specify): _____

6. Family Reunification

43.Were you separated from family members during displacement? [ ] Yes [ ] No

44.If yes, have efforts been made to reunite you? [ ] Yes [ ] No

45.What support would help in reuniting families? [ ] Assistance with legal documentation [ ] Financial support for travel [ ] Access to family tracing services [ ] Support from local authorities or NGOs [ ] Other (please specify): _____

7. Psychosocial Support

46. Have people been traumatized before or during their displacement?

47. Are there adequate psychosocial support services to address these demands?

8. Participation in Public Affairs

48.Are you involved in any community or decision-making activities? [ ] Yes [ ] No

49. If not, what prevents you from participating? [ ] Lack of opportunity [ ] Lack of time [ ] Limited access to information [ ] Social or cultural barriers [ ] Security concerns [ ] Other (please specify): _____

9. Access to Effective Remedies

50.Do you feel you have access to justice to resolve disputes or violations? [ ] Yes [ ] No

51.Have you sought help for any rights violations? [ ] Yes [ ] No

52. If no, why not? [ ] Lack of information about available resources [ ] Fear of retaliation or further harm [ ] Lack of trust in legal or governmental institutions [ ] Distance to legal services
 [ ] Financial constraints [ ] Other (please specify): _____

Section 3: Social cohesion

53.How would you describe your relationship with the host community? Very good [ ] Good [ ] Neutral [ ] Poor [ ] Very poor

54.Have there been any conflicts with the host community? [ ] Yes [ ] No

55. If yes, were these conflicts resolved satisfactorily? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Section 4: Needs of Women and Children
Women

56. What are the main challenges women face in your community? [ ] Safety [ ] Access to livelihoods [ ] Healthcare [ ] Education [ ] Gender-based violence [ ] Limited access to decision-making [ ] Discrimination (e.g., cultural, legal, or social) [ ] Limited access to legal support Limited [ ] Difficulties accessing rights to land in case of inheritance or divorce
 [ ] Other (please specify): _____

57. Are there programs or interventions addressing the needs of women? [ ] Yes [ ] No

58. Are these programs effectively improving the situation of women and girls? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] I do not know

Children
   1. Are children in your community attending school? [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] I do not know
   2. What are the biggest challenges children face? [ ] Education [ ] Food insecurity [ ] Health
   3. [ ] Safety and protection [ ] Family separation [ ] Access to clean water [ ] Psychological trauma [ ] Child labor [ ] Lack of access to social services [ ] Other (please specify): _____ [ ] I do not know

Section 5: Preferences for durable solutions
61. Are you getting help? [ ] Food Support [ ] Income-generating activity [ ] Legal aid [ ] Access to documentation [ ] Psychosocial Support [ ] Housing [ ] Other (please specify) : _____

62. Is this support provided by: [ ] government [ ] NGOs [ ] Other (please specify) _____ [ ] I do not know

63. What is your preferred solution for the future? [ ] Staying here (local integration) [ ] Returning to your original home [ ] Moving to another location

64. Why? [ ] Security / safety [ ] Livelihood opportunities [ ] Ownership of land / housing [ ] Presence of family members [ ] Other (please specify)

65. What would you wish to engage in the next couple of months? [ ] School [ ] University [ ] Farming [ ] Livestock Rearing [ ] Trading [ ] Daily Labor Work [ ] Employed Work [ ] Other

66. Could you engage in this activity here or would you have to move somewhere else? [ ] Here [ ] I would have to move [ ] I do not know