

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## REVIEW OF DURABLE SOLUTIONS INITIATIVES IN EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

Good practices, challenges and opportunities in the search  
of durable solutions

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Unlocking Protracted Displacement



The search for durable solutions to protracted displacement situation in East and Horn of Africa is a key humanitarian and development concern. This is a regional/cross border issue, dynamic and with a strong political dimension which demands a multi-sectorial response that goes beyond the existing humanitarian agenda.

The Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) was created in March 2014 with the aim of maintaining a focused momentum and stakeholder engagement towards durable solutions for displaced and displacement affected communities.

The secretariat was established following extensive consultations among NGOs in the region, identifying a wish and a vision to form a body that can assist stakeholders in addressing durable solutions more consistently. ReDSS is managed through an Advisory Group comprising of 11 NGOs: DRC, NRC, IRC, World Vision, CARE International, Save the Children International, OXFAM, ACTED, INTERSOS, Mercy Corps and Refugee Consortium of Kenya with DRC and IRC forming the steering committee.

The Secretariat is not an implementing agency but a coordination and information hub acting as a catalyst and agent provocateur to stimulate forward thinking and policy development on durable solutions for displacement affected communities in East and Horn of Africa. It seeks to improve joint learning and research, support advocacy and policy development, capacity building and coordination.

This publication was commissioned by ReDSS and conducted solely by Samuel Hall. The views and analysis therefore do not necessarily represent ReDSS' views.



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*2016 is a dynamic time for durable solutions in East and Horn of Africa. The region is home to some of the largest displacement situations in the world with over 11 million displaced, and most have been displaced for several years or even decades.*

**Why speak of durable solutions now?** This report reviews 14 different initiatives on durable solutions in a region where the needs of protracted and newly displaced populations are still very high. The leading political discourse may not recognize these needs, and may not recognize the rights of the displaced to choose their preferred durable solution. This calls for a stronger coordination among those engaged in the response to displacement. This is now a more diverse group: beyond humanitarian actors, ‘those engaged’ include development, private sector actors, as well as local and regional actors. This review highlights best practices, bottlenecks and ways forward to improve coordination. At a time when more actors are on board with a new global attention to migration, it is key to have a one-stop-shop for information on the region. No common institution and no unified language exist to speak of durable solutions. A learning agenda is needed as part of a “toolbox” to plan ahead in the search of durable solutions.

**How to speak of durable solutions?** Stakeholders do not currently speak the same language. Humanitarian actors are well versed in the legal frameworks on durable solutions, while academics are moving away from the term ‘solution’ or of the limit set at three durable solutions – return, local integration or resettlement. Academics speak of a right to a fourth durable solution: mobility. At the same time, some governments publicize security concerns, limiting mobility and asylum space. This is why international organizations and think tanks are moving towards transitional solutions and engagement with development and private sector actors for new pathways to solutions. The East and Horn of Africa region can set an example of a coordinated, regional durable solutions system among this diverse group.

**“Not one vision but many visions on durable solutions exist”.** Is it possible to aim for a coordinated durable solutions system in the region? How can existing initiatives be operationalized and monitored? The review answers these questions, with a focus away from national pressures to: 1) area-based/local as well as regional approaches; 2) coordination between initiatives to avoid working in silos; and 3) a clear, organized and participatory space for policy dialogue in the region.

## GOOD PRACTICES TO SCALE UP

The core principles for durable solutions exist: they are outlined in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) framework and brought on board, regionally, through several initiatives – from the Solutions Alliance, to the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) framework – with indicators and a results chain developed to guide practice. These are used and being further tested – in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, where practical initiatives are changing mind sets, policies and programmes towards the displaced.

- **Somalia is exploring local integration for IDPs and creating linkages with development actors and government.** The vision for the National Development Plan (NDP) includes durable solutions as an objective, with successful advocacy around ‘displacement as a development issue’<sup>1</sup> and impactful humanitarian-development dialogue. With continued insecurity and limited access leading to the protracted displacement of over one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and two million refugees abroad, a key priority is to plan for durable solutions in a context where access and mobility are reduced. Top-led initiatives are the strongest, such as the IDP Solutions Initiative, an example of leadership from the Representative of the United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) on the human rights of IDPs and the Office of the Regional Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) together with the government. Complementing this, the Solutions Alliance Somalia matches leadership from a humanitarian and development perspective, bringing both sets of actors around the table to discuss methods to plan, measure, and document durable solutions. A results chain has been developed and remains to be finalized. Whether the key actors will take these tools forward remains to be seen.

<sup>1</sup> Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) /Samuel Hall (2014) A New Deal for Somalia’s Displaced? Exploring Opportunities of Engagement for Solutions with the Somalia New Deal Compact.

- **Kenya is reflecting on the promises of local/sub-national and transitional solutions.**<sup>2</sup> This is a hidden best practice as dynamics have changed: although at a national level, the rhetoric is worsening, focused on the refugee-security nexus, promising opportunities exist at the sub-national and local county level. Initiatives pointing to informal economic integration abound and their dynamism has been partially documented in recent research reflecting on the opportunities that the devolved government process presents for transitional solutions. The local, area-based gains of the solutions agenda in Kenya hold promises that show the soft power of subnational advocacy.
- **Uganda is leading in local economic integration,** giving refugees the right to engage in gainful employment and the freedom to move as enshrined in the Geneva Convention. Uganda is a success of humanitarian-development linkage, of host-refugee interactions, and a case to learn from. More will be needed to make local integration an achievable reality, with naturalization a bottleneck to full integration for the oldest refugees. Legal advocacy and planning are key priorities in a welcoming context for refugees, with the need to adapt to the aspirations and expectations of a protracted population. Scholars call for the creation of an innovation ecosystem.<sup>3</sup>
- **Ethiopia is testing alternatives to camps in restricted settings,** and provides an important case study of a government exploring out of camp solutions, at least for one group (Eritrean refugees) through the Out-of-Camp policy (OCP). Gains from this initiative seem timid and uncertain but stakeholders agree for the need to revive efforts around the OCP, especially at a time of increasing donor focus and interest on migration and displacement at large. Additionally, on forced displacement, discussions are on-going on what a Solutions Strategy can look like in a context where alternatives to camps must remain a priority.

## BOTTLENECKS TO ADDRESS

Coordination is not where it should be on durable solutions in this region. All stakeholders agree on the presence of three obstacles: a lack of any common system, a missing coordination structure and the lack of a necessary evidence base to support planning. Initiatives are working in silos and lessons are not being documented to learn from on-going efforts. No learning agenda exists, nor a common platform for discussion. The Theory of Change presented in this review recommends a sequencing, layering and integrating of activities, geographical approaches, advocacy, capacity and coordination to the widest range of stakeholders, including – and with a stronger focus on – academia, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector and local governments.

To reach the end goal of displacement-affected communities living in safety and without discrimination, challenges need to be addressed. These challenges are:

- An increase in durable solutions (DS) initiatives without sufficient coordination and communication
- National contexts with a diverse leadership and membership base on durable solutions
- Competing priorities between stakeholders at regional, national and local levels
- Lack of operationalization and monitoring of durable solutions in programming: where is the impact and the accountability?
- Missing actors: displacement-affected communities, private sector, as well as academia and CSOs, are key actors to support.

This report encourages the focus on complementarity between initiatives. An example is the on-going work by the IDP Solutions Initiative in Somalia and the Solutions Alliance Somalia. While the latter offers a greater prospect for learning and a results chain, the former's strength is in local credibility and innovation. Both are happening at a critical time with an opening to include durable solutions on the National Development Plan. Integration between durable solutions initiatives and on-going development work is accessible: in terms of integration between United Nation (UN), agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government; and between consortia: linking up to the resilience, multi-year and multi-sectoral work of the resilience actors, many of whom, are also active on durable solutions. One of the key consortium leads is the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and a key donor pushing for the durable solutions-resilience link is the UK's Department of International Development (DFID). Synergies, and integration, are accessible.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) / Samuel Hall (2015) Devolution in Kenya: Opportunity for Transitional Solutions for Refugees? Analysing the impact of devolution on refugee affairs in refugee hosting countries.

<sup>3</sup> Bloom, L. (2016) Creating an innovation ecosystem in Uganda for refugees ? Humanitarian Innovation Project, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, February 9, 2016.

## PRACTICAL MEASURES REQUIRED

- 1. Creating a common learning agenda on DS** with a clear, organized and participatory space for policy dialogue and advocacy in the region based on evidence: a global priority put forth by the Inter Agency Working Group (IAWG) in its recommendations to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS).
  - **Supporting higher absorption capacity** for this learning, increasing the knowledge and use of research by governments, UN agencies, international and national NGOs and the participation of CSOs. A Durable Solutions Learning Agenda can be replicated on the gains of the Resilience agenda.
  - **Improving the standardization, generation and availability of data, evidence and analysis.** Sharing such information will allow for the complementariness needed between humanitarian and development actors in the search for durable solutions. The process must be viewed as a collective requirement – not a mandate-driven action.
- 2. Providing support to local authorities and host communities** to work together for economic wins, transitional solutions having proven successful in paving the way for durable solutions.
  - This means **adopting a community lens approach to data and evidence** to be collected and analyzed together with displacement affected communities. This is aligned with the **localization of aid agenda** endorsed at the WHS in May 2016.
- 3. Assessing the impact of new forms of financing and intervention,** reversing the lack of accountability and transparency on durable solutions. Tools exist to assess impact. Phone-based applications, remote monitoring, qualitative field data collection and analysis on durable solutions activities from baseline to progress tracking are feasible and should be planned. No initiative can be called effective without a clear monitoring framework.
  - **Develop a monitoring and evaluation system including a standard data protocol** to support disaggregation of data for better analysis, targeting, coordination and accountability, together with a guidance tool for adaption and use in different contexts.
- 4. Building larger, more inclusive dialogue on durable solutions** on the above points. Bringing in actors to engage in learning, dialogue and advocacy for a more inclusive forum on durable solutions in the region, that can feed the global dialogue led in Washington, London, Istanbul and New York in 2016.
  - **Support a better understanding of political context and incentive structures** within which national refugee and IDPs policies are made to have more evidence in support of local integration and the benefit of displaced people economic empowerment for host communities and countries. Focus on voluntary return and reintegration is too narrow. It buys in to the politically preferred solution but local integration options in protracted context need to be reinforced.
- 5. Adopt a holistic approach addressing physical, material and legal rights and needs** of displacement affected communities **as a whole and work on forced displacement as a development issue** to improve knowledge in this field.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

### **Recommendation 1: Initiate a Regional Coordination on Durable Solutions to Support Country Initiatives**

Return is not the most likely option given on-going insecurity and instability in countries of origin. This opens two perspectives: 1) the need for a regional support to efforts launched in national settings and 2) the need to plan for innovative and contextualized approaches to local integration. Local integration contributes to self-reliance for refugees and to local economic development. This needs to be done through an ecosystem approach engaging with local authorities and displacement-affected communities, with the support of a common framework for data standards and data management to allow for a comparative analysis, and to identify displacement-specific protection needs and assistance gaps. It will also allow for cross learning, sharing of practices and comparison in approaches to DS. A key role of regional coordination will be to develop, on the basis of such a standardized approach to DS data, a monitoring and accountability framework for DS at a regional level. The Intergovernmental Authority for Development in Eastern Africa (IGAD) has the potential to develop such a framework to follow-up processes supported by political, humanitarian, development and private actors.

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### **Recommendation 2: Structure the Learning Agenda on DS by Integrating Academia, Think Tanks and the Private Sector**

How to measure outcomes and increase accountability for DS? This question needs to be asked at the onset of any initiative on durable solutions. A learning agenda is essential to keeping track of progress, gains, and challenges. Given the number of on-going initiatives listed in this review, a common approach to testing indicators and frameworks is required along with a tracking of the gains, entry points, challenges, failure and opportunities. This can be done through quarterly dialogues, annual conferences where pilot results are openly shared, and a learning agenda that includes independent voices: with academic representatives from the region and abroad.

- This should be done by pairing international and regional/national experts in a common research agenda with
  - Annual conferences to take stock and share lessons to refine 'pilot' DS initiatives and support coordination. Learning requires that lessons are absorbed, and interventions strengthened.
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### **Recommendation 3: Engage with Local Authorities, Displacement Affected Communities and CSOs to Strengthen Local Solutions and Safeguard the Local Perspective**

DS approaches have suffered from a lack of engagement with – and capacity development of – Local Authorities, communities and CSOs. This review advocates for a stronger attention to the localization of aid, as a principle to be enshrined in DS initiatives regionally. CSOs are strategically positioned to support direct engagement of local authorities and displacement-affected communities in a holistic manner, to ensure their ownership for lasting, locally relevant and feasible initiatives and to support social cohesion. Linkages with CSOs can build on **lessons learned from countries in the region that have addressed solutions to displacement through local action plans** for refugees and IDPs. **Investing in capacities to sustain solutions locally** should be a priority.

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### **Recommendation 4: Integrate Technical Specialists for Contextualized Solutions**

Humanitarians need to start working with non-traditional DS actors. Durable solutions will require interlocutors beyond ministries of refugees and interior to working with ministries of social affairs and labor. In addition to the government, humanitarians must plan with slum dweller associations, urban planners, labor market specialists, small business development specialists, linguists and multilingual education experts to build a tailored approach to the education and skills building of refugee and displaced youth.

### **Recommendation 5: Develop Capacity Across All Stakeholders**

Capacity needs to be developed and most importantly it should happen through partnerships and constructive dialogue: agreeing on a terminology and set of objectives for durable solutions. Tools and frameworks on durable solutions exist but are not sufficiently known (such as the ReDSS framework). Similarly, training materials and interagency work to raise the level of knowledge on durable solutions (the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre – IDMC until recently and the Joint IDP Profiling Service - JIPS more actively today). Bringing them in to educate and develop the capacity of government, humanitarian and development actors is one priority. Think tanks should be supported in the region to ask the questions that still need to be asked: What is failing in the DS effort? What has worked? What is scalable?

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### **Recommendation 6: Engage Donors differently**

Humanitarian and development donors need a joint strategy on durable solutions: while development actors address root and structural causes of displacement, humanitarian actors have a stronger understanding of both emergency and protracted needs of the displaced, and a better grasp of the language and legal framework on forced displacement. Respecting frameworks, in a growing context where development donors are the ‘new actors’ on displacement and migration, must remain a key focus. Humanitarian donors can build their influence through knowledge, and advocacy, to detach durable solutions from political agendas. This is the new role of humanitarian donors in shaping and influencing the thinking of their development counterparts.

Donors – both humanitarian and development – have a key role to play to ensure that the available tools and frameworks are used consistently and that innovative tools are tested and learned from. Opening a space for innovative efforts on durable solutions is needed to bring creativity, fresh ideas and a new outlook to one of the world’s most protracted displacement situations. Foundations are encouraged to step up from a thematic focus on education and health (the most effective entry points), to engaging in discussions on methods, tools, and Value for Money. Joining the conversation to fund local experts, CSOs, think tanks is necessary to bring innovation from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, and innovative partnerships, to the regional level. This review calls for a common agenda to operationalize existing tools, innovate and monitor, as part of a new DS learning agenda in the region to be supported by donors. In addition donors will need to:

- **Provide adequate long-term and predictable international political and financial support to countries and communities in the region that host refugees and IDPs**, in such ways that improve services and inclusive economic opportunities, including on housing, employment, education, access to health care and other vital public services and infrastructure for all. At least half of the forcibly displaced people in the region are children so millions are out of school. Investing in youth and education is crucial. Failing the children and youth risks creating a lost generation and sets us on a path toward new conflicts and greater displacement in the future.
- **Ensure close coordination with resilience initiatives and support early onset solutions planning and programing for the South Sudan and Burundi regional crises:** lessons can be learned from within the region, and globally, to ensure a meaningful shift from a care and maintenance approach to displacement, to one that builds resilience and improves self-reliance to pave the way for sustainable solutions.
- **Strengthen durable solutions understanding and operational capacities of local and national NGOs** at the district/county level, recognizing their instrumental role in supporting local authorities and displacement affected communities in the long term.
- **Ensure that partnerships and capacity development approaches are based on transfer of skills and knowledge** through mentorship, peer-to-peer activities and long-term learning.

### **Recommendation 7: Maintain a Rights- and Needs-Based Approach to Solutions for the Displaced**

A rights-based approach (RBA) is “a conceptual framework...that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights...” (OHCHR). This report started off by recognizing the dynamic nature of the DS agenda in the region – and in the world today – with the emergence of new actors contributing to advancing the quest for solutions. It is time for the discourse to go beyond humanitarian actors, for discussions on solutions for the displaced to step away from a traditional group of UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs to span a much larger spectrum. Yet, in this process, the fundamentals should not be forgotten. This report concludes by urging all actors interested in durable solutions to remember the human rights standards, principles, and frameworks that should provide the structure on which to base any on-going or future initiatives. The promotion of durable solutions should be done on the basis of international legal frameworks and commitments, as enshrined in:

- The 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol which together set the legal framework that defines who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations to states. These include the right to three durable solutions – voluntary return, local integration and resettlement – in safety, and dignity.
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons

Such a rights-based approach should ensure that the displaced are in a position to:<sup>41</sup>

- Make a voluntary and informed choice on the durable solution they would like to pursue
- Participate in the planning of durable solutions
- Have access to humanitarian and development actors
- Have access to monitoring mechanisms
- Benefit from the support of peace processes and peacebuilding to reinforce durable solutions.

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