

Introduction

This research aims to get an in-depth understanding of the key components of social cohesion in Cadaado, Dhusamareb and Bosaso districts so as to inform interventions focusing on Durable Solution for Internally displaced and Refugees in Somalia (DSIRS). Ongoing drought conditions contributed to a rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Somalia throughout 2017 leading to people being displaced from their areas of origin. **Many areas of the country have experienced four successive seasons of below average rainfall, and the resultant water shortages have contributed to crop failures, loss of livestock and extreme food insecurity for at least a quarter of the country's population.** Simultaneously, there has been an intensification of conflict in the latter part of the year, particularly concentrated in the South Central Region. Both the drought and the ongoing conflict have exacerbated displacement trends across the country. The chronic displacement has placed an increasing strain on resources (particularly water and food), and other basic services (e.g., education and healthcare) in areas suffering from persistent high unemployment.¹

This lack of resources and employment opportunities have contributed to the marginalization, discrimination and lack of trust between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Host Communities (HC), and has led to further displacement, feelings of resentment and exclusion. This is especially true in urban areas, where an estimated 2.2 million of Somalia's 2.6 million IDPs are now living, and where the majority of IDPs reportedly intend to remain.² IMPACT initiatives, through the DSRIS consortium, is conducting a case study assessment of local social cohesion in Cadaado, Dhusamareb and Bosaso districts – three districts in which DSRIS partners implement activities. The assessment will use qualitative methods and target both displaced and non-displaced populations.

According to Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), social cohesion is defined as “the nature and set of relationships between individuals and groups in a particular environment (i.e., horizontal social cohesion) and between those individuals and groups and the institutions that govern them in a particular environment (i.e., vertical social cohesion).”³ The World Bank emphasized that the understanding of the interplay between vertical and horizontal is essential to work on peace building and conflict management⁴. Similarly, the UN defined a cohesive society as “one where all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, recognition and legitimacy”. For the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a cohesive society works towards the well-being of all members, minimizing disparities and trying to avoid marginalization within and between groups.⁵ Orientation towards the common good is also considered to be one of the key components of social cohesion.⁶ This research has been built around ReDSS’ definition of social cohesion, while taking into account those of the other organizations mentioned above. While social cohesion and conflict management are considered to be foundational for sustainable (re)integration; there is a lack of conceptual and practical understanding of social cohesion in the context of forced displacement.⁷

Methodology

This brief is based on qualitative data collected from 17 to 26 September 2019 in Bosaso district, Somalia. The DSIRS Thematic (social cohesion) Assessment, September 2019 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) consisted of young people aged between 18 and 24 years and older people aged between 25 and 59 living in Bosaso district, in North eastern Bari region in Somalia. Similar assessments were also conducted in Cadaado and Dhuusamareeb districts in Central Somalia. Assessing three geographically distinct districts is generally more robust and useful for comparisons—if any- between the young people and the older’s experience and perception of the social cohesion in their communities. Key Informant Interviews (KIs) were conducted with gatekeepers, elders (aged 60 years and above), and religious leaders for the strategic function they hold in Somali communities and their first-hand knowledge about community social dynamics. Local government representatives were also interviewed as part of this research to include a political analysis of the social dynamics around displacement. KIs were selected based on their functions (gate keepers, elders, religious leaders and government representatives) in the assessed communities, while FGD participants were separated according to gender, age group (young and older people) and displacement status. Settlements were purposively selected for KIs and FGDs to include settlements of different sizes. In total, 28 FGDs (of 6 to 8 participants each) and eight KIs were conducted in each district. Five slightly different semi-structured paper form tools were used in this assessment: one FGD tool for displaced/non displaced youths, one FGD tool for displaced/non displaced adults and one KI tool for gatekeepers, elders, religious leaders and local government representatives.



FGDs

Type of participants	Number of FGDs
Adult displaced male	4
Adult displaced female	4
Adult non displaced male	3
Adult non displaced female	3
Youth displaced male	4
Youth displaced female	4
Youth non displaced male	3
Youth non displaced female	3
Total	28

KIs

Type of participants	Number of KIs
Elders	3
Gatekeepers	1
Religious leaders	2
Local authorities	2
Total	8

1. REACH, Social Cohesion - Galkacyo North - Galkacyo, Galmuduug, Somalia, April 2018
2. National Protection Overview, Somalia Joint Multi Cluster Needs Assessment (JMCNA), REACH August 2018
3. ReDSS, Case study on lessons learnt and practices to support (re) integration programming – Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismayo, 2018
4. World Bank, Social cohesion and forced displacement: a desk review to inform programming and project design, June 2018
5. OECD, Social cohesion definition, webpage accessed on the 07/07/2019
6. Search for Common Ground, SOCIAL COHESION FRAMEWORK - social cohesion for stronger communities, 2016
7. ReDSS, Case study on lessons learnt and practices to support (re) integration programming – Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismayo, 2018



Key findings

- **The majority of displaced people were reported to have come from southern Somalia.** Almost all FGD participants and KIs reported that most of displaced people of Bosaso came from south-central Somalia.
- **FGD participants reported a variety of drivers in relation to displacement; insecurity, protection risks and droughts being the most commonly reported push factors for IDP households.**
- **Perceived safety and livelihood opportunities were the most commonly reported pull factors** that attracted displaced households to Bosaso according to half of FGD participants and KIs.
- **Almost all KIs and some FGD participants reported that the regional and local government provided emergency relief such as food, water and medicine to IDPs,** while some FGD participants heard about the provision of this help but did not receive any of it. Host community members also played an important role in helping displaced communities. Most of FGD participants and more than half of KIs reported that HC members helped IDPs to meet their basic needs, such as providing food and water, household materials (kitchen utensils, mattresses, blankets, etc.) and sometimes land.
- Most of KIs and FGD participants reported that politicians, as respected members in the community, played a positive role on the perceptions of communities towards each other using media such as radio, local televisions and social media platforms. **During meetings with local elders and political gatherings; politicians have been reportedly calling for peaceful relationships without discrimination,** and mobilizing local business owners and diaspora communities to provide support to IDPs, hiring them and promoting their full integration. The majority of KIs agreed that media influences positively the perception and relationships of communities towards each other, and that this has encouraged donor, government and activists' engagement towards public fundraising to meet the needs of the IDPs.
- **In almost all FGDs, religion, language and nationality were reported as the essential foundations of identity construction and belonging.** According to most KIs and FGD participants, language, religion and culture were the most commonly reported factors bringing communities together, in addition to business ties and marriage.
- Almost all FGD participants and KIs reported that **IDPs had pre-existing relationships with HC members.** Half of the KIs and FGD participants reported that HC and IDPs had pre-existing clan relationships, and most notably with major clans from Puntland, Southern parts of Somalia and the Ethiopian-Somali region. Some KIs and FGD participants also reported pre-existing business relationships, mainly with the merchants of Bosaso exporting agricultural products and livestock, and importing commodities like clothes and food from Saudi Arabia and Yemen.
- **All KIs and almost all FGD participants reported that displaced and non-displaced community members interact on a daily basis and everywhere in the city.**
- **Clan and sub-clan conflicts and segregation/discrimination, competition over services, jobs and resources, and finally land disputes were the most reported strains by almost all KIs and FGD participants that deteriorate the relationships between communities.**
- **Unequal access to jobs, differentiated access to information, humanitarian aid, historical discrimination and gender were the most reported factors contributing to social exclusion as reported by most of the KIs and FGD participants.**

- Around half of the KIs and FGD participants acknowledged **positive changes induced by displacement, most notably through the injection of new skills, the positive humanitarian aid ripple effect and the economic growth associated with the influx of population.** The injection of new skills in the community was reported by some KIs and a quarter of FGD participants as one of the positive changes induced by the arrival of IDPs into HCs. That is especially true for IDPs coming from big cities like Mogadishu or certain areas like Southern Somalia with skilled tailors who then established successful cloth-making business.
- Most KIs and FGD participants reported that IDPs participate in local political life but are generally confined to camp committees or local community leadership structures. Government representatives were recognized as the formal power holders in their communities, while religious leaders, clan elders and gatekeepers were recognized as the informal power holders by the majority of KIs and FGD participants. **The majority of KIs and FGD participants expressed positive attitudes towards the representation they receive from power holders (both formal and informal);** but few KIs and FGD participants reported that some of them were “only interested in their individual gains”.

Displacement patterns, push and pull factors

The majority of displaced people were reported to have come from southern Somalia. Almost all FGD participants and KIs reported that most of displaced people of Bosaso came from south-central Somalia. The most commonly reported areas of origin were Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Bay, Bakool, Benadir, Hiiraan, and Mudug. The Ethiopian- Somali region was the second main area of origin of displaced population, reported by a quarter of FGD participants and one KI. Two FGD participants also mentioned refugees from Yemen, Syria and Ethiopia. **FGD participants reported a variety of drivers in relation to displacement; insecurity, protection risks and droughts being the most commonly reported push factors for IDP households.** Insecurity fueled by clan conflicts and/or presence of armed/ insurgency groups was the most commonly reported push factor by all FGD participants and most of the KIs. KIs explained that insurgency groups were reportedly imposing heavy taxation or forcefully recruiting children into militia groups, and also leading attacks on civilians in some areas.

Most of the KIs mentioned clan conflicts as a major push factor, with some IDPs reportedly coming from less powerful clans who couldn't protect themselves from attacks lead by the powerful clans. Drought, by destroying land and livestock, was also an important push factor according to half of FGD participants and KIs. Farming activity in middle Shabelle and Hiraan, for instance, was reported to have been affected by both drought and flash flood. KIs also reported food shortages due to drought, poor rainfall and civil war. Finally, some FGD participants reported the lack of economic opportunities for displaced households in their areas of origin, especially in comparison to big cities like Bosaso. **Perceived safety and livelihood opportunities were the most commonly reported pull factors** that attracted displaced households to Bosaso according to half of FGD participants and KIs. All KIs and FGD participants mentioned safety as the main pull factor. KIs explained that IDPs chose Bosaso because they can get some protection from the state institutions such as the police, in comparison to their areas of origin which are largely controlled by non-state armed groups who exploit them.

Almost all KIs and FGD participants agreed that the perceived livelihood opportunities were an important pull factor, since Bosaso was seen as a large city and a commercial hub with a diverse economy and numerous job opportunities, especially in comparison with the town and villages in the area of origin. **Jobs opportunities related to the fishing industry, salt mining, housing sector and livestock exportation were reported.** According to one KI, **there are many displaced people who found job opportunities when they arrived in Bosaso.** One KI mentioned the presence of clan to get support and protection as one of the reasons why IDPs came to Bosaso. **Finally, one young FGD participant reported that the presence of smuggling networks and the city's proximity to Gulf states have attracted many youths into Bosaso.**

Top 3 push and pull factors for displaced Households (HHs) in Bosaso

Push factors from Area of origin

Insecurity
Protection risks
Drought

1
2
3

Pull factors to Bosaso

Perceived security
Availability of livelihood opportunities
Availability of jobs

Measures taken to host displaced people

Almost all KIs and some FGD participants reported that the regional and local government provided emergency relief such as food, water and medicine to IDPs, while some FGD participants heard about the provision of this help but did not receive any of it. **Finally, some FGD participants reported that the local authorities did not respond to the needs of the displaced population because they lacked the capacity to do so.** Half of the FGD participants and two KIs mentioned that the government of Puntland has supported the relocation of many IDPs with the donation of land, and also by facilitating the negotiation with individuals or communities when the land was privately owned.

Over half of the FGD participants reported that the local government has played an important role in informing and alerting humanitarian organizations and the federal government about IDPs' situation. The local government also urged religious leaders and HC members to contribute financially through mosques, shops and even schools in order to participate in the emergency relief effort. Finally, some FGD participants highlighted that the government was providing security to displaced people.

HC members also played an important role in helping displaced communities. **Most FGD participants and more than half of KIs reported that HC members helped IDPs to meet their basic needs, such as providing food and water, household materials (kitchen utensils, mattresses, blankets, etc.) and sometimes land.** Women and youth groups were reported to facilitate the distribution of these resources. They also willingly shared community resources and services like health facilities, water points (sometimes by creating them), and education facilities. In seven FGDs, **religious leaders were reported to have played a major role in calling the community to support displaced people, for instance by collecting money at the mosque before distributing it to displaced population, and encouraging community members to maintain a peaceful relationship with IDPs.**

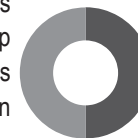
Finally, the elders, religious leaders and influential members of clans were also reported to have helped in negotiating with clans/landowners to give up land for building sustainable housing units for IDPs. Participants in one FGD recognized the role of International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in building housing units for displaced communities.

Finally, one FGD participant reported that on some occasions the government, community members and NGOs coordinated themselves to provide sustainable housing solutions for the displaced populations, with the help of committees. **The majority of the KIs and FGD participants believed that the measures taken by the government, INGOs and the local community were very beneficial to the displaced households** because the IDPs were in dire need of food, water, and shelters. The impact of education and healthcare on IDPs is also very positive.

Definition of identity and perception of belonging

In almost all FGDs, religion, language and nationality were reported as being the essential foundations of identity construction and belonging. Some participants also described that the culture and dialect attached to an area of origin were also important in terms of identity, most notably with IDPs from southern regions of Somalia. During four FGDs, participants mentioned that displacement is the biggest factor of identity and one FGD participant pointed out: **"some of us were born in the same area and we grew up together and displaced from the same areas together, therefore, our sense of belonging is built around the fact that we are displaced people"**. Facing similar challenges such as having a poor / restricted access to services also contributed to building a common identity for a few FGD participants.

Finally, it is interesting to note that in three out of four FGDs, participants from the host community reported clan membership as a main factor in their sense of belonging". **According to most KIs and FGD participants, language, religion and culture were the most important factors that bring the two communities together, as well as business ties and marriage.** Half of KIs and a few FGD participants reported clan membership was an important factor that brings communities together, especially for IDPs from Puntland, Southern Somalia or Ethiopian Somali region.



Half of KIs reported clan membership was an important factor that brings communities together.

During half of FGDs, participants reported sharing of resources (health facilities, schools, water points, market areas, land plots) as a unifying factor as they regularly meet and interact there. In five out of the 22 FGDs, some members mentioned that business interactions connect members of the communities. Finally, some FGD participants mentioned organizations affiliation like youth, sport and women organizations that comprise both displaced and non- displaced members as an important factor in their sense of belonging.

The role of media and political discourse on the perceptions of communities

Most of KIs and FGD participants reported that politicians, as respected members in the community, played a positive role on the perceptions of communities towards each other. Using media such as radio, local televisions and social media platforms, but also during meetings with local elders and rallies; politicians have been reportedly calling for peaceful relationships without discrimination and mobilizing local business owners and diaspora communities to provide support to IDPs, hiring them and promoting their full integration.

One KI highlighted the role of politicians in integrating IDP leaders into peace and security management in displaced camps and in the city. A few FGD participants and one KI reported that politicians remain neutral and give little attention to the IDPs in general while a few FGD participants reported that some politicians reportedly advocate for the repatriation of IDPs to their areas of origin.

The majority of KIs and FGD participants agreed that media influences positively the perception and relationships of communities towards each other, and that this has encouraged donor, government and activists' engagement, and also public fundraising towards the IDPs' needs. Both KIs and FGD participants reported that religious, community and political leaders used media to raise awareness, to relay the needs and fundraise to help IDPs, especially during emergency operations. Local radios, television and social media are usually used for this mobilization. Finally, participants in some FGDs mentioned NGO-sponsored programs that promote peace and community integration, highlighting and interviewing role models in the community to stop social violations and historical discriminations against marginalized communities and displaced people.

On the other hand, one KI reported that sometimes media over-represents conflicts and wars between the communities or clans, which can raise tension as clans may start campaigns to 'defend' themselves against the alleged aggression from the other clan. One KI also mentioned the role of social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, as used by the communities themselves to make regular updates about the situation with the diaspora, humanitarian organizations and government officials.

Interaction between communities and levels of integration

Almost all FGD participants and KIs reported that IDPs had pre-existing relationships with HC members. Half of the KIs and FGD participants reported that HC members and IDPs had pre-existing clan relationships, and most notably with major clans from Puntland, Southern parts of Somalia and the Ethiopian-Somali region. Some KIs and FGD participants also reported pre-existing business relationships, mainly with the merchants of Bosaso exporting agricultural products and livestock, and importing commodities like clothes and food from Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Communities (displaced and non-displaced) generally interact everyday and everywhere in the city. All KIs and almost all FGD participants reported that displaced and non-displaced communities interact with each other, with the vast majority of them on a daily basis. As reported by both FGD participants and KIs, there are many places for both communities to interact; such as in the workplace (in the port for instance, in the homes of host community members where displaced people often offer their services, according to one KI), in educational institutions such as schools and qur'anic dugsis (Quranic schools), universities, playgrounds, mosques, public transport, health facilities, market areas, and lastly in decision-making forums for elders from both communities during conflict resolution processes.

The majority of KIs and FGD participants agreed that communities were cooperating on a range of social issues, such as women's rights and eradication of certain cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); and also to a lesser extent peace building and security when elders take part in peace building processes in the community through negotiation and the traditional justice system.

All FGD participants and KIs reported that, displaced and non-displaced community members participate in the lives of their communities mostly through voluntary work (when an emergency occurs such as floods or conflict, but also on a daily basis), and by participating in social organizations (youth, women, sport organizations). Some participants mentioned that they consider themselves prominent members in IDP camps and the city since they can work, interact and live in the community, and in almost all FGDs, participants have shown their willingness to take part in community activities. Interestingly, almost all FGD participants acknowledged that displaced children were better integrated than they were.

Interaction with people from areas of origin

Almost all displaced FGD participants reported that they still have relationships and contacts with people from their areas of origin. The most reported type of interaction was with family or relatives, friends or clan members in order to exchange general information, greetings, news, and also to know "if we can get back to the location or not" as one FGD participant pointed out. Some send remittances to their areas of origin to assist their family members and relatives.

Few KIs and FGD participants mentioned that their relation was only business-oriented to trade products. As mentioned during FGDs, the frequency of contact varies depending on the individual, some contact people from their areas of origin everyday, others every week or every month, while others said they only communicate back home when an incident or an event occurs. The most commonly reported channels used are connecting through telephone and social media platforms such as WhatsApp and imo (massaging/calling app). Visitation is also mentioned, when finance allows it, and / or when some events occur like the death of a relative. Only one FGD participant mentioned that he has lost communication with his relatives because they went to Nairobi, Kenya.

KIs and FGD participants reported that people from the diaspora influenced the community relationships by sending remittance and changing the economic relationships between them. KIs and FGD participants recognized that during the civil war, the Somali diaspora became one of the greatest economic resources among local communities, thereby driving and influencing all levels of social, political and economic life. Many families are still helped through the contributions from the diaspora members according to several FGD participants. KIs and FGD participants also reported that many businesses were established by the diaspora, which have provided job opportunities to many local youths.

Positive changes attributed to displacement

Around half of KIs and FGD participants acknowledged positive changes induced by displacement, most notably through the injection of new skills, the positive humanitarian aid ripple effect and the economic growth associated with the influx of population. **The injection of new skills in the community was reported by some KIs and a quarter of FGD participants as one of the positive changes induced by the arrival of IDPs into HCs.** That is especially true for IDPs coming from big cities like Mogadishu or certain areas like Southern Somalia with skilled tailors who then established successful cloth-making business. New skills were also being brought by refugees from Yemen, Syria, Bangladesh, working in industries such as hospitality, construction, interior design, health and education. One KI also mentioned doctors from Syria and other Arab countries who opened private hospitals and lecturers from Sudan.

Finally, some KIs and FGD participants reported the attraction and opening of new investments and businesses as a positive consequence of displacements in the community; with the opening of new hotels, shops, schools, beauty salons, etc... who also happen to hire and pay taxes to the government. Some investors also seized the opportunity to invest in refugee camps and open businesses in their vicinity. Some FGD participants reported an increased demand for goods and services from the local traders, which have expanded the markets in size and offer. More than half of KIs and a few FGD participants reported the **positive humanitarian aid ripple effects in the wider community, with for instance the development and improvement of infrastructures such as schools, hospitals and water points thanks to the additional investments from humanitarian organizations and through their vocational programs targeting displaced communities.**

The relationships between the host community and displaced population

Clan and sub-clan conflicts and segregation/discrimination, competition over services, jobs and resources, and finally land disputes were the most reported strains by almost all KIs and FGD participants that **deteriorate the relationships between communities.** Most societal discrimination and clan-based violence is reportedly directed against minority groups and displaced people, some of them getting abused by armed clans and groups. Three KIs mentioned that discrimination reportedly involved the use of terms such as ‘clan-minority’ or ‘Somali –original’, with inter-marriage being forbidden for instance between ‘Somali-original’ clans and members of a minority clan.

The majority of KIs and FGD participants reported that these tensions come in the form of verbal and social violence such as segregation, discrimination, racism and also exclusion of services. Physical violence, including instances of assault, against minority groups is also common as reported during some FGDs. **Finally, competition over humanitarian help was mentioned in a few FGDs. The main negative impacts associated with displacements as reported by some FGD participants and two KIs were the increased competition over limited resources and services, in particular health (for instance with drugs in health facilities), education and water sources.** The increased competition in the labour market was also reported by more than half of KIs. A few FGD participants also reported the increased living costs associated with the arrival of IDPs. Unequal access to jobs, differentiated access to information, humanitarian aid, historical discrimination and gender were the most important factors contributing to social exclusion in general. **The majority of FGD participants reported that unequal access to jobs and services can be an important factor that can contribute to social exclusion.** In six FGDs, some participants from both communities mentioned that the lack of access to information can also be an excluding factor as it is vital for finding income generating activities or receiving humanitarian help.

Historical discrimination has also led to social exclusion according to several FGD participants, since minority groups are sometimes excluded from some camp meetings or election/selection of committees. Furthermore, social problems such as clan disputes, revenge, and injustice were mentioned by participants of four FGDs to be hindering the progress of local integration.

Top reported changes attributed to displacement

Positive changes

- Injection of new skills
- Presence of humanitarian aid
- Economic growth

- 1
- 2
- 3

Negative changes

- Clan and sub-clan conflicts
- Competition over jobs and resources
- Land disputes

Impact of inequalities on social relationship

All KIs and FGD participants agreed on the existence of inequalities between population groups in the access to basic services, economic opportunities, housing and political participation. However, these socio-economic disparities do not necessarily affect only displaced households, but concern a broader population group within Bosaso which are equally vulnerable and who constitute a lower-class of urban poor. As such, those inequalities are dividing factors within Bosaso society as a whole. **However, most KIs and FGD participants agreed that the poverty rate is higher in displaced settlements, and that host community members have much more access to basic services (health, food, water, education) compared to displaced households. According to FGD participants, the poverty rate is higher in displaced settlements and many families in the camps rely on humanitarian relief from aid agencies as their main source of livelihoods.**

More than half of KIs and some FGD participants agreed that host community households have much more access to basic services (health, water, food) compared to displaced households and low-income host community households, as the latter cannot afford such services. **Three KIs and most of the FGD participants reported that host community members enjoy a better access to economic opportunities than displaced households.** Host community members were reported to have better jobs in industries such as in the government, NGOs, the port management, in hotels, telecommunication companies, transportation and construction. On the other hand, IDPs and low-income host community locals can only find low-skilled work opportunities such as baggage carriers in the port, shoe shining, blacksmith jobs as well as cleaning jobs in the hotels and the residential areas. As explained by FGD participants, this gap is mainly due to their lack of access to education, but also because of a lack of social network and political representation. Displaced people and low-income host community members also face difficulties in accessing a loan from companies and large businesses as they don't own property or collateral, but also because they lack social networks and they aren't trusted the same way.

More than half of KIs and some FGD participants reported a gap between the poor and the rich in terms of access to adequate education. As reported by one KI, children from relatively wealthy host community households have the opportunity to study in private schools whereas children from displaced or less wealthy host community households cannot afford to pay for private schools and mostly study in public schools.



KIs and FGD participants reported that displaced households would need their children to work to cope with a lack of income opportunities, and that some children have never been to school. In that regard, one KI reported that the majority of the shoe shiners in Bosaso city are displaced children. Furthermore, displaced households were reported by FGD participants and a few KIs to live in inadequate shelters compared to the host community members, as the majority of displaced households live in houses made up of “sticks, blankets, plastics and iron sheets” or in the “bushes” with no running water and electricity, with little space and very poor sanitation. One KI attributed this difference to the fact that IDPs don’t own the land they live on and cannot build better houses because of the fear of eviction and lack of economic capability. Finally, several KIs reported that displaced people have limited political participation.

Mechanisms available to participate in decision-making for formal and informal power holders

IDPs participate in local political life but are generally confined to camp committees or local community leadership structures. Most KIs and FGD participants (both displaced and non displaced) reported that IDPs participate in their local political life through camp committees, meetings with NGOs, community leadership structures, and also to a lesser extent via youth forums/ organizations. However, KIs reported that IDPs were largely confined to these levels of governance and could not influence politics more generally as they weren’t originating from the neighborhood. Government representatives such as the police, district council and regional parliament members, ministers and members of the judiciary system, were recognized as the formal power holders in their communities by the majority of FGD participants and KIs. Religious leaders, clan elders and gatekeepers were then recognized as the informal power holders. Participants in five FGDs recognized the gatekeepers and the camp management committees to be the formal power holders in displaced camps. On the other hand, religious leaders, clan elders and gatekeepers were mentioned as the informal power holders by all KIs and FGD participants. In four FGDs, the participants highlighted the youth and women groups as being part of the informal power holders as they sometimes solve the problems in the community.

The majority of KIs and FGD participants expressed positive attitudes towards the representation they receive from power holders (both formal and informal); but few KIs and FGD participants reported that some of them were reportedly “only interested in their individual gains”. In half of FGDs, some participants recognized the formal power holders to be legitimate and that they were working to support and take care of the population. Some participants in displaced communities notably acknowledged their importance in terms of conflict prevention and reduction. In most FGDs, participants agreed that the informal power holders listen to their voices, but half of participants considered that they were lacking legitimacy, even if they play an important role in conflict resolution within the communities. In terms of provision of fair justice, the majority of KIs and FGD participants reported that they have trust in informal power holders because they are more accessible to community members, they are most trustworthy, less corrupted and fair in their judgment.

According to all KIs and FGD participants from both communities, the participants agreed that conflict resolution in their community is approached in mixed methods. **The people who were involved in justice dispensation and conflict resolution were the traditional leaders/clan elders who are using traditional methods “xeer”, which is sometimes combined with sharia law with the help of religious leaders. They also pass on some of the cases to formal courts when they conclude that it’s indispensable to be solved in the law courts.**

In almost all FGDs, participants reported that they believe the justice systems enforced in their communities are legitimate, saying the system can sort out their problems. Some FGD participants mentioned that they were most satisfied with the traditional conflict resolution than the formal justice systems in their location in terms of effectiveness and legitimacy. Finally, a few FGD participants reported to prefer Sharia law over the formal system because of their faith. All participants acknowledged the women, youth, religious leaders and clan elders to be playing a role in the improvement in social relations in the community. The KIs reported that the elders generally mediate disputes and govern societal relations, for instance when dealing with ‘diyya’ (blood money), land disputes, Gender Based Violence (GBV) cases as well as the negotiation of a dowry when one is going to wed, while religious leaders play a role in spiritual nourishment, they also lecture and preach for tolerance during the sermons.

Conclusion

Generally, the IDPs and HC interact often in their workplace, in educational institutions, playgrounds, religious institutions, public transport, health facilities, market areas, and in decision-making forums for elders from both communities during conflict resolution processes. Both KIs and FGD participants agreed that there are positive changes in the community that can wholly be attributed to the displacement, including: injection of new skills to the community, **positive humanitarian aid ripple effects in the wider community, with for instance the development and improvement of infrastructures such as schools, hospitals and water points** and the economic growth associated with the influx of population. Some FGD participants reported an increased demand for goods and services from the local traders, which have expanded the markets in size and offer. Besides these positive changes, several negative changes were also reported by the community members and attributed to displacement, including: **increased competition over limited resources and services, in particular health (for instance with drugs in health facilities), education and water sources as well as increased clan and sub-clan conflicts and land disputes.** Although religious, political and local community leaders are reported to do their best in strengthening social cohesion between IDPs and HC members as well as trying to meet the IDPs’ basic needs, there reportedly is a need to reinforce the peace building efforts as well as to increase the number of health and education facilities, water points and equipping these shared facilities adequately.

About IMPACT

IMPACT Initiatives is a leading Geneva-based think-and-do tank that works to improve the effectiveness and impact of humanitarian, stabilisation and development action through data, partnerships and capacity building programmes. For more information, you can write to our global office: geneva@IMPACT-initiative.org