

Introduction

This research aims to get an in-depth understanding of the key components of social cohesion in Cadaado, Dhuusamareeb 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, Dhuusamareeb 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

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

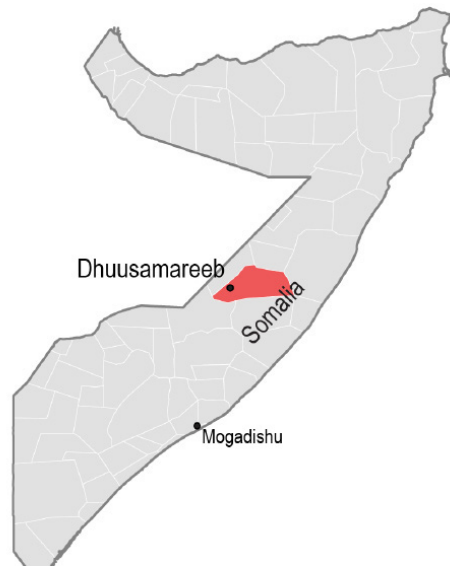
5. OECD, Social cohesion definition, webpage accessed on the 07/07/2019

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

Methodology

This brief is based on qualitative data collected from 8th to 18th August 2019 in Dhuusamareeb district, Somalia. The DSIRS Thematic (social cohesion) Assessment, August 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 Dhuusamareeb district, in Central Somalia. Similar assessments were also conducted in Bosaso and Cadaado districts in Northeast and Central regions in Somalia respectively. 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, 24 FGDs (of 6 to 8 participants each) and 16 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	9
Adult non displaced	4
Youth displaced	3
Youth non displaced male	8
Total	24

KIs

Type of participants	Number of KIs
Elders	4
Gatekeepers	5
Religious leaders	4
Local authorities	3
Total	16

Key findings

- Almost all KIs and FGD participants reported that most IDPs originated from within Galmudug region, most notably from towns and villages surrounding Dhuusamareeb.
- **Most FGD participants reported a variety of drivers in relation to displacement, including insecurity caused by the presence of armed groups and drought.**
- **Perceived safety and humanitarian assistance were the most commonly reported pull factors** that attracted displaced households to Dhuusamareeb according to all FGD participants and half of the KIs.
- **A majority of FGD participants reported that the government had played an important role in welcoming and helping IDPs but a few participants and a quarter of KIs highlighted a perceived lack of support from the government.**
- A third of KIs and a few FGD participants mentioned that HC members willingly shared resources (such as shelter, food, water points, latrines, health facilities, schools, non-food items and market places) with the IDPs.
- Three-quarters of KIs and half of FGD participants reported the positive impact that politics have on the perceptions of communities, mostly because **politicians participate in social awareness and fundraising campaigns, as well as in conflict and dispute resolution in collaboration with elders, clan and religious leaders.**
- The majority of FGD participants reported the **positive role of media on the perceptions and relationships between communities, most notably by broadcasting and raising awareness on the needs of IDPs to the local population and the world.**
- **Religion, language, places of origin and clan membership were the most commonly reported basis of identity. In almost all FGDs, religion and language were highlighted as basis of identity and almost half of FGD participants reported that their identity was defined by their culture.**
- **Clan conflicts were reported as a major strain on community's relationships** (as per half of KIs and during a third of the FGDs), as well as the competition over available resources and jobs and over humanitarian assistance (during a third of FGDs and by a few KIs).
- **A third of the displaced FGD participants mentioned that they still have connections with the relatives who stayed in the areas of origin, while another third reported no connection, while the remaining mentioned that most of their relatives were with them in the camps.**

Displacement patterns, push and pull factors

Almost all KIs and FGD participants reported that IDPs originated from within Galmudug region, most notably from towns and villages surrounding Dhuusamareeb such as Galo, Bula'le and Ceelhuur. Other towns mentioned by KIs include Eelbuur, Harardhere, Dabagalo, Ina mad, Buhooh, Af-agaag, Herale, Hananburo, Godinlabe Gadoon, Marsamag Baliguuleed, Kaxandho and Biyogaduud. A Few KIs also mentioned IDPs from Southern Somalia and the Ethiopian Somali region.

The most commonly reported drivers for most FGD participants in relation to displacement, were insecurity caused by the presence of armed groups and drought which led to the loss of livestock. This insecurity reportedly unfolded in strict rules and extortion of money and livestock through "zakawat" (tax imposed by armed groups to citizens), summary execution for those suspected to support the government and the forceful recruitment of children by the armed groups. KIs mentioned that many areas in Galmudug such as Eelbuur and Xarardhere were reportedly under control of those groups.

Perceived safety, presence of basic necessities and humanitarian assistance were the main pull factors reported by half of KIs and all FGD participants. Participants during a third of FGDs and half of KIs reported the presence of humanitarian assistance and shelter as other important reasons as to why IDPs chose Dhuusamareeb, especially since humanitarian agencies couldn't access their areas of origin. Half of FGD participants and a quarter of KIs reported the presence and availability of basic necessities such as food and water. A few participants finally reported the presence of education and health services or relatives as important drivers for their decision to stay in this location.

Top reported push and pull factors for displaced Households (HHs) in Dhuusamareeb

Push factors from Area of origin

Insecurity
Drought

1
2

Pull factors to Dhuusamareeb

Perceived security
Availability of humanitarian assistance

Measures taken to host displaced people

A majority of FGD participants reported that the government had played an important role in welcoming and helping IDPs but a few participants and a quarter of KIs highlighted a perceived lack of support from the government. According to half of KIs and some FGD participants, the main support that the government provided was through land donation or by allowing the temporary occupation of government land. Free education and health services (notably through the Hanano hospital), and water points were reported to have been granted by the government as per a quarter of KIs and a third of FGD participants. **Finally, local authorities also provided emergency basic services to respond to the emergency needs of displaced HHs when they first arrived as per a quarter of KIs and a third of FGD participants.** The role of the government in informing and alerting the humanitarian community on IDPs' needs was also reported by some FGD participants, as well as its role in providing security and help for registration as per a quarter of KIs.

The majority of KIs and FGD participants said that the host community took measures and gave an essential support to IDPs. Two-thirds of FGD participants and a fourth of KIs reported that the community gave emergency support such as food, water and clothes, while a third of KIs and a few FGD participants mentioned that HC members willingly shared resources (such as shelter, food, water points, latrines and amenities, health facilities, schools, non-food items and market places) with the IDPs. Finally, half of the FGDs participants and a third of KIs reported that some HC members temporarily hosted IDPs in their houses, or by lending some land temporarily. **Three-quarters of KIs mentioned that the measures taken by local authorities, HC members and NGOs really improved the living standards of IDPs,** while a quarter of KIs mentioned some negative impacts. However, some KIs reported that tensions may have risen over the sharing of humanitarian assistance, as it was not sufficient to cover all the needs.

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

Three-quarters of KIs and half of FGD participants reported the **positive impact that politics have on the perceptions of communities, mostly because politicians participate in social awareness, fundraising campaigns, and in conflict and dispute resolution in collaboration with elders, clan and religious leaders**. On the other hand, half of FGD participants and a quarter of KIs mentioned that politicians did not have an impact on the perceptions of the communities towards each other.

The majority of KIs and FGD participants reported the positive role of media on the perceptions and relationships between communities, most notably by broadcasting and raising awareness on the needs of IDPs to the local population and to the world. Nearly three-quarters of KIs and a third of FGD participants also reported the role of media in peace and security building, as they were reported to broadcast peaceful messages against discrimination and in favor of local solidarity. However, a few FGD participants, mentioned the negative role of media notably in broadcasting the allegations that IDPs were responsible for the outbreaks of diseases like diarrhea and cholera.

Pre-existing relationships

Half of the FGD participants and three-quarters of KIs reported pre-existing relationships between IDPs and HC members, most of them being business-oriented and clan/ relatives at the same time, with for instance IDPs bringing goats and butter in exchange of money or minerals mined in areas of origin used for making stoves. On the other hand, the other half of FGD participants and a quarter of KIs reported that there were no pre-existing relationships with the HC before the displacements. **Communities were reported to interact everyday and everywhere in the city. Their interactions were generally considered as fruitful and beneficial.** Only a quarter of FGD participants reported no interaction as they were usually living in separate and distant places. The usual venues of interaction included schools, madrasas, market places, mosques, playgrounds, tea shops, IDP camps and at the workplace. **Various benefits were reported such as increased business activities, forging friendships, educational benefits, cooperation on conflict resolution, skill gains and inter-marriages.**

Integration and participation in community's life

Almost all KIs and FGD participants indicated that they considered themselves integrated members of the community they live in, most notably via their economic interdependence and the voluntary work they were reported to provide. HC members and IDPs were said to be interdependent as IDPs were reported to work on the businesses owned by HC members, and are ready to accept low-skilled jobs at cheaper rates (which are often avoided by locals). Some community members were also integrated as they initiated micro-finance initiatives such as "hagabad" (ayuuuto) -rotating saving and credit associations- as per one KI. Half of the KIs and FGD participants mentioned that both IDPs and HC members participated in their communities' lives by doing voluntary work such as community services and philanthropic work (cleaning environment, hygiene promotion, conflict resolution, building health facilities and educational centers).



Half of the KIs and FGD participants mentioned that both IDPs and HC members participated in their communities' lives by

Definition of identity and perception of belonging

Religion, language, places of origin and clan membership were the most reported basis of identity. In almost all FGDs, religion and language were the most reported basis of identity and nearly half of the FGD participants reported that they were defined by their culture, while for the other half, clan membership was the most commonly cited feature defining identity. In a few FGDs, some participants reported that they were defined by their area of origin (geography) and during one FGD, participants said that they were defined by the fact that they were young.

The perception of belonging was mostly related to the area of origin (as per half of FGD participants) and the daily social interactions experienced by both communities, notably by playing sport (mentioned in a third of FGDs), clan membership and working relations (as per a quarter of FGD participants). Interestingly, in one FGD, IDPs linked their sense of belonging to their displacement status. **One FGD participant said, "we are displaced people and we belong to the displaced population"**. Finally, two FGD displaced participants reported having lost their sense of belonging as they were merely struggling to make ends meet, **"we are poor families who lost their livestock so we didn't build a sense of belonging but we just contributed to the increment of the population of the town"**.

Factors impacting social inclusion/ exclusion

In half of FGDs, participants mentioned that social interaction/relations such as neighborhood, friendship, sharing resources, sports, face to face meetings and socialization were fostering local integration in their communities. Education was also reported as a main factor fostering local integration by half of FGD participants, especially because HC members' and IDPs' youth and children attend the same schools together and they interact and become friends. **Marital ties were reported during a quarter of FGDs, particularly when different clans or members from displaced and non-displaced communities marry, it fosters social interactions because the union creates relatives and friendship among the clans/communities and increases social integration.** Finally, a few FGDs reported that factors such as investments, job opportunities, and cultural activities such as poem recitations and folklore music entertainment were fostering local integration.

The main reported factors bringing communities together and working in favor of the peaceful coexistence of communities were: shared religion, language and culture, as reported during all FGDs and by almost all KIs. Common clan membership (especially sub-clan) was also said to bring community groups together (as per half of KIs and a quarter of FGD participants).

Business activities were also mentioned by a quarter of KIs, as well as sharing the same district as neighbors, especially for those living in IDP settlements. **Few participants mentioned other factors such as sharing resources or places (playgrounds, markets, schools, hospitals), inter-marriages between community groups, and nationality.**

Burden of inequalities

A quarter of KIs and in more than a third of FGDs, participants indicated that inequality in wealth/property ownership was contributing to a sense of exclusion among the community members because some community members such as IDPs and low income HC households (HHs) are struggling with the basic needs while other community members possess properties such as land and houses.

There are also inequalities in terms of access to job opportunities which are linked to clan membership as per three KIs. Two other KIs connected the inequality on jobs/economic opportunities to gender inequalities, indicating male and female members reportedly don't have equal opportunities in accessing jobs/economic opportunities and also in terms of education as per a quarter of KIs. A few KIs believed that certain groups in the communities such as women, youth, displaced and minority groups cannot take part in political debates and decisions.

Furthermore, **displaced and low income HC HHs were said to have no access to loans since “they can't be trusted” because they don't possess properties** like cars as reported during one FGD. Resource scarcity was said to be contributing to a sense of exclusion by a quarter of FGD participants because many people in the community cannot meet their basic needs and those people always feel excluded/alienated. **Clan structure was also mentioned during a quarter of FGDs since clan minorities and also some IDPs whose clan members weren't living there, feel more alienated since they reportedly don't get as much protection as the major clan members.** Other factors mentioned by FGD participants include displacement, lack of access to education and reported expropriation of humanitarian aid. **On the other hand, half of the KIs and FGD participants reported that different communities face similar challenges.**

Changes induced by displacement in the community

While half of the KIs and FGD participants acknowledged the improvement of local services and infrastructures, some KIs and FGD participants reported the increased pressure/burden on the little available resource due to displacement. Almost all FGD participants reported a population increase in the city.

Half of KIs reported that displacement induced positive economic changes notably in the private sector, for example in industries such as hotels, local shops, hospitals, etc... where new businesses have opened and some became more profitable thanks to the increased number of customers induced by the population growth. In a third of FGDs it was reported that local services and infrastructures (latrines, lights, schools, roads) have improved thanks the humanitarian agencies; while a third of FGD participants also reported an improvement but didn't relate it to humanitarian work. One FGD participant mentioned: “Dhuusamareeb had two public schools before displacement now it has four public schools and these schools are built by NGOs when displaced people arrived”. A few FGD participants and KIs reported the injection of new skills and new businesses as positive changes.

Half of the KIs and a third of the FGD participants reported clan conflicts as a major strain on community relationships as well as the competition over available resources and jobs and over humanitarian assistance reported by a third of FGD participants and a few KIs. Lack of investment in services such as education and land disputes were also mentioned by some FGD participants.

While half of the KIs and FGD participants acknowledged the improvement of local services and infrastructures, the increased competition and pressure on the resources/ facilities such as schools or health facilities (with shortages of medicines and drugs as a consequence), pressure on daily jobs, as well as increased food prices, rents and dried wells have been mentioned by nearly a quarter of KIs and a few FGD participants as negative changes induced by displaced.

The majority of KIs and FGD participants acknowledged the positive role played by the diaspora in their community. In two-thirds of FGDs, participants reported that the diaspora positively influenced the community relationships. In particular, when the diaspora sends remittances to support their families in meeting their basic needs. They also reported an improvement in the local economy when the diaspora invests in local businesses which lead to increased employment opportunities. The diaspora participated in emergency relief activities such as the provision of drinking water, food distribution and other services when communities were affected by natural disasters, such as droughts.

Top reported changes attributed to displacement

Positive changes

Injection of new skills
Presence of humanitarian aid
Economic growth



Negative changes

Increased food prices
Competition over jobs and resources
Land disputes

Interaction with people from areas of origin

A third of the displaced FGD participants mentioned that they still have connections with their relatives who remained in their areas of origin, while another third reported no connection, and the remaining third mentioned that most of their relatives were living together with them in the camps. As mentioned during FGDs, the frequency of contact with relatives was **weekly or monthly**. Most of the FGD participants and KIs mentioned that they connect with their people back at home through phone calls while a few mentioned that they connect through social media such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Most of the KIs and FGD participants believed that their interaction with their people back home didn't change overtime, while a **few mentioned that their interactions became weaker/decreased mainly because their prime concerns were getting livelihoods, education and making both ends meet.**

Social mobility

Almost all KIs and FGD participants agreed on the possibility of upward social mobility, however, through their children who had access to better services and educational opportunities. All FGD participants except one mentioned that they feel social mobility is possible in their community, notably because their children will possibly have better services and educational opportunities. Displaced FGD participants also mentioned the fact that their children would be integrated and be part of the community they live in, as one displaced FGD participant mentioned: **“my children will have time to study and be part of the community and get good jobs”.**

Formal and informal power-holders

Participants agreed on recognizing the various government representatives as the formal power holders. However, with mixed opinions on their capacity to be accountable and hearing the people's voices. Almost all KIs and FGD participants, except one, reported various government representatives such as the police, courts, mayor, district commissioner, regional parliamentarians, local ministers to be the formal power holders. In one FGD, participants mentioned that armed/clan militia groups were reportedly in charge of the official issues in the rural town of Mareergur as the government institutions were reportedly not fully operational. Traditional elders/ clan leaders and religious leaders were reported as the informal power holders by almost all KIs and FGD participants while in two FGDs, participants mentioned gatekeepers as part of the informal power holders in their communities. More than a third of FGD participants mentioned that formal power holders were legitimate since they were officially appointed and they felt they listened to the communities, while another third reported that they didn't feel formal power holders listened to them.

A quarter of FGD participants said the formal power holders were illegitimate and they didn't feel listened to, by them. On the other hand, two-thirds of FGD participants believed that the informal power holders were legitimate and they felt listened to, by them, while a third stated that they felt the informal power holders listened to them but they are not legitimate because they don't have official appointment from the government institutions.

Conflict resolution in the community

All KIs and FGD participants agreed that a mixed system is usually applied in conflict resolution in their communities. According to the majority of KIs and FGD participants, conflict resolution in their community was mainly approached on traditional (xeer) method, while a bit more than half of KIs and a third of FGD participants indicated the formal justice system is used in conflict resolution. More than a quarter of KIs and a few FGD participants also indicated that sharia law was used to resolve conflicts in their communities. Elders/clan leaders, government institutions and the religious leaders were mentioned by almost all FGD participants as the institutions/individuals dispensing justice in their communities.

Conclusion

Generally, the IDPs and HC members 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, improved services and infrastructures (latrines, lights, schools, roads)** and the economic growth associated with the influx of population where **new and profitable businesses have been opened**.

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 facilities and water sources, increased food prices as well as land disputes.

Though the religious leaders, political leaders 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**. The IDPs also feel that there is an opportunity for their children to receive education and good jobs in Dhuusamareeb. In addition to being integrated into the community.

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