

The application of the IASC Framework in Somalia and Sudan

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Analysing how the IASC Framework has been used over the decade since its launch in 2010 provides some useful reflections for those working to achieve durable solutions to internal displacement.

This contribution explores the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons¹ (hereafter IASC Framework) as a compass for progressing towards durable solutions in contexts where displacement is linked to discrimination, power imbalances and unequal opportunities in accessing rights. The Framework articulates key principles, defines criteria for measuring durable solutions, and prioritises engagement with displacement-affected communities and multi-stakeholder partnerships between governments and humanitarian, peace, human rights and development actors.

Since its launch in 2010, the IASC Framework has become an authoritative reference on durable solutions. At the national level, numerous laws and policies reflect its components, as in Niger, Afghanistan, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Somalia and South Sudan. At the global level, the Framework's criteria were operationalised into the Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library² in 2018, and in 2020 the UN Statistical Commission endorsed the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics³ (IRIS) which include approaches to measuring durable solutions based on the IASC Framework. At the regional level, several contextualised approaches have been developed, such as the ReDSS⁴ Framework in East and Horn of Africa.

To mark the 10th anniversary since the launch of the Framework, this article reviews learning from the application of the IASC Framework provisions in Somalia and Sudan where there has been a focus on durable solutions for numerous years. The following sections discuss the operationalisation of the Framework's criteria and principles

in both countries. Concluding reflections on the application of the IASC Framework highlight a) the need for partnerships to ensure both bottom-up and top-down approaches; b) the overarching importance of the voluntary and non-discriminatory nature of solutions; and, finally, c) the need for continued capacity-sharing and engagement on principles and definitions to enhance coherence of response and collective action.

Case-study: Somalia

Resolving displacement through partnerships with humanitarian, development and peace actors has been a priority for the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community since 2016.⁵ Initially, the IASC Framework guided the roll-out of the Mogadishu and Hargeisa profiling exercises, which created an evidence base for prioritising durable solutions in the eighth National Development Plan. Subsequently, a selection of durable solutions indicators, taken directly from the Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library and the ReDSS Framework, was used by ReDSS and NGO consortia to implement three durable solutions projects. These aimed to generate evidence to inform area-based planning and reintegration of IDPs and returnees in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa.

The operationalisation of the IASC Framework in these locations has shed light on the importance of focusing on social cohesion and non-discrimination as crucial elements in the success of durable solutions interventions. However, a top-down approach to measuring progress on durable solutions is a necessary complement to the on-the-ground, bottom-up analysis –

November 2020

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particularly in order to avoid a projectised approach to durable solutions. The use of IASC Framework definitions, principles and criteria-based indicators helped inform government strategic documents, and the inclusion of IASC Framework provisions in national policies in Somalia was a significant development emerging from this approach.

Somalia's forthcoming National Durable Solutions Strategy is expected to expand the operationalisation of IASC Framework provisions across the country, thereby strengthening linkages with rule of law, stabilisation, justice, security and economic development. This more systematic consideration of the IASC Framework is a result of four years of engagement, a progressive shift towards government-led processes at both the local and national level, and the expansion of capacity building to international partners, government and civil society.

Case-study: Sudan

Finding durable solutions to Sudan's internal displacement is one of the ten priorities of the transitional government. Between 2017 and 2019 the government and the international community embarked on a joint endeavour to support durable solutions in El Fasher (in North Darfur) and Um Dukhun (Central Darfur) in order to shift from the provision of humanitarian assistance to more long-term, sustainable programming for internally displaced and host communities. This resulted in two pilot projects, which adopted an area-based approach to durable solutions and a five-step process that prioritises comprehensive evidence-gathering, as well as consultations and joint planning with displacement-affected communities, as the basis for durable solutions programming. The IASC Framework informed the analysis, methodology and joint programming design.

At the local level, in the rural pilot in Um Dukhun area-based action plans were developed to address obstacles to durable solutions. These plans were based on consultations with displacement-affected communities and with buy-in from relevant stakeholders, including the local authorities.

The urban pilot in El Fasher⁶ was a collaborative multi-sectoral profiling exercise undertaken jointly by the government, the World Bank, the UN, donors and INGOs (represented through the Durable Solutions Working Group) and IDPs residing in Abu Shouk and El Salam camps. For the first time, humanitarian and development actors worked with the local authorities to generate high-quality data, combining a socio-economic analysis of the situation of IDPs and their neighbours with an analysis of the wider city-planning requirements.

In these cases, as in Somalia, it was evident that local, bottom-up analysis and planning need to be complemented by a top-down, national-level strategy to ensure that all stakeholders agree on concepts, principles and criteria for durable solutions. Based on the lessons learned from the pilots in Darfur, a scaling-up of the efforts to support durable solutions planning is now underway in seven states in Sudan. This approach will subsequently ensure that in-country actors and the authorities will have results that can be compared and jointly analysed in order to design policy to support durable solutions.

Challenges and lessons

Ten years after its publication, the IASC Framework is widely known among, and provides a solid foundation for, organisations working on durable solutions. However, there are several challenges to be addressed and lessons to be taken on board when operationalising the IASC Framework.

An external evaluation⁷ of the profiling analysis undertaken in El Fasher highlighted that there was a lack of common understanding among stakeholders of the internationally accepted definition of durable solutions. In Somalia, by contrast, work had been carried out on contextualising the IASC definitions and principles and agreeing them with the government, which effectively underpinned the solutions-focused work described above. Work at settlement level has also underscored the importance of incorporating local understandings of these principles. Having a common understanding of definitions and principles

when embarking on durable solutions processes is key in order to mitigate differing expectations and inform coordination.

Often, actors focus on the geographic solutions outlined in the IASC Framework (return, stay, settle elsewhere), rather than on the principles of non-discrimination and the voluntary nature of reaching durable solutions described in the Framework, thus often overlooking the fact that reaching durable solutions is typically a long and complicated process over and beyond the physical settlement. As per the IASC Framework, “a durable solution is achieved when IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and such persons can enjoy their human rights without discrimination resulting from their displacement.”

It is of central importance to focus on the non-discriminatory and voluntary nature of solutions, and to measure local integration – whether in the place where people have found themselves after being displaced or where they have returned to – as a process towards overcoming displacement-linked vulnerabilities.

In both Somalia and Sudan, a combined bottom-up, top-down approach has proven important. Ideally, durable solutions need to be addressed conceptually and operationally, at both national and local level, as well as in official statistics and in operational data, in order to ensure inter-operability and greater effectiveness. These processes hinge on complex government dynamics whereby alignment of national- and local-level action may not happen simultaneously and may require sequencing. Key to these

efforts is the alignment of definitions and indicators, and in this area IRIS is making a very significant contribution.

Measuring progress towards solutions in both Sudan and Somalia was based on the comparison of the situation of the displaced population with that of the non-displaced population (rather than against minimum standards). This approach has proved an effective foundation when measuring solutions and has also underpinned the area-based approaches seen in both case-studies. Through these area-based approaches, social cohesion, which is not a criteria of the IASC Framework, has been identified as an additional key factor in local integration processes beyond the eight criteria in the IASC Framework – and one that needs to be included in analysis and response.

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1. bit.ly/IASC-Framework
2. <http://inform-durablesolutions-idp.org/indicators/>
3. bit.ly/UNStats-IRIS-March2020
4. Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat <https://regionaldss.org/>
5. This was at the heart of the Durable Solutions Initiative, which was supported by key stakeholders such as the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.
6. UNCT, Government of Sudan, JIPS, World Bank (2019) *Progress towards Durable Solutions in Abou Shouk and El Salam IDP camps, North Darfur Sudan* bit.ly/DSWG-North-Darfur-2019
7. Jacobsen K and Mason T B (2020) *Measuring Progress Towards Solutions in Darfur* bit.ly/Jacobsen-Mason-Darfur-2020



GP20 Compilation of Practices on Preventing, Addressing and Resolving Internal Displacement

Aiming to strengthen collaboration on internal displacement and catalyse further action for internally displaced people at the country level, the GP20 initiative has supported achievements in several ways. This includes establishing a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned on internal displacement. The GP20 Compilation of Practices to Prevent, Address and Resolve Internal Displacement gathers the best wisdom on internal displacement shared and generated over the three-year lifespan of the GP20 initiative, presenting over 20 country examples of policy and operational practice with lessons learned and recommendations.

This GP20 report will be published in late November 2020 and can be accessed at www.gp20.org, on Twitter at [@GP2064215284](https://twitter.com/GP2064215284) or by writing to gp20@unhcr.org.