

STRATEGY

SHELTER AND REFUGEE RETURNEES



Summary of discussions on refugee returns

The Shelter cluster convened a meeting with UNHCR and all active shelter cluster partners on Wednesday the 14th of September regarding the refugee return package for shelter and NFIs. Shelter Cluster has presence in most of the return areas with a strong focus on IDP shelter programmes looking at local integration (LBDKAM):

- Luuq: DRC and WVI
- Baidoa: SYPD, DRC, NRC and WVI.
- Doolow: WVI, DRC, NRC and SYPD
- Kismaayo: NRC, MercyCorps, ARC, UNHCR, IOM, WRRS and HAPEN.
- Afmadow: no shelter/NFI activities, but slight presence AVORD
- Mogadishu: UNHCR, IOM, NRC, DRC, SYPD, AVORD, Diakonie and ORDO

The following provides an overview of the discussion and the main action points to be taken by the shelter cluster and its partners. For more information, see minutes of the meeting:

- So far, **no direct shelter activities** have been targeting the refugee returns. Some partners have started to incorporate shelter and NFIs for refugee returns in project proposals.
- While considering support to returnees, it is important to adopt a **do-no harm approach** in order to avoid tensions between returnees and local urban poor and IDP groups. IDPs often live in over-congested settlements with limited access to basic services. Joint targeting will be crucial to ensure **peaceful coexistence in-between all population groups**. Shelter Cluster partners believe the approach of Sustainable Shelter Solutions to be over-arching for protracted IDPs, rural returns, urban returns and host communities (see SOF Shelter Cluster).
- There is a strong need for **integrated programming**. Strong linkages with Wash infrastructure, education, health and protection should be embedded in the approach. Livelihoods should be the key component that will ensure a sustainable and scalable approach.
- Clarity is needed on the **proposed integrated package** of refugee returns and what their entitlements are. Shelter cluster and partners agreed that the shelter package should differ depending if the return is urban or rural. Nevertheless, it was strongly re-iterated that the overall integrated return package should be of similar value to the returning population but should differ due to difference in needs (provision of informed choices and do-no-harm principle):
 - It will take some time before **rural returns** will have a good source of revenue from their agricultural livelihoods. Therefore, the rural returns will need a longer subsistence allowance. Due to access and security constraints, shelter partners will have difficulty in following up on a conditional shelter grant in rural settings. The host population often lives in earthen architecture and therefore shelter cluster partners consider an un-conditional shelter grant of 350\$ will be sufficient. A strong component of awareness and building back safer can be incorporated in Dadaab and at the way-stations.
 - In an **urban setting**, land tenure and the shelter will be crucial in forming a longer term solution. The house is often where your livelihoods start, where your family is safe and healthy, where your goods are protected and where the children can be educated. Therefore, a stronger conditional shelter package is considered of around 800\$¹ (to be further agreed) for refugee returnees. As access to a regular livelihood in urban centres is more evident, a smaller or shorter subsistence allowance can be provided. Investments are needed in the overall livelihood market in urban centres and discussions with WFP, FAO and development actors have started.
- **Land tenure** remains the most problematic subject. Although many refugee returnees in Kismaayo are claiming to have access to land, it needs to be further identified what this

¹ The Shelter component will be provided as a conditional grant, split according to the different stages of construction: foundation, walls, roof and finishing touches.

actually means. Shelter partners can only construct longer term shelter solutions if land tenure has been achieved. Strong collaboration with the Protection Cluster is needed to ensure do-no-harm.

- **Data collection:** Detailed data regarding refugee returns is scarce, both regarding the Yemeni crisis and the Dadaab returns. Shelter Cluster and its partners agreed that it would be good if data could be collected regarding the returnees where-about (including GIS wherever possible), their land tenure status, their intention to stay urban or rural, their former occupation and education degree... Shelter cluster will work with other clusters to ensure a holistic approach is envisioned.
- **Learning from experiences:** There have been interesting examples in Puntland where non-conditional cash grants (to Somalia refugee returnees from Yemen) were used to build a transitional CGI shelter, spending only around 350\$. As land tenure in Mogadishu is very contentious, investigation in rental subsidy programmes should be looked into. UNHABITAT in collaboration with Protection and Shelter cluster has looked into the rental housing system in Mogadishu.²
- **Local building culture (LBC) and Building Back Safer:** to reduce costs of construction.

Strategy for refugee returns

Shelter Cluster has expressed the importance to invest in the shelter component for refugee returns, but acknowledges to keep a strong element of do-no-harm to the existing population groups in areas of return. Due to the different needs regarding urban and rural returns, the shelter component will be differently approached:

- Rural returns: higher subsistence allowance and 350\$ of non-conditional shelter cash grant³.
- Urban returns: lower subsistence allowance and max 800\$ conditional cash grant for an upgraded T-shelter according to contractor prices.⁴

According to the Shelter Cluster, it will be difficult to advocate with humanitarian donors for more than an upgraded T-shelter regarding IDPs and refugee returnees. As pure CGI constructions are not accepted by many local governments as a longer term solution, SC partners have invested in hybrid designs with a strong component of building back safer and improved foundations. There are many examples in Somalia where improved T-shelters can be built through contractor driven approaches for around 800 dollars (hybrid shelters in Garowe, Gaalkacyo and Kismaayo). The design incorporates often a permanent foundation and an upper-structure where materials can be re-used for internal walling and roof ceilings in the final house.



² Rental subsidy programmes are complex in a Somalia environment. Caution needs to be taken to avoid artificial markets. UNHABITAT can contribute with further expertise.

³ Evidence shows that T-shelters can be built in Somalia owner driven with around 350\$. In Garowe a refugee-return family from Yemen was able to build a T-shelter (CGI model) with a fence for 350\$ through an un-conditional cash grant. In Kismaayo, shelter partners have provided a Charish (wattle-daub) structure with iron sheeting roof which costs around 350\$. Further discussions are needed to look at multi-sectoral un-conditional cash grants.

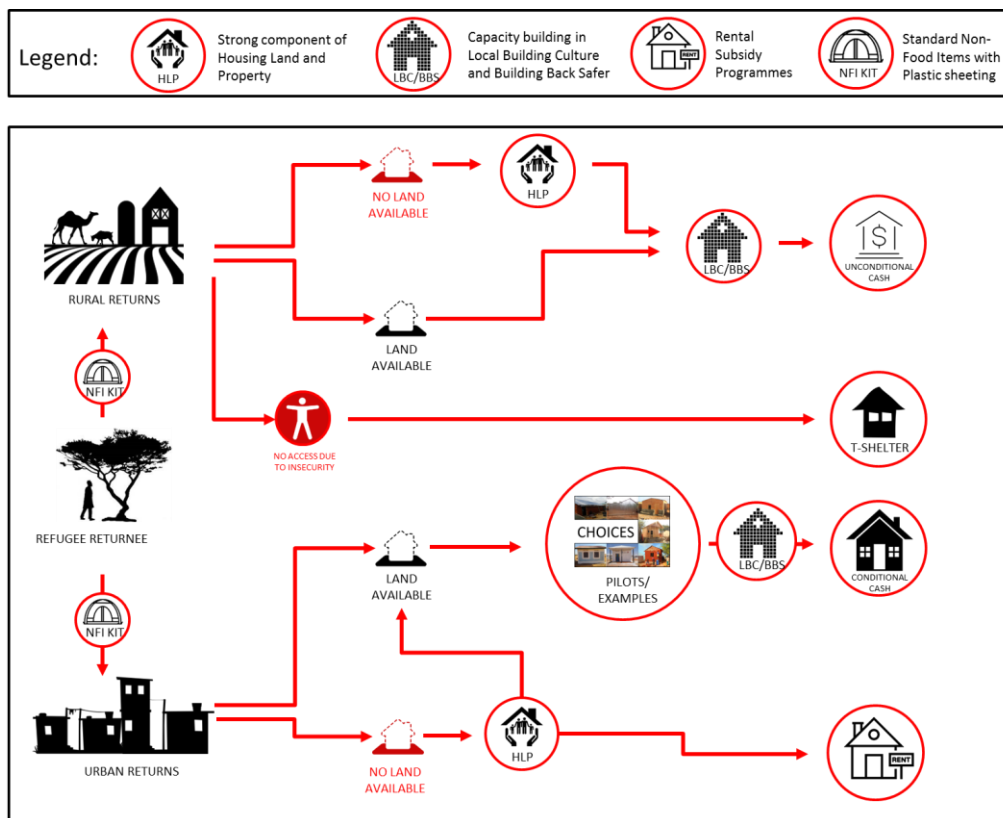
⁴ Cash is a terminology used that comprises both cash and voucher modalities. The conditional shelter grant in urban centres will vary in cost depending on the modality chosen (contractor versus owner driven approaches).

There are also many examples where certain beneficiaries have access **to loans and remittances**. Refugee returns also have access to an installation grant that can help top-up the shelter package. By providing information on different prototypes and providing real samples to the population, beneficiaries should have sufficient knowledge to an informed choice regarding shelter. It will be important that populations are sensitized on the pros and cons of each building technique and costs related: cement block house, adobe block house, Stabilized Soil Blocks, charish w improved foundation (wattle&daub) and CGI.

Land tenure remains the main problem throughout the shelter approach. An 800 dollar conditional grant can only be provided to those that have genuine land tenure. T-shelter kits could be provided as an initial shelter package, where the wood can be re-used in the final house design. NRC has done testing in Mogadishu where a 140\$ cash grant was provided to IDPs to make a T-shelter (for more information see dissemination workshop: <https://www.sheltercluster.org/library/dissemination-workshop-sustainable-shelter-solutions>. The T-shelter component for those that are stranded/transitioning in urban centres needs to be further elaborated as we assume that many refugee returns will be fitting this category.

Therefore, the SC prefers to have an **equal programme for both IDPs, host communities and refugee returnees** where a minimum standard is provided while leaving a lot of flexibility for the beneficiaries to invest in the final shelter solution themselves. According to the IASC framework on Durable Solutions (to be verified), 20% of the humanitarian intervention should be directed to local/host communities.

Strong emphasis on **sensitization of the population on LBC and BBS**. In Dadaab, in way-stations and during the project shelter cycle, it will be crucial to provide the beneficiaries with the different level of choices that they will need to take, first starting to look at the differences in-between rural and urban returns. Secondly, a thorough emphasis on building back safer and local building culture will be embedded to help them decide what kind of shelter they will be investing in. This section needs to be further elaborated.



Background to refugee returnees in priority locations (LBDKAM)

The Shelter Cluster's main target population for 2015 was restricted to internally displaced persons. Since the beginning of the year, the refugee return component has been added to the cluster coordination system. Since the end of 2014 until August 2016, in total 50,152 Somalia persons have returned from both Yemen (28,458) and Kenya (21,694).

The refugee population fixing exercise in Dadaab (July – August 2016) provided more in-depth quantitative results on the intentions of those that are willing to return:

- Out of 341,574 individuals registered in Dadaab, 283,558 were verified as physically living in the camps.
- 69,811 individuals (99% Somalis) expressed willingness to return, of which 57,957 expressed willingness to return within six months.
- Majority of Somalis (individuals) indicated to return to Kismayo_mainland (39,723), Baidoa (11,022) and Mogadishu (5,935).
- There are several areas where there is limited access from humanitarian actors due to high in-security, presence of AS and physical access: Middle Juba (9%) and Gedo (4%)
- Majority of refugees (heads of households) mentioned to have no occupation or skills (62%)
- Major three concerns to not move back: Lack of security (66%), lack of education (14%) and lack of shelter (10).

The weekly update of UNHCR on voluntary repatriation from Kenya since the beginning of 2016 shows that in total 21,694 individuals arrived back to Somalia of which 4,873 individuals have arrived back to Kismaayo, 1,183 to Baidoa, 3,283 to Dinsoor and 1,536 to Bu'aale. The Shelter asked for secondary data on the returnees already in Luuq and Kismaayo on the following facts to enable more informed decisions to take place regarding the shelter component:

- Nr of refugee returns having access to land
 - 803HH in Kismaayo have indicated that they have access to land.
 - 5 HHs out of 17 in Luuq have access to land. Others mentioned that they will share land with relatives.
 - It seems that the reason for many people to join IDP settlements is related to land tenure problems.
- Nr of refugee returns stranded in urban centres waiting to go their rural village
 - 375HH awaiting their scope cards in Kismaayo
 - Some awaiting their scope cards in Luuq, Doolow and Bulo-Hawa.
- How many female headed households are there?⁵
 - 418HH in Kismaayo
 - 11HH out of 17 in Luuq
- In which locations are the refugee returns staying now
 - Kismaayo district (Farjano, Fanole, Alanley, Shaqallaha and Guul Wade sub-district)
 - Villages under Kismayo district: Bulo-Haji, Goob-Weyn, Bulo-Gaduud, Beer-Hani and Abdulle-Briole
 - Villages under Badhadhe district: Kulbiyow, Hosin-Gow
 - 34 HHs are livening in Qanshley IDP in Doolow
 - 11HH in Madina IDP in Luuq

Data regarding the returns from Yemen is not up to date and many of the Yemeni Somali refugee returns have set up settlements next to the existing protracted IDP populations in Garowe, Bossaso, Berbera and other locations.

⁵ Information is not accurate. Further improved data on vulnerability will be necessary.

Rural versus urban returns

Data is still lacking on the intention of individuals/households to return back to their place of origin in rural settings or in urban settings. Further assessments need to be done on both target groups (rural and urban) to have an equal return package that would help the population take an informed decision what he would want to do. The Shelter Cluster believes that both packages should be equal in value, but should be differently presented:

- **Rural returns:** it will take time before the returning population will have benefits from the agricultural livelihoods. Furthermore, investments will be crucial in the provision of basic services looking at education, water, health and infrastructure. Without roads and bridges, the population will not be able to bring their products to the markets which are often located in urban centers:
 - The package should provide a higher subsistence allowance for the first X months.
 - As access in rural settings will be difficult to monitor, the shelter cluster promotes an **un-conditional cash-grant** (amount to be discussed but estimated around 350\$) in order for the returning population to build a shelter from local resources, similar to the host communities that already live in local (often mud-built) houses.
 - Land tenure for shelter should be less problematic, but there will be a strong need to follow up on land tenure regarding cultivation.
- **Urban returns:** an urban livelihood is totally different than a rural livelihoods. Therefore, a different approach and package should be presented:
 - Strengthening of the overall urban livelihoods, looking at a strong potential in the construction sector as a whole.
 - If strengthening of the livelihoods sector in urban centers is envisioned, the returning refugees will more quickly have an income and therefore the component of subsistence allowance will be less than in rural settings.
 - The shelter in an urban environment is strongly linked to a person's livelihood. It is an area where people feel safe, where children can have a good health, where education can happen and where people are able to lock their assets. Therefore, the shelter component in an urban return has a stronger value and a **conditional cash grant** of max 1000 dollars (to be discussed and agreed) can be provided.

IDPs and host communities versus refugee returnees

In many areas of return, the refugee returnees often end up in a settlement similar to the situation of the protracted IDPs. New settlements have been starting to form in Baidoa and Kismaayo. It will be crucial to have an overall vision where both refugee returnees, protracted IDPs and host communities benefit from activities related to refugee returns.

Further discussions are needed to find a good balance to ensure do-no-harm. The strategy should include the following population groups: 10% host communities, 40% IDPs and 50% refugee returnees. Ideally, according to IASC standards, 20% of the host community should be incorporated. In this case, as IDPs could be accounted as host communities, 50% of the refugee operation will include IDPs and host communities.

Shelter philosophy and strategy

Sustainable shelter solutions are a strategic focus of the SC. They look at short-term interventions to mitigate the effects of issues such as land tenure insecurity, IDP legal rights status, and low humanitarian funding levels. These however are issues that can only be resolved in the long term, and they do vary substantively in rural or urban settings. Instrumental to tackling long term issues, is building community resilience of IDPs and returnees. Sustainable shelter approaches need to be addressed as a holistic package and need a strong integrated approach with all other sectors (e.g., water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH, education, health).

The Shelter Cluster has identified 7 key concepts that show that “*A shelter is more than a roof*”: (1) HLP (2) Site and settlement planning (3) Owner Driven Approaches and community participation (4) Protection Mainstreaming (5) Localized Solutions (6) Building Back Safer and (7) Modalities.

The Sustainable Shelter Solutions approach is not only limited to IDP response, but can also be used for programmatic purposes looking at refugee returnees and host communities. The Shelter cluster has started several pilots focusing on 4 main approaches: (1) HLP (2) Owner Driven Approaches (3) Local Building Culture and (4) Building Back Safer.

- HLP: land tenure is crucial to provide longer term solutions. It remain very un-clear from the data we have received how many people have official land tenure documents. Furthermore, land tenure is also more than just a land title deed. Especially with the increased use of local resources (like rock, sand, earth and wood), a strong emphasis on access to local resources should be envisioned.
 - Land tenure in Kismaayo: a large plot of land has been provided to IOM for the construction of houses for mixed population groups. The land is quite big (1km*2km). nevertheless, there remain issues regarding the vicinity of the Amisom base.
 - Land tenure in Baidoa: although progress has been made, there will be a strong need to further initiate bilaterals with the government and finding suitable land for integration purposes.
- Owner Driven Approaches: looking at examples in Puntland and Somaliland, owner driven approaches (and the use of cash) have shown a better value for money than contractor driven approaches. Example: A Somalia refugee returnee from Yemen was able to build her own CGI shelter with enclosure (made of recuperated tin) for a budget of 350 dollars. We, as humanitarians, often have paid double this amount.
- Local Building Culture: the use of local resources and techniques can help in reducing the cost of the longer term shelter needs. Humanitarians should advocate for some minimum standards, providing different kinds of typologies that can be built. Furthermore, the SC has noticed after many different evaluations that the construction techniques like cement-block construction are not sustainable for the vulnerable population groups. The shelter solution should provide improved understanding on the costs regarding the different prototypes, remaining flexible in order for the beneficiaries to top-up through loans or remittances to an improved solution.
 - Shelter Cluster hopes to come up for each return location with different typologies to provide the beneficiaries with informed choices.
- Building Back safer: the minimum standards that are provided by the Shelter Cluster should include building back safer components:
 - In flood-prone areas, water resistant foundation techniques should be used
 - In cyclone areas (Puntland), more emphasis should be put on roof connections
 - In coastal areas, awareness on rust should be incorporated

