

Thematic Brief I3: Mitigating the risk associated with receiving communities engaged in large population movements

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Rapid mass population movements have the potential to negatively affect well-being, stability and safety in the receiving communities by modifying existing socioeconomic and cultural balances. Receiving communities often suffer the arrival of newcomers as a burden, as the influx of the foreign population results in competition for scarce resources, services and income opportunities, potentially leading to impoverishment, tension and conflict. Active efforts are therefore required to adequately manage mobility (especially sudden, large-scale population movements), in order to preserve the living standards of the receiving communities.

Actions

- ▶ Plan for the arrival of mobile people in the host community, in order to prepare adequate facilities and avoid the creation of informal settlements that put both newcomers and receiving individuals at risk. (See thematic brief 19)
- ▶ Support the capacities of local institutions to provide basic services, in order to avoid a drop in the existing standards of health care, education, transportation and water and energy provision of the receiving community.
- ▶ Multiply income opportunities, taking into account that the influx of population fuels the local market and economy. (See thematic brief 16)
- ▶ Address tensions stemming from cultural and ethnic differences, by building reciprocal trust between communities (e.g. by bringing communities together around small infrastructure projects). (See thematic brief 19)
- ▶ Adequately address existing conditions of need and deprivation to prevent situations of inequality that put the most vulnerable in the host community at a disadvantage when support and assistance are given to the newcomers.

CASE STUDY 19: Relocating cross-border migrants in Kenya and Ethiopia

In August 2012, IOM started relocating Somalis affected by drought and famine who had moved *en masse* to the refugee camp in Dadaab, northern Kenya. About 30,000 displaced individuals were living in deplorable conditions on the overcrowded outskirts of the camp, overwhelming the response capacity of host communities and humanitarian actors.

The work of IOM in the region focused on relocating displaced Somalis to an extension site in Ifo, which the Organization had been preparing for weeks and is capable of hosting 7,500 tents. The relocation enabled aid agencies to rationalize their provision of essential services, better assisting the drought-affected population.

Similarly, IOM relocated the displaced population to Ethiopia from the transit centre in Dollo Ado, where a measles outbreak was further aggravating the living condition of a congested population. Migrants were relocated to a new camp at Halewiyn, where additional shelter and other life-saving services and facilities had been established. The transport assistance provided by IOM helped to reunify families separated by the drought and the distance between Kenya and Ethiopia.

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ISSUE 4: Pastoralists

Pastoralist communities observe a traditional lifestyle based on mobility. They herd livestock over long distances, looking for fresh pastures in typically harsh ecosystems. They tend to occupy dry, barely fertile regions, especially in West and East Africa and Central Asia. In such areas, rotating pastures helps avoid the depletion of local natural resources due to overgrazing, by allowing ecosystems to regenerate between grazing seasons. Drylands such as scrub and steppe are among the geographic regions that are most vulnerable to environmental change, and it is expected that nomadic communities, highly dependent on natural resources, will be among the most affected by future changes in precipitation patterns and desertification.

Pastoralist communities have often practiced nomadic lifestyles for thousands of years, and the pattern of ecosystem exploitation observed in moving herds has been in use ever since the domestication of the first animal species. Pastoralist groups have often evolved alongside more permanent settlements, which host the markets for trading livestock and animal products for agricultural produce and manufactured items. As

migration is central to the livelihoods of pastoralist societies, obstacles to mobility seriously threaten their capacity to pursue a nomadic lifestyle, as well as diminish the capacity of ecosystems to regenerate. In a context of increasing resource scarcity, intra-communal conflict for water and land is growing frequent, especially between agricultural and pastoralist communities, which are often ethnically and culturally different.

Open routes available for nomadic movement are often threatened in conflict situations, where military confrontations can lead to border closure and hamper the access to grazing areas. In some cases, conflict has led to the destruction of water points along nomadic routes, hampering access to an essential resource for communities on the move. As such, movement across national borders is often seen as a driver of tensions by national governments, in particular because it tends to happen in informal, unregulated ways. While positive for promoting local economic growth, food security and local integration, movements, when uncontrolled, can cause loss of tax revenue and the spread of disease.

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Efforts to promote the mobility of nomadic pastoralists often need to factor in conflict resolution measures and intra-communal natural resource management practices that promote the sustainable exploitation of ecosystems and avoid tension over scarce resources. Collaboration among border authorities and the establishment of common cross-country frameworks can help create positive legal and political mechanisms to facilitate the movement of pastoralist communities across national borders.

Northern Kenya is an arid, drought-prone area heavily affected by the effects of climate change on precipitation patterns. It is home to numerous groups of nomadic pastoralists. The region, bordered by Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, is susceptible to ethnic tension and political insecurity. Frequent droughts deplete water supplies and pastures, greatly reducing the capacity of the local environment to sustain livestock and reducing the livelihood options of pastoralist communities. These conditions increase the need for mobility of local nomadic population and further fuel inter-communal conflicts over resources, especially along the often-insecure

borders. The past experience of IOM suggests that supporting pastoralists in this area requires protecting host communities' assets and allowing peaceful coexistence among and within the communities.

IOM is promoting sustainable ecosystem exploitation and conflict resolution through a variety of youth-led capacity-building initiatives focusing on safe migration, as well as the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and community-based natural resource management for increased productivity. The activities have so far included the following: 1) building the capacity of community members, especially the young, for strengthening rural livelihood and diversifying income sources; 2) developing small-scale markets; 3) drilling boreholes and rehabilitating smallholder irrigation schemes; and 4) providing credit for youth-friendly community stabilization projects. In addition, the Organization supported the development of community partnerships for the management of natural resources within and across districts, and encouraged a gradual change in land utilization and towards resilient livelihoods.

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