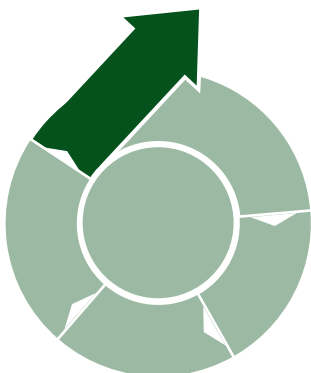




Thematic Brief 14: Implementing durable solutions – return, local integration and relocation

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In most cases of mobility induced by environmental factors, population movements tend to be reversible. Preventive migration is usually a measure people adopt on a temporary, often seasonal, basis, and displacement induced by disasters mostly leaves the door open for the return of the affected population to their area of origin.

Return should take place in a sustainable fashion, especially when the source area is undergoing a process of environmental degradation, in order to avoid secondary displacement. Whenever the conditions for the return of displaced individuals and communities are not in place (e.g. due to irreversible environmental degradation that has made the source area inhospitable or the presence of risk factors that cannot be adequately reduced), however, other options, such as their integration with the local host population or their relocation to a third area, must be considered.

Return, local integration and relocation should always be chosen freely. Displaced persons should not be coerced into, or prevented from, accepting any solution through the use of physical force, restriction of movement or intimidation. Neither should indirect coercion be applied (e.g. by providing misleading information or setting arbitrary limits to assistance).

Governmental, humanitarian and other actors in the recovery process should make sure that the conditions for a safe life are in place in the destination site when planning for the closure of camps, collective centres, transitional shelters and other receiving facilities. Sustainable solutions to displacement should lead to a safer, more resilient community, which can rely on sustainable livelihoods and effective social protection measures, and in which culture and practices change as people and institutions are committed to education, training and awareness campaigns on environmental risks and their reduction.

Implementing durable solutions is therefore a complex, long-term process of gradually reducing the needs of the displaced population. Unless they have long-term positive implications on the well-being of affected communities, return, local integration and relocation risk depleting the displaced population's social networks, local knowledge and capacities. Therefore, solutions should take into account existing socioeconomic and legal issues (such as the availability of income opportunities and the accessibility to basic services and land), as well as the evolution of ecosystems, including the current and future effects of climate change.

Actions for return

- ▶ Support spontaneous return as soon as the environmental and material conditions for safe reconstruction and recovery are in place.
- ▶ In case no durable solution to displacement is immediately available, support displaced households through the deployment of transitional shelters, which allow for improved dignity and well-being and reduce the negative effects of displacement.¹⁷
- ▶ Identify and address the main risk factors that pressure people out of their settlements in the first place.
- ▶ Prevent and mitigate hazards in the source area, in order to avoid putting at risk the lives and the safety of returnees.
- ▶ When confronting progressive ecosystem degradation, establish adequate measures to preserve and restore the local environment.
- ▶ Restore and enhance essential assets and livelihoods, by building back safer houses and infrastructure, revitalizing local productive activities and markets and re-establishing local services.
- ▶ Promote new settlement and ecosystem management practices through education and training, in order to create safer and more sustainable living conditions.

¹⁷ To learn about the Transitional Shelter Guidelines Project, visit <http://sheltercentre.org/node/4063>.

CASE STUDY 20: Enhancing the livelihoods of internally displaced persons and returnees in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, in 2012, hydro-geological hazards affected approximately 40,000 households, displacing about 3,600 families. Most of the families were willing to immediately return to their communities. However, with houses, assets, basic infrastructure and services destroyed, return was not always an option, and many had to remain displaced for a long period.

The post-flood intervention activity of IOM took into account the potential negative impacts of protracted displacement, which included uncontrolled urbanization, risky irregular migration and the loss of livelihoods. The Organization set up specific measures aimed at enhancing the long-term well-being of beneficiaries and at minimizing the effect of displacement on future disaster risk.

IOM assisted community members in building 200 permanent shelters for vulnerable households. About 100 families displaced by the floods received livelihood start-up packages, while family heads were trained in starting up businesses. IOM also supported community representative bodies in implementing community development projects, including infrastructure for hazard mitigation.

Actions for local integration

- ▶ Strengthen local capacities through training and education, in order to provide adequate services to a rapidly increasing population (e.g. shelter, health care, water and power provision) and avoid marginalization of newcomers. (See thematic brief 13)
- ▶ Promote sustainable livelihoods in the host community to avoid impoverishment; improve the well-being of both communities; and avoid overusing local resources. (See thematic brief 12)
- ▶ Ensure that mobile communities enjoy legal status and political representation in relation to the displacement context.
- ▶ Prepare and assist receiving communities, political and administrative authorities and civil society organizations for and in confronting and resolving inevitable friction (e.g. by using conflict prevention and management tools to enhance cooperation and fair sharing of assets), in order to avoid hostility, xenophobic violence and discrimination.
- ▶ Adopt community-based and participatory approaches in order to allow for dialogue and mutual accountability between newcomers and the host communities. (See issue 2)
- ▶ Promote the co-development of the displaced and host communities, by maximizing the contributions of the former to the local economy and making full use of their skills and culture

CASE STUDY 21: WASH services in communities of return in Sudan, South Sudan and Abyei

According to a series of IOM assessments carried out between 2010 and 2013, communities in the Sudan-South Sudan border (including the contested area of Abyei), have limited or no access to safe water and suffer from inadequate sanitation and hygiene conditions. Many villages do not have access to safe drinking water, often sharing a the limited water source with other villages or using it for both human and animal consumption. These limited resources are further strained by the large influx of migrants, beginning in the lead-up to the 2011 Disaster Referendum and continuing today.

IOM estimates that more than 1.8 million individuals have returned to South Sudan since 2007, most through the Sudan-South Sudan borders. Ongoing WASH interventions by IOM aim to reduce the strain on the resources of receiving communities and contribute to the sustainable reintegration of returnees, while also reducing the risk of further (secondary) displacement for the overall community. The WASH interventions include the construction and rehabilitation of water points, to improve access to safe water; the establishment of water management committees, to ensure sustainability of these water points; and the facilitation of community dialogues, to promote peace between conflicting groups, including nomadic pastoralists from Sudan. These WASH interventions are carried out in communities receiving the largest numbers of returnees; at present, they are being implemented in over 11 counties in the states of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Lakes, Upper Nile and Jonglei.

In Sudan, IOM intervened to enhance the capacity of communities to maintain water resources and, ultimately, improve access to clean water sources for at least 20,000 individuals, especially vulnerable returnees. Activities targeted returnees, IDPs and nomads and allowed for the rehabilitation, maintenance and sustainable operation of existing water supply systems and sanitation facilities in IDP sites. In addition, the Organization provided WASH services to vulnerable people in underserved rural areas. Training activities in hygiene promotion also targeted IDP communities in areas experiencing frequent disease outbreaks.

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Actions for relocation to a third area

As opposed to preventive relocation, described in thematic brief 2, relocation to a third area follows displacement induced by a crisis and, therefore, concerns people who have already been affected by a disaster. In addition to the issues confronted under local integration, relocation to a third area involves the following actions:

- ▶ Minimize the impact of a second displacement, by adequately protecting people on the move.
- ▶ Ensure that access to livelihoods, services and infrastructure is sufficient, to guarantee adequate living conditions, and avoid the production of new vulnerabilities for the relocated population, thereby preventing further displacement.

CASE STUDY 22: Relocation sites in Gaza Province, Mozambique

In January 2013, heavy rains fell for over one week in Mozambique, killing 46 and affecting more than 300,000 persons throughout the country. Gaza Province was the hardest-hit area, with some 130,000 displaced persons sheltered in 23 different sites. Dwellings and infrastructure, including roads and bridges, were severely damaged. On January 30, the Government requested the assistance of national and international humanitarian partners.

The majority of the affected people are willing to return to their communities; however, with houses, assets and basic infrastructure destroyed and services disrupted, return to high-risk areas is not always a safe choice. The Government has therefore proposed a relocation option to displaced households, offering them new plots of land on which to settle. To date, 3,500 families have accepted to relocate and are currently living in camp-like settlements inhabited by a combination of permanently relocated and temporarily displaced households.

IOM is conducting displacement monitoring in multiple districts in the province of Gaza. The main objective of displacement monitoring is to ensure timely and accurate data on population needs, as well as to track the caseloads of flood-affected communities and ensure timely humanitarian response. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of IOM captures information on the needs and gaps of disaster-affected communities in both origin and resettlement sites, in order to ensure a more targeted, coordinated and needs-based response and avoidance of duplication. At the same time, data collected through the Displacement Tracking Matrix helps to identify longer-term durable solutions for these affected communities.

IOM is currently coordinating relief distribution in the field and works with the National Institute for Disaster Management to ensure that assistance reaches those most in need. In addition, the Organization plans to assist affected communities by supporting government action to improve services in 25 communities in the areas covered by minimum Sphere standards (these include water, sanitation, lights, safe structures and accessibility, among others). IOM is further supporting the Government of Mozambique and Red Cross Mozambique through training actions in camp coordination and camp management, with a focus on upgrading resettlement sites (software and hardware) and creating planned evacuation sites with basic infrastructure in safe zones.