

Localisation of Protection Programming in Garissa & Turkana, Kenya

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Executive Summary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research study was conducted by a team of researchers at Samuel Hall, led by Nassim Majidi, Johanna Lee, Jared Owuor, Wendy Indira, with Franco Ohisa in Kakuma and Yussuf Hassan Ibrahim in Dadaab.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRS	Department of Refugee Services
EAGL	East Africa & Great Lakes
IASC	Inter-Agency Steering Committee
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO	International Organisation
IPA	Individual Protection Assistance
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and other sexuality & gender diverse people and communities
LPMF	Localisation Performance Measurement Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSS	Psychosocial Support
RCK	Refugee Consortium of Kenya
REHORI	Refugee and Host Resilience Initiative
RLO	Refugee-Led Organisation
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
VSLA	Village Savings Loan Associations

METHODOLOGY & OBJECTIVES

In a context of commitments to durable solutions, since the World Humanitarian Summit 2016 and the Grand Bargain, there have been increased calls for those who are closest to the crises to have more control of resources, more agency and greater decision-making powers. The process of “localisation” aims at creating more equitable, power sharing and decision making systems that support those in need of protection.

Localisation holds the potential to foster sustainability by enabling an environment where displacement-affected communities are able to handle challenges, promoting local ownership and strengthening self-protection capacities. The protection of refugees in Kenya is a critical issue due to the significant number of refugee men, women, children and youth in protracted displacement, due to conflict, violence, natural disasters, and other factors. Kenya is host to two of the largest refugee camps in the world – in Garissa and Turkana counties, known as Kenya’s marginalised counties in the arid and semi-arid land regions.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) acknowledges the importance of localisation in protection programming by noting that while international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have both the funds and the expertise needed to undertake advocacy activities, local actors – ranging from governmental actors, to civil society organisations (CSOs) and community based organisations (CBOs), formal and informal groups and committees, as well as the private sector- are well-positioned to carry the voice of the local community into the appropriate advocacy settings because of their deep knowledge of a community’s challenges and proximity to the community. It has enshrined localisation in its Strategy 2025 through its “Go Local” principle, which aims to engage local partners through “principled, equitable and collaborative partnerships [...] in pursuit of a relevant, effective and sustainable response.” DRC’s Kenya programme has articulated broader localisation objectives through its strategic priorities for 2023, which include the aims to strengthen DRC Kenya’s collaboration with local actors, foster synergies around programming and advocacy, and promote the protection of rights and peaceful coexistence in displacement-affected areas.

The main study focuses on the localisation of protection programming in Garissa and Turkana counties – and seeks a deeper understanding of the opportunities available and entry points for engagement with local actors supporting refugees and host communities. The research seeks to map out localisation efforts in in Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps, identifying entry points to new collaborations and engagement for more localised protection outcomes and draw out key information and recommendations from the challenges and lessons from international and local actors.

This study comes at a crucial time, with only one year left to achieve the goals of the Grand Bargain. DRC Kenya has commissioned Samuel Hall to conduct this research study to explore the opportunities for entry points and strengthening of localised protection programming in Garissa and Turkana counties, and to gain a deeper understanding of how to engage with local protection actors, and harness their positionality and capacity to enhance protection outcomes in the two counties.

Entry points for protection programming <i>What entry points and opportunities exist for stronger engagement on protection programming between DRC Kenya and local actors in Garissa and Turkana counties?</i>	Understand Local Actors and Barriers to their Involvement <i>Which actors and activities are currently in place to address the protection needs identified by local actors?</i>	Translate learnings into actionable insights <i>How can DRC strengthen its existing engagement with local actors? How can DRC better support local communities’ protection? What is DRC’s value added?</i>
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KEY FINDINGS

1. LOCALISATION AT A TIME OF INCREASING PROTECTION NEEDS

The research reveals a situation of heightened protection risks and need for protection responses in both Garissa and Turkana counties. All local actors interviewed are worried of rising numbers of incidents and a drop in security levels in both counties. DRC works closely with law enforcement and Kenya police, alongside the Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) to ensure legal resolutions are achieved, survivors are protected, and perpetrators are held to account, but the demand is rising with a disturbing surge in violent episodes.

Given the context, the success of protection programs depends on continuous learning, adaptation, and collaboration with local actors to address protection risks such as sexual exploitation and abuse and child protection through awareness campaigns and preventive measures. This calls for close collaboration with local NGOs, community-based organisations, and government agencies to leverage local expertise and resources. Differences have also to be taken into account as each county presents its own protection profile and a set of protection priorities.

2. COLLABORATION BETWEEN DRC AND LOCAL ACTORS AROUND THE DUAL OBJECTIVE OF PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

While the local actors interviewed feel better equipped to intervene on prevention and identification, they recommend that DRC continues leading on response and mitigation directly, while jointly working on protection coordination, referrals and resource mobilisation. Local actors specifically identified the following activities as areas for collaboration with DRC:

- Violence against women and girls
- Legal aid, rule of law, peace and security agenda
- Child protection and youth inclusion
- Diversity inclusion

3. LOCAL ACTORS' ADDED VALUE IN LOCAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMING

Local actors' added value is seen in their capacity to understand and discuss protection issues, operationalising referrals services, and improving access and trust building as they are able to overcome language barriers, and as they can draw on their own lived experiences of protection issues. Their work is largely complementary on GBV prevention and link to DRC's case management.

For local actors, protection programming is keeping an eye on refugees' safety and rights, as one stakeholder explained in Kakuma. This starts with education – both for children, youth and adults. It also comes with a responsibility to monitor rights, as often happens, in critical cases when someone is wounded, or when someone is discriminated against. Local actors are the ones who can take action to stop it – even if not reported, because they are there to see it. In Kakuma, a number of CSOs were created to be able to have representatives in the camp to prevent undesirable behaviours like fighting or harming others like block leaders as well as women and children. They take part in counselling and solving disputes between families. Protection goes beyond prevent and response however, and is about mitigation for local actors:

- Educating the community on self-protection measures
- Linking the community to referrals

¹ DRC, n.d., "Organisational Principle 2 (Go Local)- Summary" pp. 1.

4. DRC's ADDED VALUE IN LOCAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMING

Local actors view DRC's added value in prevention and identification, response and mitigation, assessment and monitoring. Local actors and DRC align on humanitarian principles and protection standards. They both perceive the importance of localising protection programming through existing and strengthened community dialogues, and a stronger emphasis on monitoring. Working with those closest to the most vulnerable, local actors believe in the necessity to build **women led networks**, and work with community-based women's organisations as an essential actor in localised protection programming.

Case management remains the key strength of DRC's protection programming. One of the most urgent aspects – as viewed by local actors – is the need for DRC to show that it can close protection cases, either through **formal channels or alternative channels**. They recognise DRC's strength in the process of development and implementing dispute resolution mechanisms given the lack of more effective formal mechanisms. However, they also note that **often times, the dispute resolution process does not take into consideration the survivor**.

“Local actors need to lead in campaigns to support survivors of domestic violence, gender equality...and prevent it. These organisations enable women to assert their rights and obtain the assistance they require.”
– KII DRC

5. NINE MAIN GAPS AND OBSTACLES TO LOCALISATION TO BE ADDRESSED

The main report details nine main gaps to be prioritised for removal and reduction of barriers to the localisation of protection programming:

- Gap 1: A networked approach
- Gap 2: Funding
- Gap 3: Freedom of movement
- Gap 4: Capacity building
- Gap 5: Trust building and shifting mindsets
- Gap 6: Private sector involvement
- Gap 7: Government involvement
- Gap 8: Beyond case management
- Gap 9: Infrastructure for localisation

DRC's strategy in Kenya will need to be tailored to address, remove and reduce these nine gaps. This also entails monitoring localisation and protection outcomes and setting key performance indicators . Out of these nine gaps, several are detailed in this summary (please refer to the main report for a full discussion on all gaps).

6. A NETWORKED APPROACH

Community leaders spoke of the need to work collaboratively, within a network that can advance protection across contexts: respondents in Dadaab asked for shared and cross-learning with actors in Kakuma, for instance. Community leaders see protection as being achieved through a series of preventive actions that require a collective undertaking. Respondents in Dadaab and Kakuma consider that localisation requires collaborating between community-based informal group, registered civil society groups and external players in maintaining the community's safety and wellbeing. These are the connections or networked approach that they find currently lacking.

To address this gap in community involvement, one of the main suggestions made is to develop norms and guidelines for community peace and security, to discourage and resolve disputes and confrontations, encouraging communal harmony. Only after that has been done can the work of the police force, local NGOs and international NGOs become effective on GBV, counselling, child protection and general wellbeing. Respondents suggested:

- Funding initiatives through both external support and community donations
- Accessing specialised services through stronger referral systems
- Gaining knowledge through cross-border and multi-sited learning

7. FUNDING FOR LOCALISATION

Local actors consider that funding streams are too slow to respond to specific cases they can assist. They also consider that those who hold the funds, in a partnership, also hold the power. In most situations, while there may be partnerships between INGOs and local partners, INGOs are the ones holding control over the funds, and receiving the funds directly.

Local actors request from DRC and INGOs to link them directly with donors, and help them build a direct line of communication and relationship with donors. When donors visit the camps, local actors feel that this happens “once in a while, for 30 minutes”, in a group meeting where they do not have the opportunity to directly expose certain issues or cases and work with them for possible solutions forward. encourage donors to invest in them. They are conscious that this relationship requires nurturing, over time.

8. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AS A REQUIREMENT

Although the Government of Kenya has passed a new Refugees Act in 2021 easing freedom of movement, this has not yet translated into practice for local actors. Without freedom of movement, local actors cannot access trainings provided by DRC in counties such as Nairobi, or go meet counterparts in Kakuma, where protection activities are more evolved, or further abroad in the region, in Uganda or Tanzania. Local actors believe DRC and other INGOs can advocate not only for their registration and recognition as CSOs but also provide their founders and staff with documentation to be able to move out of the camps.

9. GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LOCALISATION

As part of the networked approach, a central actor that CSOs/CBOs would like to engage more with – and **obtain registration and movement passes** from – are local government actors. As confirmed in interviews with DRS, local and national government are a key to referral pathways, service mapping – including child services and women’s services – and are the protection leads in camp settings.

DRS’ role in registering newly arrived refugees and providing their legal documentation touches on some of the greatest sources of anxiety, discrimination and violence. These legal gaps need to be addressed for refugees to be referred to services, for their businesses to be supported, for their movement passes, travel documents and police clearance certificates to be provided.

CSOs would like to act as a legitimate partner of local and national government, including in providing **temporary shelters and safe spaces**, addressing complaints raised by refugees, and **monitoring protection** at large. The monitoring recommendation was raised given specifically the concerns with the Kenya police on issues of GBV. Local actors would like to work more closely with UNHCR and other agencies to address the cases of police officer corruption, which often discourages survivors from reporting cases, and advantages the perpetrators who are ready to pay to solve a dispute.

10. INVESTING IN COMMUNITY DATA & PARTNERING WITH LOCAL ACTORS TO LISTEN TO PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND LEARN FROM THEM

Actors interviewed reject the idea that there is a data fatigue. Where there fatigue lies is in the fact that they do not receive any feedback, and do not feel like they are actually listened to, “they don’t feel treated as human beings” in the words of one key informant in Dadaab. A simple best practice is meaningful engagement, active listening of people’s needs, and engaging their participation and inputs, to build a strong relationship at the grassroots level of the existing community leaders who have the community information.

Community structures are also well equipped to provide stronger monitoring. For instance, block leaders play an important role in ensuring the safety and security of refugees communities. When problems or concerns occur, members of the community can report to them, for necessary action. This system of block leaders is an excellent means to preserve community protection and security, but also monitoring their rights over time.

ROADMAP AHEAD FOR DRC

DRC will need in both counties:

- **An engagement plan** for more clarity over the communication with communities, but also about DRC's plans with regards to local actors more generally. This engagement plan will need to include a statement on DRC's localisation approach as well as a community engagement plan

- **A mapping of local actors** from the various camps, an expansion of its local partners, with a more diverse representation of marginalised communities
- **A resource mobilisation plan** to fill funding gaps and enhance the space for local actors on resource mobilisation, introducing partners to funding networks and diversifying funding sources
- **A capacity building plan** to address technical skills gaps among local actors and DRC staff, with on- the-job training to fill the gaps and key performance indicators (KPIs) as well as secondments to facilitate learning on procurement, implementation, and financial systems
- **Adequate accountability systems** through different partnership models - at the project level, transformative partnership level, and networks/collectives with different levels of accountability.

To move localisation forward, given the nascent and progressing state of engagement by DRC in Kenya, a **localisation performance measurement framework can be adopted and adapted from existing resources**. The NEAR network provides such a framework to evidence progress towards achieving localisation commitments. The main report suggests the key indicators for an adapted framework for DRC.

ABOUT DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

DRC has been operational in Kenya since 2005 and is one of the United Nations Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) largest implementing partners in the refugee response. DRC is present in Garissa (Dadaab & Garissa), Isiolo, Nairobi Urban (Eastleigh), Mandera, Marsabit, Wajir and Turkana (Kakuma, Kalobeyei and Lodwar) Counties.

DRC-Kenya works in different sectors which include Protection, Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding and Livelihoods and Economic Recovery. For more information, please visit www.drc.ngo

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ABOUT SAMUEL HALL

Samuel Hall is a social enterprise that conducts research, evaluates programmes, and designs policies in contexts of migration and displacement. Our approach is ethical, academically rigorous, and based on first-hand experience of complex and fragile settings.

Our research connects the voices of communities to changemakers for more inclusive societies. With offices in Afghanistan, Germany, Kenya, and Tunisia and a presence in Somalia, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates, we are based in the regions we study. For more information, please visit www.samuelhall.org.

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