

Shelter Strategy for Dadaab Camps

1. Background

Dadaab region has been hosting refugees since 1991 when the first camp was established in Ifo by the Government of Kenya with support from UNHCR. Subsequently, two other camps were established in 1992 in Dagahaley and Hagadera.

Ifo and Dagahaley are in Lagdera District, while Hagadera is in fafi District. Due to the continued political unrest and civil war in Somalia, the refugee population fleeing to Dadaab camps now stands at 277,509 as at 2nd July, 2010 although verification of the population in Dagahaley is ongoing and this figure might change when completed.

In December 2009 after several months of negotiations, the Local County Council agreed to allocate 1,370 hectares for the establishment of an extension to Ifo camp in Lagdera District. This will be used for both the decongestion of existing camps and accommodation of some new arrivals. UNHCR has divided the 1,370 Ha camp into two phases Ifo 2 (350 Hectares) and Ifo 3 (365 Hectares) to accommodate slightly under 40,000 refugees in each phase. UNHCR intends to develop Ifo 2 camp in 2010/11, and Ifo 3 in 2012/13.

It became necessary after the difficult negotiations for Ifo camp extension to re-evaluate the way UNHCR and its IPs were implementing programmes in Dadaab refugee camps. Not only because we were requested by the host community and the National Environment Management Agency (NEMA) but also because UNHCR has realised that unsustainable management of large refugee camps threatened the very institution of asylum.

2. Aim of strategy

Although UNHCR is mandated by the United Nations to provide protection (and assistance) to refugees it is clear that no one agency can provide the (shelter) assistance needs of the refugees in Dadaab refugee camps.

Therefore in order to encourage synergistic tendencies this strategy seeks to provide a common focus and common objectives for UNHCR and shelter agencies operating in Dadaab to harmonise their assistance and provide more cost effective solutions to shelter challenges in an environmentally sustainable way.

There was a clear need for the articulation of clear integrated strategy that would address environmental factors, the decongestion of camps and the recurrent flooding of certain areas of the existing camps. It has also become necessary to try and provide a community based assistance and link assistance provision to livelihood capacity building and employment opportunities

This will encourage collaboration and continuous improvement as all agencies have come together to develop the shelter strategy and find solutions to common challenges.

Specific points of focus are the identification of strategies for increased and better community participation as well as linking livelihood opportunities through providing training, commercial sale of bricks, secondary transport of soil/bricks, etc

3. Assumptions/Constraints

There are several assumptions/constraints that we need to be aware of particular to the new environment we are working in namely:

- i. May not increase number of boreholes within camp boundaries from a total of 8 currently
- ii. May not use camp water for brick making and (animal watering) within camp boundary
- iii. May not abstract soil within camp boundary
- iv. May not use Tents as emergency shelter – UNHCR HC directive
- v. Will not transport refugees daily to fabricate bricks and construct shelters

- vi. The revised shelter methodology should, as far as possible, be used for future implementation in the existing camps as well as any future camps constructed

4. Beneficiaries

There will be primarily two main categories of beneficiaries for Ifo 2 which will require slightly different strategies. It is recommended that the relocation exercise be completed before new arrivals are considered. It may also be a good idea to define some basic qualification criteria.

- I. Somali refugees living in flood prone areas in the existing camps
- II. Newly arrived Somali refugees (define newly arrived from when?)

These will live in various situations namely:

- Registered refugees living in flood prone areas in existing camps with allocated plots
- Registered refugees living in flood prone areas in existing camps without allocated plots
- Unregistered refugees living in flood prone areas in existing camps with plots obtained illegally
- Unregistered refugees living in flood prone areas in existing camps without plots
- Newly arrived refugees coming into the camps for the first time (define timeline)
- Newly arrived refugees already staying in the camps with refugee families (define timeline)
- Newly arrived refugees already staying illegally in the camps by themselves

With all relevant stakeholders' inputs, we will need to define a system to identify and deal with all these cases in a fair and consistent manner. In terms of allocating a plot and construction of a shelter or provision of shelter materials the proposed scenarios will be as follows

Relocation:

- Registered refugee families residing in flood prone areas will receive a plot and constructed shelter in Ifo 2 – *First tier beneficiaries?*
- Registered refugees living in flood prone areas without allocated plots will receive a plot and constructed shelter in Ifo 2? – *Second tier beneficiaries?*
- Unregistered refugees residing in flood prone areas (define timeline) with plots will be registered and put on a waiting list for allocation of plots – *3rd Tier beneficiaries*
- Unregistered refugees living with other families in flood prone areas (define timeline) without plots will be registered and put on waiting list for allocation of plots – *3rd Tier beneficiaries*

New Arrivals:

- Newly arrived unregistered refugees coming into the camp (define timeline) will be registered and receive a plot and materials to construct their shelter
- Newly arrived (define timeline) registered refugees already staying in the existing camps with refugee families will receive a plot of land and materials to construct their shelter
- Newly arrived unregistered refugees already staying in the camps by themselves will be registered and receive a plot and materials to construct their shelter

5. Shelter Types

In the situations that will arise in the camps as described above, there will be need for two types of shelter solutions

- Emergency shelter for immediate stay – these will be communal or individual structures made of reusable materials (CI sheets, plywood, ceiling board, timber etc)
- Transitional shelter for longer term stay – mud blocks with CI sheet roofing

The relocation exercise will require the construction of transitional shelters for relocating refugees

Newly arriving refugees will require temporary accommodation before they construct their shelters

The shelter designs and material quantities will need to be discussed and harmonised among shelter agencies.

6. Sustainable use of materials

Several elements have been improved in the existing shelter construction methodology to make it more sustainable and less environmentally destructive.

- i. A soil abstraction site/quarry designated to mine clay soil that will be transported to designated locations in the new camp. After-extraction use will be determined with the host communities including converting to water pans.
 - At least two dedicated boreholes drilled outside the camp boundary at a minimum distance of 2 km to ensure that it is not fed from the same aquifer as that of the new camp. The water will be piped from the site to elevated water storage tank(s) in the camp. Within the camp water can be fed through the distribution system to tap stands in the communities (or trucked to storage tanks in designated locations).
 - No stabilizing agent would be added until and unless it can be available in sustainable quantities in or around Dadaab and field tests confirm clear technical advantages.
 - To improve the uniformity, durability and strength of the mud blocks the compressive force would be increased by providing manually operated Cinva Ram machines. Some trials will be conducted and if clear advantage is demonstrated it would be procured for mass use by refugees for block fabrication.
 - To further link environmental mitigation measures to shelter construction the provision of indigenous fast growing tree species to refugee communities that could be planted close to sources of water like tap stands, showers etc is recommended.
 - Mathenge bush sticks would be harvested and supplied so that refugees do not have to cut sticks and trees to fence their plots.

7. Shelter Construction Methodology

The shelter construction methodology would be as follows:

- Distribute emergency shelter materials to new families at transit centre on arrival in new site and provide them plots to construct their shelters
- For relocating families construct shelters for them in new camp and move them directly into shelters
- Soil supplied to designated dump sites at block level in the camp and secondary transport to individual plots
- Water provided for refugees through dedicated boreholes outside the camp and distribution through network or through water tankering.
- Refugees fabricate their blocks with Cinva Ram machines if pilot successful
- Foundations set out and constructed through IP construction teams – including host community

- Construction of walls by refugees – improved structures, less use of mud for plastering and less repetitive maintenance
- Construction of roofing through IP construction teams – including host community
- Finishing by refugees – plastering, flooring – fabrication of identification plaque for each shelter by IP

8. Beneficiary Consultation/Participation

The importance of beneficiary participation and consultation in the process has been regularly emphasised and efforts will be made to ensure and increase this participation. Changes in the shelter methodology will be explained to the refugees through meetings with refugees as well as community leaders and any constructive suggestions and comments incorporated into the final strategy.

In order to encourage better community participation refugees would be required to sign a simple 'contract' between them and the IP for the provision of the shelters. This document will clearly spell out all parties' responsibilities, obligations and liabilities.

Incentives will also be looked into to encourage increased beneficiary participation and might include provision of tools for construction, incentives like extra NFIs and Food? items for the timely completion of shelters etc

9. Material Provision and Logistics

In order to succeed at the new methodology to be introduced it is necessary to identify and provide the required logistical support. Several areas have been identified like the transportation of soil that will require additional tipper trucks and front end loaders initially to be rented and later bought to increase the fleet available to IPs. Soil transport contracts would also be provided for the host community contractors to provide livelihood opportunities for the community.

Similarly assurance of fuel and spare parts for the maintenance of all mechanical equipment needs to be budgeted. During planning it will be necessary to consider seasonal constraints on the roads especially when it rains and roads become impassable. IPs will be advised to consider joint bulk procurement as far as their internal procurement procedures allow so that savings can be made on procurement, transportation as well as time taken for delivery.

10. Implementing Arrangements and staffing

In order for this change in methodology to be successful the resources need to be made available to meet our objectives for 2010 and beyond. There have been three Shelter IPs identified so far that are interested in providing shelter assistance in Ifo extension, LWF, NRC and DRC. The capacity of these IPs will be evaluated and realistic negotiations carried out on activities to be implemented till the end of 2010 and then for 2011. Staffing plans need to be critically examined factoring in lead times for recruitment and looking into local labour opportunities.

Proposals would also be solicited for staffing needs in Camp Management agencies for the monitoring of land use (illegal structures) as well as ensuring that the problems of refugees selling plots of land and communal land grabbing are addressed and monitored.

11. Timelines – define schedule of works

Timelines would be determined with IPs to ensure realistic implementation rates. These would be short enough (3 – 6 mths) to be properly monitored and agreed between IP and UNHCR. These would be for the provision of local and imported materials as well as renting or purchase of machinery and construction materials. The idea is to ensure that break in materials pipelines are eliminated or minimised as much as possible.

12. Shelter Information Management and reporting

The shelter information management strategy will involve collecting and sharing information with our beneficiaries, other units in UNHCR and donors each with its own specific requirements and level of detail. This requires defining the formats and frequency in which information will be shared depending on the audience it is intended for.

Regarding refugees the key messages we need to impart on our shelter methodology should be defined. Information on the relocation process and shelter agencies responsibilities and obligations need to be defined and shared as well as responsibilities of the refugees themselves.

Information on allocation of plots, shelter and plot handover procedures, decommissioning of shelters will be defined and shared with our Field Staff as well as with refugees. The responsibilities of each party UNHCR, IP and refugee in the shelter methodology will be clearly defined and shared with all parties.

Information for donors will include Information on activities implemented through IPs as well as human interest stories on how provision of more durable shelters in a properly planned camp has improved the lives of ordinary refugees and hopefully made camp management less challenging.