

Summary of Key Trends from Consultations with IDPs and Host Communities

I. Introduction

When, because of the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, the Panel found itself unable to travel to the field to hear directly from internally displaced persons and host communities, arrangements were made for these consultations to be carried out on the Panel's behalf by partners with a presence on the ground. **Five UN Agencies and 32 NGOs**¹ supported this consultation process in 24 countries across the world.²

This note provides a summary of the results from the **22 countries** that had submitted reports by mid November 2020. Where there were differences in views of IDPs across ages or genders, or between IDPs and host community members, these points of difference are noted.

The results of these consultations have been incorporated into the Panel's internal analysis and framing documents and will continue to serve as a critical guide going forward.

II. Background

In May 2020, the Secretariat approached a number of UN Agencies and NGOs to ask for their support in carrying out consultations with IDPs and host community populations. The Secretariat asked the organizations to identify where they would have the capacity to undertake consultations, with a view to achieving a balance of countries affected by conflict, other types of violence (e.g. criminal or gang violence), and disasters. Following this discussion, an initial list of 26 countries was identified, which was subsequently narrowed to 24 due to partner capacity.

The Secretariat provided partners with eight themes³ that it requested all consultations touch upon, as well as a series of guiding questions to be contextualized on the ground in each location. Partners were asked to ensure that people across all ages, genders, and diversities had a chance to express their views, as well as members of the host communities. Partner consultations were conducted from June 2020 until October 2020 using a combination of in-person and virtual focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and household surveys, all respecting COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Partners submitted their results in different formats, some sharing raw data (qualitative and quantitative) and some sharing summary reports. The Secretariat subsequently processed the materials in order to obtain metadata such as age, gender, and diversity of participants, host community and IDP statuses, and whether participants were displaced by conflict, violence, or disaster.

¹ At global level, the Secretariat coordinated with ACT Alliance, CARE, DRC, IOM, NRC, Plan International, UNHCR, and IOM. Additional partners supported these efforts at country-level.

² Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Iraq, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen

³ Durable solutions, prevention, participation and accountability, protection, coordination, the nexus, AGD-specific needs, and COVID. IDPs were also invited to share any other priorities at the end of each consultation.

In total, **results were received from 22 countries**. Over **12,500 IDP and host community members**⁴ were consulted, of whom **53% were men, 42% were women, 2% were girls, and 3% were boys**.⁵ Partners consulted IDPs displaced by conflict in 17 countries, by other types of violence in 3 countries, and by disasters in 6 countries.⁶

Due to partner capacity and the specific methodologies used by the different partner organizations, the numbers of IDPs and host community members consulted ranged from a few dozen in some countries to over a thousand in others. Consultation results were analyzed first at the country level, and then trends were analyzed across countries.

Age and Gender Breakdown of People Consulted

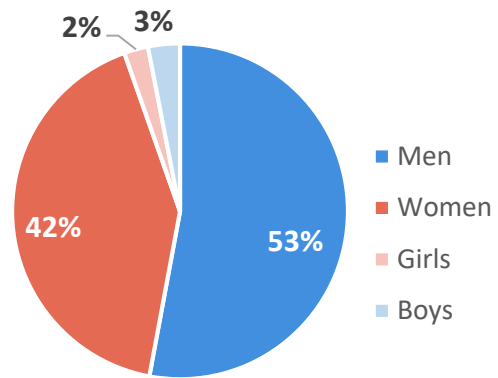
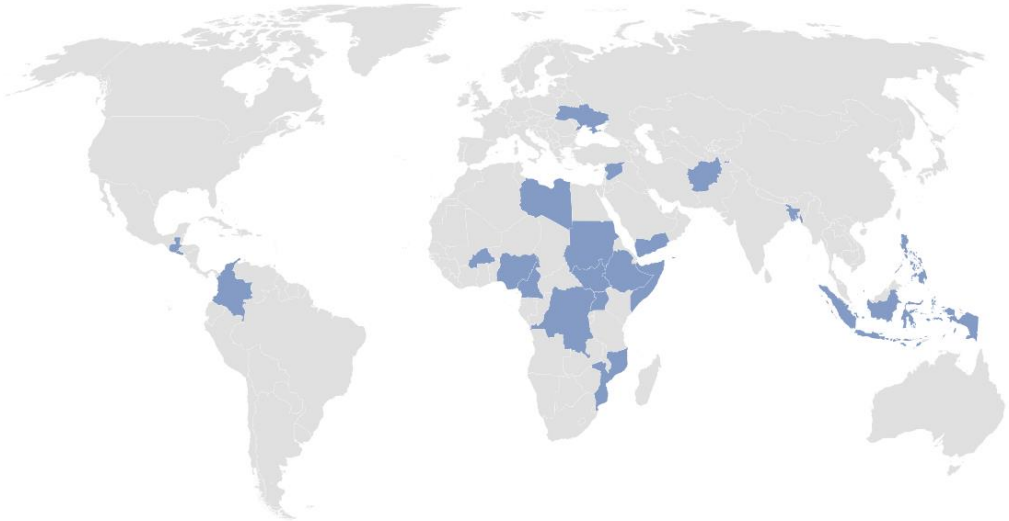


Image: Countries where consultations were conducted.



III. Summary of Response Trends

The following sections provide an overview of key trends in responses on the eight themes that were used to frame the consultations. Each section includes in *italics* some of the questions that were used to frame the discussion or interview. They are followed by a summary of key trends in responses across the 22 countries from which responses were received.

⁴ To avoid artificially inflating numbers, only Heads of Households were counted towards the 8,000 in cases where partners used household surveys.

⁵ The gender differentiation is slightly skewed as 10.5% of IDPs and host community members were consulted through household surveys, and in those cases, we have assumed that the Head of Household (who were predominantly men) was the primary respondent.

⁶ This includes four countries in which IDPs displaced by conflict/violence and IDPs affected by disaster were consulted.

1. Durable Solutions

“What do you hope your life will look like in five years? Will you have returned home? Settled in this area? Moved somewhere else? What would need to happen for this to be possible (and successful)?”

- **IDPs in a slight majority of countries reported that they hope to return to their former homes.** Many IDPs noted that regardless of the challenges they face in returning, the connection to their ancestral land, communities and former livelihoods remains an overriding draw. The ability of the IDPs to return was, however, often closely associated with three key factors:
 1. **Security.** IDPs displaced by conflict and violence overwhelmingly highlighted security as the primary precondition for effective solutions.
 2. **Livelihoods.** The specific livelihood priorities support varied between locations, but across both conflict and disaster settings IDPs stressed the importance of being able to earn an income and be self-sufficient.
 3. **Housing, land and infrastructure.** In both conflict and disaster settings, permanent housing (and sometimes land and infrastructure) was noted as being crucial. Many IDPs called on their governments to provide or subsidize their housing as well as rehabilitate infrastructure and services.
- **A significant number of IDPs expressed a preference to integrate locally or settle elsewhere.** This was linked to a number of causes: in both disasters and situations of conflict/violence, IDPs sometimes doubted whether the situation would ever be sufficiently safe in their areas of origin. Other IDPs, particularly those who had settled in urban areas, also expressed a preference for the life they had established in their place of displacement. As with return, however, IDPs reported that the success of their integration or settlement would be largely dependent on their ability to find a livelihood, permanent housing and/or land, and in some cases, the ability to access **education for their children.**

“Everyone has the intention to return... but my place of origin is not safe, there are a lot of tensions. That is why we are not thinking of returning in the near future.”

– Male IDP, Iraq

“The factories and other economic projects... that were providing jobs, were all destroyed. If population returns, they will be jobless as there is not any functioning sector of economy and even the palms/date farms were burnt.”

– Male IDP, Libya

For host community members: “What has been the impact of hosting displaced families in your community? If displaced families remain in this area for the next few years, are there any specific steps that would need to be taken to support positive relations between the displaced and host communities?”

- **Host community members expressed empathy for IDPs, but often indicated that they feel overstretched.** Most of the host community members reported that they receive little or no assistance and suggested that if IDPs remain long-term, the host community will need greater support. Some host community members noted that they faced increased strains on livelihoods and housing availability due to the high numbers of IDPs settling in the local community who are willing to work for lower rates.

2. Prevention

“Are there steps the government or others could have taken to enable you to remain safely in your home?”

- In settings characterized by conflict and violence, IDPs overwhelmingly noted that action by the state to provide **better security** or **promote dialogue** could have potentially mitigated their need to flee their homes. In a number of cases, however, IDPs expressed doubts about the **willingness of the state** to do so – whether because of perceived corruption among the leadership and police or because of discriminatory attitudes within the government. Some IDPs highlighted the need to disarm communities and provide **education and livelihoods** to offer **alternatives to fighting**.

“If the government had provided security in the original villages, the displacement would not have occurred.”

– Male IDP, Sudan

“Many young people lose themselves because of lack of opportunities.”

– Male IDP, El Salvador

- In areas of disaster-induced displacement, IDPs called for both better **physical protection from disasters** (e.g. flood-control dams, cyclone shelters) as well as better **sensitization** of communities around disaster risks. Some IDPs noted that it was only after a major disaster occurred that they began to receive awareness-raising sessions on risks and mitigation.

3. Participation and Accountability to IDPs and Host Communities

“Do you feel your voice is heard by the Government? And also by response organizations?”

- **Many IDPs and host community members reported that they do not feel heard** by their governments. Although with slightly less frequency, IDPs also reported challenges in being heard by response organizations. In both cases, particularly high numbers of **women, LGBTI, youth, indigenous and marginalized populations, and host community members report feeling excluded**.
- Comments from IDPs indicated that participation and feedback mechanisms within camps and IDP settlements were often **carried over from the place of origin**, bringing with it associated benefits and pitfalls – in some cases, this led to a predictable avenue through which IDPs could voice their opinions, whereas in other cases it appears to have resulted in the exclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups.

“We’re feeling as if we are not citizens of our own country as no information is shared with us”

– Host community member, South Sudan

“How would you like to have a say and be part of decision-making?”

- **IDPs voiced an interest to play a more active and direct role in decision-making**, and to have more frequent, face-to-face opportunities to engage. Some IDPs also suggested the value of strengthening representation mechanisms with both the government and aid organizations. In particular, IDPs stressed that they should be consulted on the types of assistance and support provided, as well who is most in need of assistance.
- Importantly, IDPs also reported that **follow-up was critical**, and noted that on many occasions their inputs and concerns appear to go unanswered.

“We believe the best way to convey a woman’s voice is to give women a share of 40% of the jobs and enable women to participate in decision-making bodies as stipulated in the constitutional document. To date, Darfurian women do not have representation in any of the decision-making bodies.”

– Female IDP, Sudan

“Do you feel that you have opportunities to safely raise feedback or complaints about the government, response organizations or others?”

- **Many IDPs reported that they do not feel they can raise complaints** (particularly against governments) for fear of retaliation or compromising their access to assistance. IDPs suggested that creating safe, accessible mechanisms to make complaints would improve their ability to voice their concerns.

“We never said anything when the opportunity comes because of the fear of being isolated. We need to form a group to talk in the meeting for the betterment of the community.”

– Adult IDP, Bangladesh

4. Protection

“Do you feel safe in this location? Why or why not?”

- **Some IDPs, particularly women, youth, and marginalized groups, reported that they feel unsafe in their place of displacement.** These concerns were more acute in conflict-affected locations but were also present in disaster contexts. Very often these concerns were associated with sexual and gender-based violence, but also about risks for young people who may turn to harmful activities (e.g. gangs or substance abuse) for lack of opportunities and education.
- In disaster contexts, some IDPs expressed doubts about whether sufficient assessments and precautions had been taken to ensure that the new places of settlement were **safe from future disaster risks**.
- Across contexts, people with disabilities, LGBTI individuals, and people from marginalized groups reported facing **discrimination** – both from other IDPs and from host communities – which at times influenced their **ability to access services** or move freely. Freedom of movement was also heavily affected in some cases by whether the IDP had civil documents.

Spotlight: Lack of civil documentation has far-reaching impacts

“The IDPs do not have full freedom of movement as people who do not have a personal ID will be stopped at the checkpoint and sometimes might be put in detention, therefore, they cannot travel to other cities in search for job opportunities.” IDP in Yemen

Many IDP families left their personal belongings and civil documentation behind when they fled their homes. The loss of identification and documentation can have significant and lasting impacts for IDP families: it can result in restrictions in their ability to move freely within their own countries, an inability to exercise their agency and rights (for example, to get a job or enroll in school), and difficulty accessing services and opportunities. At worst, it can lead to discrimination and abuse.

- While some IDPs indicated that they would contact the police if they had a problem, most said they either did not know who they would turn to or would contact staff from UN agencies or NGOs. Some IDPs also reported that they would contact their local leader or IDP representative.

“The woman’s voice is always absent, and even if a woman is subjected to the crime of rape, she does not have the right to report it/open a case without the consent of her family. Rape cases are often ignored for fear of shame.”

– Adult IDP, Sudan

5. Coordination

“Do you feel that response organizations are coordinating and communicating effectively with one another? Why or why not?”

- **There were different views expressed by IDPs about the effectiveness of response coordination.** Some IDPs had positive impressions, highlighting that organizations sometimes work together to deliver food and other items. Others expressed doubts about coordination, noting that some IDPs received assistance twice while others received nothing at all. IDPs noted that sometimes one region received more focus than others and that assistance should be available to all IDPs.
- Views on coordination also appear to be influenced by the extent to which the respondents felt their assistance needs were being met, as well as the level of exposure the individual had had to different humanitarian actors.

“All projects are focused on the conflict zone. But IDPs residing in different locations also face multiple unresolved issues. Assistance to IDPs should be available throughout Ukraine.”

– Adult IDP, Ukraine

“Some people get relief twice during/after disaster while others starving”

– Female IDP, Bangladesh

6. Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

“Do you feel there is the right balance between the emergency assistance you receive (food, shelter, etc) and assistance or services aimed at longer term recovery and development (reconstruction, livelihoods, etc)?”

- **Views varied on whether there was an appropriate balance between emergency assistance and longer-term support.** Many IDPs, particularly those in countries affected by ongoing conflict or violence, reported that the **humanitarian assistance they received was insufficient** to meet their day-to-day needs, which they expressed as a critical priority.
- Other IDPs, particularly those in disaster-affected settings and areas that historically were more stable, stressed the need for recovery-oriented support – particularly around **livelihoods** and **permanent housing**. Across contexts, youth emphasized **education**.

“We still require emergency assistance for our immediate needs, which should be addressed first.”

– Female IDP, Sudan

Spotlight: Livelihoods and entrepreneurship

“If I was given a loan from the government or an organization, I would start a profitable small business to achieve my personal and financial ambitions and get out of these difficult circumstances. The capital available to me is not enough to actualize my business or take real business classes about entrepreneurship. One of my dreams projects is to open a clothing and home decor store or a women’s beauty store.” –Female IDP, Iraq

IDPs across multiple countries expressed a strong interest in sustainable livelihoods or income generating activities so they can provide for themselves and their families. In some cases this involved relaunching their former livelihoods, while in other cases, IDPs were interested in new opportunities. IDPs particularly mentioned entrepreneurship and opening small businesses to earn income and were interested in small business loans for capital or classes.

Some IDPs also noted that by opening a business, they can help the community as well as themselves. *“I need to be the one that starts the action, to come up with new strategies to start a business so that people will follow me. I need to be a role model to my community where my main priority is to encourage local production.”* IDP in Somalia.

“Is there a need for peacebuilding or reconciliation in your community? Why or why not?”

- **Many IDPs and host community members were supportive of the need for peacebuilding** and social cohesion programs in their area, both among IDPs and with host communities. Some particularly emphasized the need for reconciliation between armed actors.

7. Specific Needs

“How has your experience as a woman/child/person with disability/minority been different from other people’s? Do you feel that the current response takes into account your specific needs and capacities?”

- **Many women, youth, and disabled IDPs reported that they didn’t feel the response took into account their specific experiences, needs and capacities.** Host community members also reported being left out of assistance altogether. While some IDPs reported that there had been instances of targeted assistance (for example, additional rations for people with disabilities or menstrual hygiene materials for women), they often described assistance that was approached as “one-size-fits-all.” Young people, in particular, strongly emphasized the need for greater attention to **education**.

Spotlight: Education is a priority

“We love education a lot and we want to return to education, obtain certificates and pursue university achievement, but many obstacles face us, especially girls.” – Female IDP youth, Syria

In consultations with young IDPs around the world, education stood out as an overarching priority. Even in Syria, where IDP youth struggled to imagine what their lives might look like in five years, one thing was clear: they hoped to complete school and go to university. IDPs in Syria and elsewhere spoke about how education often stops after the primary level, but to succeed they need access to secondary and tertiary schooling. The obstacles to education varied from country to country, ranging from difficulties paying tuition, to an absence of teachers due to lack of salaries, to challenges associated with a lack of internet (particularly problematic during COVID), to a sheer absence of (or destruction of) infrastructure. Regardless of the barriers, however, young IDPs were clear: education must be a priority.

8. COVID-19

“What are your main concerns about COVID-19? Are you receiving information about how you and your community can protect yourselves from coronavirus and/or access help if needed?”

- **IDPs and host community members report a high degree of concern around COVID** – both its health impacts as well as its economic toll. The loss of income for some IDPs due to lockdown measures has resulted in being unable to provide food for their families. While IDPs and host community members largely report feeling informed about COVID prevention measures, some expressed doubt about their ability to implement those measures or access medical care if they became ill.