



LONGITUDINAL RESEARCH

SOMALIA

Displacement, tenure security and land governance in Bosaso, Somalia

Final report



A house built by Saameynta (by author)

SAAMEYNTA ★



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PREFACE

This report is the result of a collaboration between the Saameynta project and LANDac under the LAND-at-scale programme. The Saameynta programme is co-funded by RVO (with NORAD and SDC) under the LAND-at-scale programme. LANDac commissioned this study as part of its knowledge management activities under the RVO LAND-at-scale programme. Funding from both Saameynta and LANDac's knowledge management programme for LAND-at-scale enabled this research.

As part of its knowledge management activities, LANDac commissioned two so-called longitudinal studies, including several rounds of data collection at different key stages of the project cycle with the aim to document evidence on the ground to provide a better understanding of impact pathways of the intervention. This study on Saameynta consisted of two rounds of data collection: before the relocation programme started and once it was underway. The research was designed to reflect the knowledge needs of the Saameynta partners as well as the thematic knowledge agenda as formulated by LANDac and was developed in close interaction between IOM as Saameynta partner, the researcher (and author of this report), and the LANDac Steering Committee (Wyske Chamberlain, Gemma van der Haar, Kei Otsuki, Marja Spierenburg & Dima Todorovski). The qualitative approach allowed to learn about how (would-be/intended) beneficiaries were experiencing and reflecting on the programmes at different stages of the implementation. As hoped, the research fostered rich reflection between those involved and fed adaptive programming based on research findings. Findings of both rounds of field work, as well as this synthesis report, have been discussed between Saameynta, LANDac's Steering Committee for the knowledge management activities, and the researcher. Further knowledge sharing was promoted by inviting the researcher, and IOM representatives to present at subsequent LANDac Annual conferences.

We are grateful for the trust placed in us by the Saameynta partners. Their openness and willingness to share and learn was vital to the success of this joint endeavour. Most of all, we are grateful to Marta Cavallaro who impressed us with her commitment and excellent analytical and research capacities. We hope this rich report will find its way to interested audiences both in Somalia and beyond.

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This study would not have been possible without the invaluable support of many individuals and institutions. The research was carried out within the framework of the LAND-at-scale knowledge programme, under the guidance of its academic consortium's Steering Committee, which instituted, co-designed, and coordinated the study, alongside Saameynta partners Karel Boers and Federica Acquaviva. Special thanks also go to Mohamed Ahmed Dahir (Saameynta, IOM), Abdirashid Hassan (IOM), whose support and coordination on the ground were instrumental. I am also grateful to Somali interpreter Zeinab Hussein Mohamud and enumerators Deka Mire Farah, Maxmuud Axmed Samatar, and Cabdiqar Cabdirashid Maxamed Yusuf. A heartfelt thank you to all of you — your dedication and collaboration were essential to making this research happen. Without your support in designing the research, organising and carrying out the data collection, and the crucial insights you shared throughout, this study would have lacked the depth and richness it ultimately achieved.

1 INTRODUCTION

This longitudinal study explored the relationship between displacement patterns and land governance in Bosaso, Somalia, focusing on the impact pathways of the efforts to address displacement implemented under the United Nations (UN)-led Saameynta program. By adopting a bottom-up approach, the research sought to understand how internally displaced people (IDPs) perceive changes in their land rights, tenure security, and sense of displacement over time, to then provide actionable recommendations for Saameynta practitioners towards solutions that are durable for the targeted communities as a whole. The study is also part of the knowledge management strategy of Saameynta and the LAND-at-scale (LAS) academic consortium to build knowledge on how populations experience program interventions over time. The study aimed to capture evolving experiences and expectations among respondents at different stages of Saameynta's implementations. In doing so, it contributed to adaptive learning and programming by identifying barriers and gaps that could inform adjustments over time.

Bosaso, located in Puntland State, is a key destination for displaced populations due to its relative stability compared to other parts of Somalia. As of April 2024, 22 IDP camps in Bosaso housed nearly 117,000 individuals, all classified as being at high or extreme risk of eviction.¹ The Saameynta ("Impact" in Somali) program – implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat) – seeks to provide durable solutions by promoting IDPs' local integration in Bosaso. Specifically, this is done through relocation processes in sites where IDPs are believed to benefit from improved tenure security, better access to services, employment, and social integration.

Under Saameynta, IDPs in Bosaso are relocated to the site of Gribble, located approximately 5.5 kilometres from Bosaso city centre, a distance that translates into a 40-minute car ride. Gribble was initially established in 2019 on land purchased by the Bosaso Municipality from private owners and allocated to the UN to develop a site through a shelter project led by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and funded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The IDPs selected for relocation primarily come from Tawakal and 100Bush, two IDP camps on Bosaso's coastline, that are being targeted for two reasons: first, their location adjacent to major urban infrastructure – including the port and airport – makes the land strategic for future investment and city development; second, according to the latest Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) assessment,² IDPs within these sites face the highest risk of eviction in Bosaso. In this context, relocation is framed as an opportunity to provide IDPs with more secure tenure while accounting for Bosaso's broader urban and infrastructural expansion and growth.

¹ See the latest Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) assessment, available on <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-verified-idp-sites-bossaso-april-2024> (last access: 24 February 2025)

² Ibid,

Since 2024, Saameynta has actively contributed to the expansion of Gribble by relocating 61 households to newly built houses, with further relocation plans expected in 2025 under UN-Habitat's coordination. The relocation process is tied to the provision of a portion of land, a housing unit, and a land title deed to achieve better tenure security. More broadly, Saameynta also carries out physical interventions that improve IDPs' access to basic services (water, sanitation, hygiene, housing) in Gribble; provision of funds and financial support to both IDPs' and host community members to improve employment opportunities; support to local authorities in the development of strategies and norms aimed at fostering urban growth and local integration, as well as capacity building for their implementation. While the project also operates in the city of Baidoa in South West State, Bosaso was chosen as the target location for the longitudinal study given that, unlike Baidoa, it has been less exposed to humanitarian/development interventions up until now and, as a consequence, to research fatigue as well. This created an opportunity to engage with communities who had not been extensively surveyed or consulted, allowing for a more open exploration of how they would perceive Saameynta, its desirability, and impact over time.

This study was designed to:

1. Produce knowledge on displacement, land governance, and tenure security in Bosaso, feeding into LAS' wide thematic research agenda and building awareness of Saameynta's potential risks and effects to adapt strategies accordingly.
2. Assess the impact throughout the implementation process of Saameynta's interventions from the perspective of affected communities.
3. Contribute to formulating lessons of scaling and offer practical, actionable recommendations to guide programming decisions.

By focusing on IDPs' lived experiences, this study aims to capture changes over time in perceptions of tenure security, livelihoods, and integration. Overall, this longitudinal approach provides a unique perspective on whether relocation improves displaced populations' conditions or creates new challenges.

This report represents the final synthesis of the study's findings. While initially planned to include three rounds of data collection before, during and after implementation, only two phases were conducted. A third round was eventually not conducted due to time constraints within the study's allocated timeframe (January 2024 – May 2025), which was not aligned with the timing of Saameynta's operations in Bosaso, set to conclude in December 2025. Indeed, between January 2024 and May 2025, Saameynta's interventions had not advanced sufficiently to allow for three rounds of data collection. Given that meaningful changes in perceptions of tenure security, livelihoods, and integration take time to materialise, the study prioritised two rounds of data collection to ensure a

comprehensive yet realistic assessment of the program's impact. Detailed findings from each phase are available in earlier reports,³ while this final report synthesises key insights from both rounds.

Specifically, this report is structured as follows. Chapter two outlines the study's research framework, methodology, and data collection implementation, highlighting challenges and lessons learned. Chapter three presents key findings, focusing on tenure security, the perception and broader impact of the relocation process on livelihoods, access to services, social integration, and the sustainability of the Gribble project. Chapter four draws the study's conclusions and key lessons learned from Somalia for future programming and interventions.

2 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the research design that guided this study. First, attention is given to the research questions of the longitudinal study. Second, the methodology is outlined, and, finally, the chapter reflects on the strengths and limitations of the qualitative data collection and lessons learned.

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Throughout its two phases, this study explored several key themes guided by the broader learning agenda of the LAS knowledge programme, including access to land and property, perceptions of tenure security and eviction risks, dispute resolution mechanisms, the impact of relocation on living conditions, and the broader social and economic consequences of Saameynta's interventions. It also examined how relocation affected IDPs' sense of displacement and integration and how these experiences compared to those of host community (HC) members and IDPs who were not relocated.

To address these themes, the study was structured across two phases of data collection. Phase one, carried out in April and May 2024, focused on tenure security and related dynamics – such as land access, eviction risks, and land dispute resolution mechanisms – in the relocation site of Gribble and the displacement camps of Tawakal and 100Bush, where IDPs are being considered for relocation, in the anticipation of an upcoming round of relocation organised by Saameynta. Phase two, carried out in January 2025, took place shortly after the relocation process and sought to capture respondents' reflections and experiences in its immediate aftermath. This second phase also broadened and deepened the research by extending the scope to include the host community households and by examining how relocation and tenure security intersected with livelihoods, social structures, and access to essential services. Together, the two phases offer a longitudinal perspective on evolving tenure security in Bosaso of Saameynta's interventions.

³ Read online the first (<https://landgovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/Phase-1-Somalia-final-report.pdf>) and second (<https://landgovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/Saameynta-longitudinal-study-Phase-2-report.pdf>) report of the longitudinal study (last access: 30 June 2025)

Overall, the study was guided by the following key research questions:

- How is tenure security perceived among IDPs and relocated people in Gribble?
- How did this perception change over time between phase one and phase two?
- How do displaced, non-displaced, and relocated people in Bosaso differ in their access to housing, land, and property rights, as well as in their experience of tenure security?
- What are the channels used for resolving land disputes, perceived as the most common and effective by the different target populations?
- How does relocation change respondents' tenure security and housing quality?
- What is the broader impact of relocation beyond tenure (livelihoods, social networks and support, access to services, etc.)?
- How was the relocation process as carried out by Saameynta perceived by both beneficiaries and those who were eventually not selected for relocation?

2.2 METHODOLOGY

Data for this study was collected by the LAS researcher, with the support of the Saameynta project. The team composition varied across the two phases of research but consistently included the lead researcher, members of the Saameynta project, enumerators provided by the Bosaso government, and an interpreter. Security personnel from the United Nations and local police accompanied the team to ensure safe access to targeted research sites. Before each data collection exercise, the enumerators received brief training sessions to review the study's objectives and ensure consistency in data collection approaches. The fieldwork was conducted over multiple days, allowing for interviews across different sites and engagement with various population groups.

The study was primarily based on qualitative data collection methods, including:

- Semi-structured interviews with displaced persons, relocated individuals, host community members, and key stakeholders.
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) to capture collective perspectives on land tenure security, relocation experiences, and land governance mechanisms.
- Key informant interviews (KII) with government officials, landowners, brokers, and humanitarian actors involved in relocation and land governance.
- Field notes and observations recorded by the researcher to provide additional context.

A qualitative approach was chosen because land tenure security and displacement are deeply shaped by subjective perceptions and complex social, economic, and political factors. Unlike quantitative surveys, qualitative methods allowed for better exploration of respondents' experiences, concerns, and perspectives, providing a nuanced understanding of tenure security, land governance, and the broader impacts of relocation. Qualitative research also complemented the quantitative data collected by Saameynta for monitoring and evaluation purposes. In phase one, this quantitative data was used to provide baseline statistics and trends that supported the qualitative analysis. However,

in phase two, the study relied exclusively on qualitative methods. This shift was due, first, to the unavailability of updated quantitative data from the Saameynta project; and second, to the methodological limitations of the LORA tool. While LORA could provide valuable figures, its survey format limited a deeper exploration of why certain outcomes occur and how perceptions of land evolve over time. Eventually, this study suggests that qualitative fieldwork remains essential to unpack underlying drivers and lived meanings behind figures. Moreover, as better explained in the paragraph below, qualitative research can offer more flexibility to navigate the tensions that emerge when research is carried out in close proximity to aid and development actors.

As for the geographical scope of the study, phase one exclusively targeted the Gribble relocation site, where displaced households were resettled and provided with housing and a title deed, and the coastline IDP camps of Tawakal and 100Bush, as IDPs residing there were the ones who would be selected to benefit from the relocation process to Gribble. This selection allowed the study to reach an understanding of how tenure security and land-related dynamics were experienced before the relocation carried out by Saameynta.

Phase two expanded the study's scope by including HC households surrounding Tawakal and 100Bush to understand how relocation affects broader social and economic dynamics. In phase two, a visit was also made to the IDP sites on the Eastern side of Bosaso, on the way to Gribble, known as "Old Gribble." This expansion allowed for comparative analysis between IDPs, relocated populations, and host community members, as well as an assessment of the impact of Saameynta's land governance interventions over time.



Figure 1. Geographical scope of the study

A total of 74 respondents participated in the study across both phases:

- Phase one: 25 respondents (12 male, 13 female)
- Phase two: 49 respondents (17 male, 31 female)

Location	# of Interviews	# of FGDs	# of Male respondents	# of Female respondents	Total
Phase 1					
Gribble	6	2	6	6	12
Tawakal	7	2	6	7	13
Total	13	4	12	13	25
Phase 2					
Gribble	4	4	9	10	19
Tawakal	2	3	5	7	12
100Bush	3	1	0	6	6
Eastern IDP sites	3	1	2	4	6
HC members	4	1	1	5	6
Total	16	10	17	31	49
Phase 1 and Phase 2					
Total	29	14	29	44	74

Table 1. Number of respondents per location and gender

Additionally, key informant interviews were conducted in both phases with local authorities, landowners, brokers, and humanitarian practitioners. Specifically:

- One exchange took place with the Mayor of Bosaso and the Head of the Bosaso Land Department in both phases;
- One interview was carried out with a member of the Reer Askar family, also known as Reer Ugaas, belonging to the *Dishiishe* clan, who privately own the land where 100Bush camp lies;
- One interview was carried out with two land brokers operating in Bosaso;
- One meeting was held with two members of the relocation committee, respectively from the Migration Protection and Assistance Division of IOM and the Shelter Unit of NRC.

Given the study's qualitative nature, respondents were selected through a mix of sampling techniques, including:

- Random walk: The research team walked through the target sites, approaching residents willing to participate;
- Snowball sampling: Initial respondents referred the team to other individuals, expanding the sample;
- Referral sampling: Key informants and local actors helped identify individuals with relevant experiences, particularly for interviews with landowners and local authorities.

These methods allowed the team to reach respondents who do not usually take part in surveys or data collection exercises carried out in Bosaso, that often focus on pre-selected participants only. As it was not selected from a sampling frame nor chosen through a statistically random selection, the sample used to carry out this study was subject to numerous biases. Unlike individuals in a random sample, respondents did not all have the same probability of being included in data collection. Therefore, findings from such a snowball sample would not be generalisable.⁴ Despite this, the qualitative methodology was well-suited to the study's objectives, as it aimed to capture voices from the ground and gain detailed, contextualised insights into land tenure security, displacement, and relocation experiences rather than produce statistically generalisable results. Different strategies, such as varied starting points for random walks and multiple referral waves, were then deployed to mitigate problems of sample diversity and increase respondent diversity.

2.3 KEY REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Contextual Challenges:

Security constraints significantly impacted data collection. In both phases, limited field hours, mandatory military escorts, and the need to use bulletproof vehicles restricted access and affected the natural dynamics of engagement, potentially influencing respondents' openness. Logistical and security constraints, such as reliance on UN security escorts and local police, further complicated access to both locations and participants. For example, the number of male respondents was considerably lower than female respondents, as men in IDP camps and the broader city of Bosaso were typically occupied with work in the morning, the only available fieldwork hours.

Extreme weather conditions also posed challenges. Phase one took place in temperatures exceeding 35°C, making fieldwork physically exhausting, particularly when interviews had to be conducted outdoors. In contrast, phase two, conducted in January, was more manageable due to milder temperatures.

Key Takeaways:

- Flexible scheduling is key to navigating security disruptions and ensuring sufficient data collection time. Planning should account for security-related logistical constraints while exploring alternative strategies to enhance respondent privacy and reach a diverse sample.
- Conducting fieldwork during cooler months can improve conditions for both researchers and participants.

⁴ Morgan, D. (2008). Snowball Sampling. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. SAGE Publications Inc.

Methodological Insights:

The qualitative methodology adopted in this study offered significant added value, particularly for understanding evolving perceptions and lived experiences of land tenure security in contexts of displacement – insights that can be missed by more rigid quantitative tools.

Using semi-structured interviews with clear, adaptable guiding questions proved effective. Translating and testing the questionnaires beforehand is key to making the cultural and linguistic adjustments. For instance, in our case, the concept of tenure security does not translate well in Somalia and was thus paraphrased with context-specific explanations.

Opting for the random walk, instead of relying on pre-selected lists of interviewees, was key in ensuring that broader perspectives were incorporated into the study, thus also reducing respondents' fatigue. However, it complicated follow-up efforts due to the lack of a pre-existing participant list.

Key Takeaways:

- Careful questionnaire design, culturally sensitive translation, and open-ended formats in interviews help foster more reciprocal interactions and offer insights that might be overlooked in standardised surveys.
- The benefits of random sampling can be balanced with strategies for respondent follow-up, such as discreetly collecting contact details when appropriate.

Team composition and dynamics:

Larger teams, especially those including multiple enumerators, often overwhelmed respondents. Smaller teams facilitated more effective and natural conversations.

The presence of Saameynta partners in the field proved mutually beneficial. For the researcher, engagement with Saameynta national and international officers provided valuable insights into the complexities and compromises required to keep a project running in Somalia. This firsthand exposure also highlighted the good intentions behind development and humanitarian interventions, even when their outcomes were mixed. At the same time, unlike conventional monitoring and evaluation exercises that often rely on quantitative data, this qualitative approach allowed project partners to witness the direct impact of their interventions – both positive and negative – through the lived experiences of affected communities. Participating in interviews and discussions in real time fosters a more reflective, responsive approach to project planning, offering insights that a standard mission report or statistical study might overlook.

As neither the lead researcher nor the Saameynta international officer spoke Somali, the team relied on an interpreter, introducing an additional layer of distance between respondents. Linguistic and cultural barriers impacted data collection, as translation and interpretation are hardly ever neutral

but rather inherently shaped by power dynamics, influencing how responses were conveyed and understood.

The research team's limited knowledge of internal and interpersonal camp dynamics made it difficult to contextualise responses. Expressions of frustration or complaints, for instance, could stem from internal camp divisions rather than broader governance issues, while positive assessments of camp leaders and local authorities may have reflected constrained freedom of expression rather than genuine satisfaction.

Key Takeaways:

- The presence of project partners can contribute to more informed and adaptive programming. Additionally, combining qualitative insights with traditional monitoring and evaluation frameworks can create a more holistic assessment of program impact.
- Linguistic and cultural differences create barriers to accurate data collection. Researchers must remain mindful of power dynamics in translation. While efforts to mitigate these challenges were valuable, true neutrality in research is difficult to achieve. A more embedded approach – through sustained local engagement, deeper contextual learning, and increased collaboration with local experts and trusted community members who can offer insights into social and political nuances within camps – could enhance future research, ensuring responses are more accurately understood and interpreted. While knowledge production always remains positioned as neutrality can never be fully guaranteed, a more embedded approach could also help to better understand and account for how knowledge is produced and interpreted in context.

Navigating the political economy of aid:

Data collection took place under conditions similar to those characterising UN operations in IDP camps and relocation sites—arriving with military personnel and vehicles to observe, interview, and assess. This context led many interviewees to associate the study with ongoing project activities, at times even mistaking it for part of the relocation selection process it sought to analyse. The realisation emerged that, despite its analytical intent, the research process at times reproduced the very power relations it aimed to examine.

The research process also risked influencing respondents' expectations regarding future service provision. Questions such as "What do you think of Gribble? Would you want to relocate there? Why or why not?" may have been interpreted as indications of upcoming relocation rounds, leading respondents to tailor their answers accordingly. At the same time, many IDPs demonstrated strategic awareness of the aid system, adeptly positioning themselves within it. Some respondents may have presented an overly critical view of Saameynta's interventions, seeing the interview as an opportunity to voice grievances and prompt action. Others may have emphasised the severity of their living conditions in ways that aligned with known vulnerability criteria used to determine aid eligibility.

To mitigate these dynamics, efforts were made to shift away from the performative and hierarchical interactions that typically define engagements between displaced communities and humanitarian actors. Acknowledging the inherent power imbalance, the researcher sought to foster open dialogue by reversing roles, encouraging respondents to ask questions themselves and leaving space for open-ended discussions at the end of interviews. This approach aimed to create a more authentic exchange, allowing respondents greater agency in shaping the conversation according to their perspectives.

This study highlighted the difficulty of conducting research in contexts where aid structures deeply shape social interactions. Even with efforts to maintain neutrality, the research process was inevitably influenced by the existing power dynamics between humanitarian actors and displaced communities. This raises important ethical considerations: How can researchers ensure that their presence does not inadvertently reinforce systemic inequalities? What methods can be employed to counteract the perception of research as an extension of aid distribution?

Key Takeaways:

Moving forward, future research in aid-dependent settings should take proactive measures to navigate and, when possible, minimise the reproduction of power hierarchies in data collection while prioritising reflexivity and transparency. Inherent tensions arise from the proximity to humanitarian and development aid provision in a research setting: while proximity can enable access and foster mutual learning between the research and practitioners' community, it can influence respondent expectations and reinforce existing power dynamics. Creating safe spaces for open dialogue is key to managing these tensions. Giving respondents space to shape the conversation – by allowing them to introduce new topics, ask questions, or challenge assumptions – can help shift the dynamic from extraction to exchange. Taking the time for each conversation, conducting interviews at a comfortable pace, and ensuring the conversation feels meaningful and informative for both those interviewing and those interviewed is also essential. Finally, involving local researchers and trusted community intermediaries throughout the process – and reflecting critically on their positionality as well – can improve understanding of local power dynamics and promote more grounded, nuanced knowledge. Together, these strategies will not resolve the proximity dilemma, but they can help foster more ethical, reciprocal, and insightful research in complex settings.

3 KEY FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings on the main themes of the research. The first paragraph examines IDPs' and relocated individuals' perceptions of land dynamics and compares them to the experiences of the host community in Bosaso. It specifically explores access to land and property, tenure security, land, housing, and property rights, as well as perceptions of eviction risk. The second paragraph assesses the broader impact of relocation to Gribble, focusing on changes in social networks and support systems, access to services, livelihoods, and family income, as well as the overall appeal and attractiveness of the site. Finally, the third paragraph outlines the relocation process itself,

detailing its key steps, the actors involved, and its major challenges while also reflecting on its long-term sustainability.

3.1 ACCESS TO LAND AND TENURE SECURITY IN BOSASO



Figure 2: IDP shelter Tawakal

Since the Somali civil war erupted in 1991, land ownership in Bosaso and across Somalia has been predominantly private.⁵ For **IDPs in Tawakal and 100Bush**, securing land typically involves informal rental agreements with private landowners, followed by the construction of their shelters. Due to financial constraints, purchasing land is generally not an option for IDPs. The process of finding land varies; some IDPs directly approach landowners to negotiate rental terms, while others rely on land brokers or community referrals. In many cases, IDPs identify vacant plots, settle informally, and later engage with the owner when rent is eventually demanded. The agreements are predominantly oral, specifying only the rent amount without formal provisions for tenure duration or protection against eviction. While IDPs have the right to construct makeshift shelters on rented land and, in some cases, sub-let property, they often face restrictions on infrastructure improvements such as constructing toilets or latrines. Rising rent prices, exacerbated by economic instability in Bosaso, remain a significant barrier to securing land and are a major driver of forced evictions.

For **members of the HC**, access to land presents a broader spectrum of possibilities, as those with financial means can purchase land or property through a formalised process. Land purchases involve negotiation with private owners, often facilitated by land brokers, with transactions officially registered at the Municipality and certified by public notaries. Buyers receive a title deed upon completion, which costs between \$70 and \$100. However, for HC members who cannot afford to buy, renting remains a common alternative. The rental process mirrors that of IDPs in terms of oral agreements with landowners or brokers, yet HC tenants typically rent constructed housing rather than vacant land. While some HC landlords permit sub-letting and property expansion, security of tenure remains limited, as rental agreements do not guarantee protection against eviction. Although HC members generally benefit from greater



Figure 3: Home Community house

⁵ For more information, read Surer, Q. M. (2023). *Somalia Land Governance Review*. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies. <https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Land-Governance-Review-.pdf> (last access: 6 March 2025)

employment stability, which helps in meeting rent obligations while affording better housing quality options, rising land prices and job insecurity have increased their vulnerability to eviction, making it a widespread issue across the city.

The high cost of rent and land remains the central obstacle to land access and tenure security for both IDPs and HC members. Between phase one and phase two, the perceptions among both IDPs and HC were of escalating land prices, which have made renting increasingly unaffordable, forcing many families, both displaced and HC, to relocate frequently. Evictions are primarily driven by the inability to meet rent payments or by private owners reclaiming land for investment purposes. While eviction is a common threat for both groups, IDPs experience it with greater frequency due to their more precarious economic circumstances.

Strategies to avoid and mitigate eviction threats among IDPs include timely rent payment, leveraging social connections with landowners, and community-level interventions through camp committees. These camp committees – led by a camp leader, made up of elected community members and often formally recognised by the municipality – sometimes negotiate temporary extensions with landlords to delay or prevent eviction or assist displaced families in finding new accommodation. While formal conflict resolution mechanisms exist, such as municipal conflict resolution committees and land dispute tribunals,⁶ they are rarely used; IDPs overwhelmingly prefer informal systems by resorting to camp committees and clan elders, which are perceived as faster, more accessible, affordable, and more trustworthy.⁷ In this hybrid system, municipal committees and state institutions play a secondary role, often engaging only when mediation through informal channels fails. HC members, on the other hand, navigate eviction largely on their own, with no perception of trustful community structures to mediate on their behalf. The expectation of self-reliance within the HC also discourages individuals from seeking external support, further isolating those at risk of eviction.

In the **Eastern IDP sites**, land access and tenure security differ from the dynamics observed in Tawakal and 100Bush. Unlike the coastal IDP settlements, where land rental is negotiated with private owners, many Eastern IDP camps were established with government and humanitarian assistance, starting from the early 2010s⁸, as part of a relocation strategy for displaced populations. This included IDPs previously exposed to environmental hazards in camps within Bosaso, such as fires, or those affected by mass evictions resulting from land disputes between private owners and brokers. In these camps, local authorities have played a more active role in securing temporary agreements with landowners to allow IDPs to occupy land for a specific period, with the government stepping in if land rights are threatened. Although these arrangements remain temporary, they were often renewed

⁶ For more information, read Tonnarelli, Francesco. 2024, p. 40. Bosaso City Strategy. UN-Habitat. <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/bosaso-city-strategy-2024> (last access: 6 March 2025).

⁷ For more information, read Acumen Research. (2024). *Social Cohesion Formative Assessment for Puntland State*. Saameynta.

⁸ Tonnarelli, Francesco. 2024, p. 88. Bosaso City Strategy. UN-Habitat. <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/bosaso-city-strategy-2024> (last access: 6 March 2025)

over time and provided a buffer against arbitrary eviction. When agreements officially expired, IDPs were sometimes required to pay rent directly to the landowners. In other cases, landowners still allow IDPs to remain on the land for free. Regardless of the situation, the form of tenure security in these camps also remains largely informal, relying on oral agreements that do not protect in case of eviction.

In **Gribble**, land access follows a structured relocation process, differing significantly from the informal rental arrangements in Tawakal and 100Bush. Relocated people in Gribble were selected as beneficiaries during a formal relocation process and, upon arrival, received a plot of land along with a housing unit or materials to build their permanent shelter. Their right to reside in Gribble was documented through a written agreement issued by local authorities, known as the *super logo*, which serves as a title deed.



Figure 4: Gribble houses

Despite this formalised process, uncertainty persists over the exact nature of land tenure in Gribble. While the *super logo* is widely recognised as proof of residency, its implications for ownership rights remain ambiguous. Some residents believe they hold full ownership of their house and land, granting them the right to sell or sublet their property. Others, however, maintain that the land remains government property and cannot be sold. This confusion is exacerbated by contradictory statements from local authorities. The Mayor of Bosaso has referred to the *super logo* as granting "full ownership", yet he has also stressed that "relocated people remain beneficiaries" and that "the land [donated to them] remains the property of the government". From the government's perspective, the allocation of land to IDPs is a social welfare measure: if a beneficiary decides to leave, the land should be reassigned to someone in need. As the Mayor put it, "If you stay, the land is yours; if you do not stay, you leave the land behind." Meanwhile, officials from the Land Department suggest that sales may eventually be permitted but remain restricted "for the time being". In practice, relocated IDPs receive

the same title deed as host community members who purchase land, raising the question of whether they do, in fact, have full ownership rights but are simply discouraged from exercising them.



Figure 5: Example of a super logo (Bosaso City Strategy, 2024)

This lack of clarity has significant implications. While most relocated IDPs feel secure from eviction, citing the *super logo* as proof of their right to remain, this sense of stability rests on uncertain legal foundations. Without a formalised policy, future shifts in government stance could leave residents vulnerable to eviction or new restrictions on land use. This disconnect is particularly striking given that tenure security is central to both IDP perspectives and the objectives of durable solutions providers. Indeed, many IDPs view tenure security as a key marker of integration into the host community, believing that receiving land transforms them from displaced persons into settled residents. Until these legal uncertainties are resolved, IDPs remain in a precarious position. While the relocation process is meant to provide long-term security, the ambiguity surrounding their legal rights risks creating a false sense of stability, one in which beneficiaries believe they have secure tenure but, in reality, remain dependent on shifting policies and government decisions.

Finally, the longitudinal study consistently found that **tenure security** is a central factor in how people understand their ability **to exit displacement in Bosaso**. Across sites, being an IDP was closely associated with a sense of tenure insecurity – a condition shaped by threats to one's right to stay, settle, and dwell. In particular, this insecurity was most commonly tied to the perceived risk of eviction and the absence of meaningful protection against it. In Tawakal and 100Bush, for example, residents reported feeling vulnerable due to repeated past evictions, ongoing fears of being forced to move again, and a lack of formal or informal safeguards. Even in Eastern Bosaso, where temporary agreements with landowners exist, the sense of security was limited. In contrast, residents in Gribble expressed greater confidence in their tenure, despite the unclear legal weight of the *super logo*. What mattered most was not the content of the documentation itself, but the belief that, should eviction be threatened, the presence of a written agreement and the trust they place in local authorities would offer some level of protection. Importantly, no eviction cases had been recorded in Gribble at the time of the study, which further contributed to residents' sense of security.

The study also revealed, while eviction is the most direct and visible manifestation of insecurity, the concept also overlaps with broader experiences of physical safety and well-being. Spatial belonging also played a role: while residents of Tawakal and 100Bush identified as IDPs because they lived in IDP camps and remained under threat of eviction, many in Gribble felt a stronger sense of belonging precisely because they had relocated and felt reassured, even informally, that they could stay.

Still, the notion of what constitutes secure tenure remains somewhat open-ended. Questions remain around the preferred path to achieving this security: is land ownership the ultimate goal, or could long-term rental agreements backed by stable income offer a similar sense of permanence? While many respondents mentioned the need “to have land,” “a piece of land,” or “a house” as key to feeling integrated and safe, this may be shaped by the expectations raised during the relocation process – particularly the promise of free land provision, – in a context where tested alternatives for improving tenure security have so far remained limited.

3.2 THE BROADER IMPACT OF RELOCATION

Gribble, located approximately 5.5 km from Bosaso, is about a 40-minute car drive on a rough, unpaved road. The site is adjacent to the city's cemetery, situated between IDP settlements in eastern Bosaso and the relocation site, earning it the local nickname “If iyo aakhiro” (“between life and death” in Somali)⁹ among locals. As mentioned earlier, relocating to Gribble has been shown to improve IDPs’ perception of tenure security and protection from eviction – even if this still remains a perception rather than a guaranteed reality, given the ongoing uncertainty over land ownership and the *super logo* issue. However, the site’s location raises broader concerns regarding the impact of relocation on displaced individuals. While relocation may provide greater tenure security and protection from eviction, how do relocated individuals maintain their social ties, jobs, and livelihoods? How do they access essential services, which remain largely lacking in Gribble?

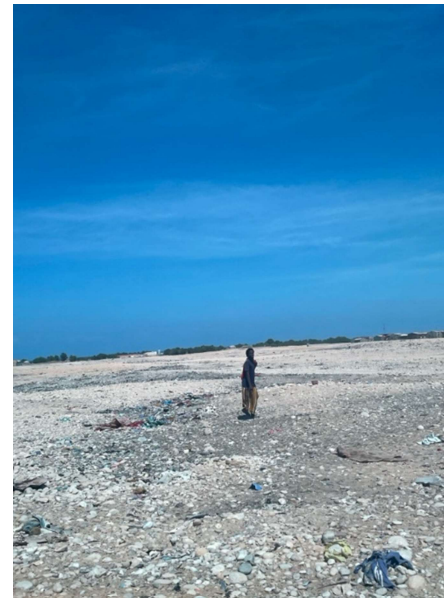


Figure 6: A person on the road to Gribble from Bosaso

In terms of **social ties**, many relocated individuals maintain strong connections with friends and family in Tawakal and 100Bush. Visits between the two locations are frequent, particularly for social events, and some IDPs from the camps even spend extended time in Gribble during the summer months. Moreover, because the relocation process has repeatedly targeted the same camps, many people already know one another upon their arrival in Gribble, helping to foster a sense of community. Respondents describe their new community as a source of mutual support, where neighbours can rely on each other for help in times of need.

Access to services, on the other hand, has proven to be more problematic. While relocation results in improved shelter and sanitation, the overall access to essential services declines. Many services in Gribble are either too expensive or absent, forcing residents to travel back to the city. Facilities such

⁹ For more information, read Tonnarelli, Francesco. 2024, p. 63. Bosaso City Strategy. UN-Habitat. <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/bosaso-city-strategy-2024> (last access: 6 March 2025).

as a market and health centre exist but remain non-operational, making healthcare access particularly challenging. This disproportionately affects vulnerable individuals such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and pregnant women, who previously had better access to support systems in the city.

Relocation has also had a profound impact on **livelihoods**. While living in the camps, many IDPs relied on informal, daily labour with jobs in construction, carpentry, welding, and cleaning. Women were particularly engaged in cleaning and market-related activities. However, the distance to the city and the high cost of transportation have made it difficult for relocated individuals to maintain employment. Some families adopt coping strategies such as keeping family members in the camps for work or prioritising the father's employment upon relocation while the mother remains in Gribble to care for the children. This shift has reinforced gendered divisions of labour and reduced women's access to livelihood opportunities.

Finally, the **emotional toll of the relocation process** is a concern, affecting both those who relocate and those who remain behind. Relocation is not just a logistical change; it is a disruptive experience with emotional, psychological, and social consequences. For those who relocate, while relocation is framed as an opportunity for a better life, throughout the process, many feel sadness and loss, especially when they are separated from long-established social ties and networks established in the camps. The disruption of daily routines, the distance from family and friends, and the loss of livelihood can create feelings of disconnection and grief. The emotional burden is also significant for those who remain in the camps. With each round of relocation, expectations rise, only to be followed by disappointment for those not selected. This sense of rejection affects self-esteem and morale, and the waiting can lead to exhaustion, anger, and frustration. This heightened tension often manifests in feelings of abandonment, neglect, and disillusionment, fuelling, in some cases, rumours of unfairness and favouritism.

In a nutshell, relocation to Gribble involves trade-offs. While living conditions improve compared to the camps, access to employment and services generally worsens. These challenges raise a fundamental question: **Is Gribble an appealing option?** For many IDPs in Tawakal and 100Bush, moving to Gribble offers an escape from living conditions that have become unbearable in the camps, marked by insecure tenure, poor hygiene, and a lack of protection. Overall, the relocation to Gribble is perceived as an improvement, as it provides access to basic rights such as shelter, privacy, and a sense of stability. Gribble residents emphasised the importance of having their own house and latrine, as well as the perceived safety from eviction that comes with a sense of land and property ownership. However, they also pointed out that Gribble is far from a perfect solution: there is still much to be done in terms of service delivery, development of income opportunities, and improving the site's accessibility and connection to the city.

Eventually, for many IDPs, relocation is less about the appeal of Gribble itself and more about the desire to escape the harsh conditions in Tawakal and 100Bush. Indeed, many respondents acknowledged that they would not choose to relocate if they had to pay for the land, housing, and private latrine – provisions they currently receive for free as part of the relocation process. If these

provisions came at a cost, most would prefer a location closer to the city. Ultimately, Gribble represents a balancing act. It is neither an ideal destination nor a permanent solution, but rather the best available option for many IDPs seeking greater stability. As long as relocation remains free, people are willing to adapt to the site's limitations. However, the broader implications of this approach – including the sustainability of free service provision without continued external support and the ongoing need for economic opportunities – must be carefully considered in discussions about long-term solutions for displaced populations in Bosaso.

3.3 THE RELOCATION PROCESS

The relocation process to Gribble involves a set of specific steps and actors. Each round of relocation is managed by a committee that includes representatives from development and humanitarian agencies and local authorities. The relocation committee overseeing the relocation led by Saameynta was comprised of members from Bosaso Land Department, UN-Habitat, the IOM, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), NRC, and UNHCR. This committee works together to define the criteria that will guide the selection of beneficiaries and to ensure the relocation is carried out fairly.

The process begins with a planning phase where the relocation committee convenes to define the criteria for selection, designed to prioritise the households most in need. The **criteria** that guided Saameynta's relocation were shelter conditions, risk of eviction, and "vulnerable" groups, including the elderly, people with disabilities, orphans, and survivors of gender-based violence. Once these criteria are set, camp leaders and IDP representatives are informed of the upcoming relocation, and IDPs are asked to remain in the camp on the day of registration. The committee then visits the camp, making a general observation of the living conditions and working with camp leaders to identify and interview the households perceived to be the most vulnerable. These observations are followed by interviews where the selected households' information is registered for further review. Following the interviews, the committee finalises the selection of beneficiaries and communicates their decision to the selected individuals, who are given the option to visit the new Gribble site before deciding whether they wish to relocate.

During the exchanges with IDPs and relocated individuals in Gribble, several **critical issues** were raised in relation to the relocation process, offering a perspective "from below" on how the relocation process is perceived by those directly impacted.

The **lack of clear information about the relocation process** is a major source of frustration and confusion for IDPs. Although some have a basic understanding that relocation is linked to a set of vulnerability criteria, how decisions are made and the roles of the various actors involved remain vague. This gap in understanding creates uncertainty, mistrust, and a sense of unpredictability and lack of transparency. It also limits possible accountability channels – if people have concerns or complaints about the process, how do they know whom they can turn to?

The perception that relocation is based on chance or luck rather than a structured, fair decision-making process is another critical issue. Several IDPs explicitly voiced the belief that being selected for relocation was a matter of "fate" or "luck" rather than being a result of deliberate, thoughtful decisions based on need. This perception of arbitrariness undermines the legitimacy of the process and creates emotional distress. Those who are left behind in the camp often feel that the selection process is random, contributing to disappointment, frustration, and a sense of exclusion. The belief that others were chosen because of favouritism or superficial observations deepens the sense that the process lacks fairness. The perception of favouritism – whether real or imagined – can damage trust in the camp leaders and create divisions within the IDP community.

The **criteria for selection** – such as prioritising the "most vulnerable" – are fraught with complications. The issue of determining who is most vulnerable within a group of people already living in extremely precarious conditions is an ethical and logistical challenge. The reliance on housing conditions as an indicator of vulnerability is particularly problematic, considering that in IDP camps, housing is often unstable, and while an IDP might have what seems like an adequate shelter one day, they could be evicted the next. Some IDPs who feel they meet the vulnerability criteria are excluded simply because their shelter was seen as "adequate" at the time of the committee's visit, even though their overall situation is precarious. Secondly, the prioritisation of groups like the elderly or chronically ill makes sense in theory, but the situation on the ground complicates this logic, as their hardships often worsen upon arrival in Gribble. While these individuals are recognised as needing support, they are often the most vulnerable in Gribble, being disproportionately affected by the challenges of relocation, such as the lack of services and particularly health care.

Finally and more broadly, relocation to Gribble reveals significant **shortcomings in the long-term planning and sustainability of the initiative**. From the outset, the relocation process was envisioned as a strategy to vacate the sites of Tawakal and 100Bush, as confirmed by both local authorities and UN representatives. The rationale behind this decision stemmed from the need to develop the land occupied by the camps, which is situated near key infrastructure such as the Bosaso airport and port. The objective was also to relocate IDPs to a permanent site with better security, as the camps in Tawakal and 100Bush are considered to be at a heightened risk of eviction. To do so, local authorities secured land outside the city of Bosaso, while the UN's role was primarily to mobilise resources for infrastructure development, specifically the construction of housing and latrine facilities, but without direct oversight in the selection of the land.

The primary factor guiding the selection of the land for Gribble was cost. Unfortunately, this meant that Gribble, while more affordable, is located far from the city, where land was deemed too expensive. This isolation has left the site with limited access to essential services, employment, and economic opportunities, undermining the intended benefits of the relocation. While local authorities and the UN emphasised that the site would improve over time through infrastructure development and better connectivity to Bosaso, this optimistic projection has not yet fully materialised. Five years since the project's launch in 2019, infrastructure improvements beyond housing have been slow, and

the accessibility of Gribble remains a significant challenge, undermining its attractiveness for long-term settlement.

Moreover, while the central objective of the Gribble relocation project was to empty the camps, Tawakal and 100Bush are not getting any emptier. One reason for this is the detachment of the Gribble site, which makes it difficult for relocated families to sustain livelihoods, leading households to not fully move out of the camps. Indeed, in many cases, family members, especially younger ones, stay behind in Tawakal or 100Bush to continue accessing employment opportunities and services in the city. Additionally, vacant spaces left by those who relocate are quickly filled in various ways. Neighbors expand their shelters to occupy the empty plots, and new IDPs continue to arrive, some of them attracted by the assumption that these camps might be selected for relocation in the future. Overall, while the relocation is meant to clear the camps, the flow of people into the camps continues.

This issue is further compounded by the lack of coordinated monitoring or oversight to ensure that vacated land remains empty. While local authorities and the UN expect private landowners to prevent newcomers from occupying vacated plots, landowners – who have economic incentives to rent out the land – have no real motivation to keep it empty. As one landowner in 100Bush stated, “IDPs are free to stay or move as they choose. In any case, durable solutions programs and the relocation process are not nearly large enough to move everyone.” Without clear instructions from the government or enforcement mechanisms, the policy to maintain empty land is unenforced, and the camps remain crowded.

In conclusion, the absence of a clear, shared vision for the future of Tawakal, 100Bush, and Gribble has undermined the goals of the relocation process. As it stands, the relocation is caught in a vicious cycle. People move to Gribble because life in Tawakal and 100Bush has become unbearable, but in Gribble, they find themselves in a situation that is far from perfect – often forcing them to maintain a foothold in the camps they supposedly left through family members or relatives who stay behind. The camps remain the place where they can more easily access essential services and livelihood opportunities. The very location of Gribble – a site that may have been more affordable but is distant from the city and poorly connected – reinforces the same dynamics that prevent Tawakal and 100Bush from emptying. As the projects’ financing eventually comes to an end, a realistic long-term strategy is essential for the relocation process to succeed. This strategy must be not only ambitious but also practical, with safeguards to ensure the sustainability of the relocation process in the long run.

4 FINAL REFLECTIONS AND TAKEAWAYS

This longitudinal study was designed to inquire how displaced people and host communities in Bosaso experience land tenure, relocation, and local integration, following the interventions of the Saameynta project. By capturing evolving experiences and expectations among respondents at different stages of project implementations, with a specific focus on impact pathways, this study also aimed to foster and contribute to adaptive learning and programming within Saameynta.

To do so, the research relied primarily on qualitative methods – including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and field observations – that were essential to better explore the lived experiences and evolving perceptions of respondents, dimensions that might often be missed by standardised surveys. Given that data collection took place in a setting marked by the political economy of aid – often under conditions resembling those of UN-led activities in camps and relocation sites – qualitative research also offered the flexibility needed to navigate the tensions that emerge when research is carried out in close proximity to development programs like Saameynta.

This proximity, while introducing ethical and methodological challenges, also created opportunities for mutual learning. The involvement of Saameynta’s national and international staff in fieldwork enabled real-time reflection on how interventions were being perceived by communities, prompting early adaptations. These included adjustments to shelter design based on feedback around space constraints; increased attention to the need to improve Gribble’s physical connectivity to the rest of Bosaso, recognising that geographic isolation hindered livelihoods and service access; and better awareness around the uncertainty surrounding the *super logo*, which led to pressure on local authorities to clarify legal messaging on land rights. Such examples highlight how research can inform adaptive programming by surfacing perspectives and dynamics that may otherwise remain invisible.

At the same time, proximity also blurred the line between research and aid in the eyes of respondents. Respondents sometimes viewed the research as part of the aid process itself, which may have influenced how they framed their responses. While it was carried out in full recognition that research cannot entirely escape the power asymmetries embedded in humanitarian and development aid settings, the study sought to mitigate these dynamics through open-ended, culturally adapted interviews, flexible sampling strategies, and efforts to create space for reciprocal dialogue. Overall, the qualitative methodology proved well-suited to trace impact pathways, foster critical reflection on how aid is experienced from below, and generate insights for adaptive programming.

The findings of this study highlight both the achievements and the persistent challenges of the relocation process under the Saameynta project. While relocation to Gribble has provided many displaced individuals with improved housing conditions and a sense of tenure security, critical concerns remain about the long-term sustainability of the process.

Projects like Saameynta are making significant efforts to improve the situation in Gribble. Saameynta arrived in Bosaso at a stage when Gribble was already in existence and has since worked to align its

efforts with previous initiatives to create a more coordinated approach –ensuring that multiple UN stakeholders are not operating in silos. Their work is focused on improving the site as much as possible within the given constraints. Several insights from this study suggest where future efforts could evolve further, particularly if the project is extended beyond 2025. Following phase 1, Saameynta began engaging with local authorities to clarify the legal implications of the *super logo* documentation. Yet questions persist among relocated residents regarding the rights it confers – whether it offers legal protection against eviction, allows for transfer or inheritance of property, or constitutes formal ownership. Clarifying this ambiguity and effectively communicating the outcome to IDPs and beneficiaries remain critical to preventing future protection risks. The study also identified opportunities to improve the development and integration of Gribble itself. While two-room housing designs – preferred by Gribble residents – have now been incorporated into new constructions, and facilities like a market and health centre have been built, many of these services remain inactive. Efforts to operationalise them and improve the connectivity to Bosaso, thus reducing the distance to key services and employment opportunities currently lacking in the site, remain key to Gribble’s future viability as an urban neighbourhood. Phase 2 of the study also reflected the need for a more transparent and inclusive approach to the relocation selection process and suggested that current relocation practices – focused mainly on vulnerability and shelter conditions – may unintentionally exclude economically active individuals who could contribute to Gribble’s social and economic development. Finally, a coherent vision for the future of Tawakal and 100Bush remains to be articulated. Without inclusive, forward-looking planning involving private landowners, local authorities, and displaced community representatives, the long-term sustainability of both relocation and camp populations remains uncertain.

Overall, broader questions remain about whether relocation is truly the most effective tool in a context like Somalia, and if so, how it can be strengthened to ensure better outcomes, particularly as Saameynta approaches its end in 2025.

First of all, **the effectiveness of relocation as a durable solution remains uncertain**. The case of Bosaso is key in showing that while relocation to Gribble provides immediate relief by offering IDPs a more stable living environment in terms of tenure security, its emotional toll and disruptive nature on livelihoods and access to services raise concerns. This is particularly important in a context where IDPs face social and logistical barriers to employment,¹⁰ particularly in roles that extend beyond casual labour. Indeed, in Bosaso IDPs often take on physically demanding roles – such as construction labour, carpentry, welding, roofing, and cleaning – that are seen as less desirable by the HC, something which limits their ability to secure stable income and long-term financial stability that would ensure timely rent payment and thus improved tenure security. While the Saameynta program attempts to adopt a more holistic approach by incorporating a livelihood component and developing a social cohesion strategy for Bosaso, it is worth questioning whether the relocation process itself is inadvertently

¹⁰ Schmitt-Degenhardt, S., & Aden, A. (2024). *Gribble Economic Study*. UNDP, Saameynta.

hindering the very areas Saameynta aims to improve, such as access to livelihoods, services, and social cohesion. As highlighted in this study, relocation has, in many ways, impaired livelihoods and limited access to services. While Saameynta's interventions may not yet have had their full impact, the Gribble relocation plans began in 2019, meaning some IDPs have endured the negative effects of relocation on their livelihoods and service access for five years without substantial improvements.

These insights do not point to a singular conclusion, but rather open space for critical deliberation as Saameynta comes to an end: can alternative strategies – such as the upgrading of existing camps – be less disruptive and more effective in ensuring the long-term sustainability of development programs? At the very least, future relocation activities may benefit from embedding stronger mechanisms to support economic integration and mobility, and from recognising that housing security alone may be insufficient in contexts where livelihood and social barriers persist.

Key takeaways:

- The findings invite critical consideration of whether relocation – while beneficial in certain domains – may inadvertently undermine longer-term goals around economic inclusion and social cohesion.
- Insights from this study can inform future programming beyond 2025, either by strengthening relocation models with more robust livelihood and service access strategies or by exploring alternative, less disruptive solutions such as urban upgrading.
- Rather than framing relocation as a stand-alone solution, durable solutions programming may need to more holistically address the interlinked factors – such as labour market integration – that shape tenure security over time.

Where relocation is pursued, this study suggests that greater attention to inclusive planning processes could mitigate its disruptive effects and improve long-term sustainability. A central reflection emerging from this study is the extent to which IDPs from Tawakal and 100Bush were involved in the decision-making process regarding the Gribble relocation project. While many now accept Gribble as the best available option – it is free, and it offers a better alternative to the unbearable conditions in the camps – this does not necessarily mean it was the right or most suitable solution for them. The process of site selection was largely shaped by government authorities and UN actors, with little space for displaced communities to influence outcomes. This raises important questions not only about the ethics of participation but also the practical implications for program success. The sustainability of Gribble depends on its long-term appeal. If people are moving primarily because it is free rather than because they see it as a viable place to settle, what will happen when external funding ends? Eventually, the future success of the project hinges on whether Gribble can become an attractive and self-sustaining urban settlement.

Looking forward, these reflections highlight the value of more participatory models that can inform the design of future durable solutions efforts as the Saameynta project moves toward its conclusion in 2025. In particular, they underscore the need to critically examine both the appeal and the

limitations of relocation, and to consider how displaced communities might be more directly involved in shaping the pathways intended to support their reintegration.

Key takeaways:

- The study suggests that IDPs' acceptance of relocation in Bosaso might often stem from constrained choices, raising questions about how durable such solutions are over time.
- Greater participation in the planning and selection of relocation sites may enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of such efforts and could also help surface alternative solutions that better align with displaced communities' aspirations.

Another key reflection is how the relocation process might have unintentionally reinforced certain assumptions about what it means to "exit" displacement – understood as a policy concept. Throughout the study, many respondents associated holding a land title or plot with the ultimate pathway out of displacement. This finding may, at least in part, stem from the common association of research efforts with the relocation process itself.

This assumption raises critical questions. At a practical level, many members of the host community do not own land either, yet they are not considered "displaced." What distinguishes them is not land ownership but income stability, the ability to rent stable and more decent housing over time, avoiding the constant threat of eviction. Seen in this light, overemphasis on land provision as a singular solution risks overlooking broader social and economic conditions required for long-term inclusion in urban life. Also, it is important to note that the free provision of land, while offering immediate relief, risks fostering aid dependency or reinforcing the expectation that assistance will always be provided. At a deeper level, this raises a conceptual tension: can one truly "exit" displacement, and if so, how? The lived reality of displacement is rarely so clear-cut: rather than a linear exit, many displaced people are engaged in an ongoing process of re-rooting – crafting new forms of belonging, identity, and livelihood. In this sense, land can be a useful resource – to establish conditions for long-time dwelling, feel protected from removal, and develop confidence in the ability to remain, – but not a definite endpoint.

Key takeaways:

- The emphasis on land ownership as a marker of "exit" from displacement might reflect both aid system incentives and displaced people's strategic positioning within that system, but may obscure the deeper factors that shape long-term stability.
- In contexts like Bosaso, strengthening tenure security through improved and stable income may offer a more sustainable pathway out of displacement than the free provision of land. This insight invites a broader reconsideration of durable solutions programming, including the potential of long-term rental models, income support, and urban integration strategies that do not rely solely on land allocation.

A fundamental step for Saameynta and the broader humanitarian-development community in Somalia is **ensuring greater accountability**. Across both rounds of data collection, participants frequently expressed confusion or uncertainty regarding different relocation decisions, intervention choices, and the overall transparency of the process. This lack of awareness among beneficiaries underscores a significant downward accountability gap. Currently, accountability in humanitarian and development projects like Saameynta is largely upward, structured around reporting requirements to donors, who in turn are accountable to their constituents.¹¹ There is no established mechanism ensuring direct accountability to the displaced communities themselves. Exercises like this study provide a model for incorporating beneficiary feedback, but more institutionalised, systematic, and accessible communication channels with affected communities can improve trust and perceptions of fairness and transparency by allowing relocated individuals and IDPs to voice concerns and receive clear, consistent responses.

As Saameynta enters its next phases, building regular engagement with both relocated households and those who remain in the Tawakal and 100Bush is critical. While the presence of a Saameynta National Officer has helped bridge this gap, expanding this outreach – such as through appointing a second officer, ideally a woman to better address gender-specific concerns – could improve trust-building and ensure that gender-specific and camp-based perspectives are better represented in decision-making.

Key takeaways:

- The absence of consistent, institutionalised accountability to displaced populations limits the transparency, downward accountability, and responsiveness of development and humanitarian programs.
- This study demonstrates the value of (qualitative) research as a tool informing more accountable and adaptive programming. Regular engagement with this kind of reflective, grounded inquiry could help bridge the downward accountability gap and support more inclusive program design.

¹¹ Eyben, Rosalind. 2007. "Labelling People for Aid." In *The Power of Labelling: How People Are Categorized and Why It Matters*, eds. Joy Moncrieffe and Rosalind Eyben. London; Sterling: Earthscan; International Institute of Development.