

# THE DILEMMA OF INTEGRATION INTERNALLY DISPLAYED PERSONS IN UASI- GISHU COUNTY, KENYA

*Kungu, David Mwangi*

Development Studies Department,  
School of Human Resource Development, Moi University

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## Abstract

Internal displacements in Africa and Kenya in particular have become a common phenomenon. These have had multiple causes ranging from ethnic conflict, inter clan conflicts, cattle rustling, floods, earth quakes and politically instigated tensions and conflicts. However, of the many causes of internal displacements the most common and notable is the politically instigated conflict as it is perennial, occurring after most elections since the re-introduction of multi-party politics. Such displacements occurred in 1992 and 1997, the worst being the post election violence of 2007 and 2008 following the disputed presidential elections. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the challenges to integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kenya with reference to Uasin Gishu District. The study adopted a survey research design. The target population was 31,189 IDPs in camps, the “host” community who were 289,380, 5 government officers and 5 NGOs giving assistance to IDPs. From these target populations a sample of 100 IDPS in camps, 100 members of the host community, 5 provincial administration officials and 5 representatives of NGOs were drawn using cluster sampling, simple random sampling, transect walk and census sampling. The data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. The quantitative data collected was analyzed descriptively while qualitative data was analyzed using the five thematic steps. The study found out that the main challenges to integration of the IDPS included lack of economic resources, the host community being unfriendly and fluctuating political temperatures at the national and local levels. The study recommends that the process of resettlement and integration of IDPs should be hastened, peace and reconciliation be a continuous process, to ensure that IDPs are economically integrated, they should be given economic support and that all actors should be included in the re-settlement and integration process.

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**Keywords:** Internally displaced persons, Conflict, Displacement, Integration and Resettlement

## **Introduction**

Internally displaced persons are persons who have been forced out of their homes by conflict/wars or natural disaster such as floods earth quakes, hurricane among other and are within their country border having not crossed any internally recognized borders (IMDC, 2001). However, more than 90% of the world IDPS are as a result of war or conflict between different ethnic groups, different religion, a fight for supremacy in utilization of resources and Inter-state wars among others.

The Kenyan IDP situation brought about by political turmoil has become a perennial problem witnessed slightly before or after elections and border disputes among other reasons. Kamungi (2002) notes that elections related violence is the major cause of internal displacement in Kenya as witnessed in 2002 and 2007 general elections as political groups used violence to intimidate supporters of their opponents.

In support of this, Kamungi (2002) opines that the number of IDPs after the 2002 violence spread across the country and those who had not returned to their home for one reason or the other were 44,421 households totaling to 355,368 persons who were either in camps, living with relatives or shifted to urban areas. The 2007/08 conflict arising from the disputed general election generated the highest number of IDPs in the Kenyan history. The conflict led to the death of over 1,200 persons and left displaced more than 500,000 persons. Even with the operation Rudi Nyumbani launched by the government, majority of IDPs had not returned to their homes as they were either in main camps or transition camps. It is from this back drop that this paper aims at investigating the challenges to the integration of IDP's in Uasin Gishu District, Kenya.

## **Problem Statement**

At the end of 2006, estimates of the world IDP population was 24.5 million in some 52 countries (Cohen, 2006) out of which, 21 countries with 11.8 million IDPs were in Africa. Even with this large number, international assistance for the IDPs was not well established since they do not cross National borders.

In Kenya, the term came to the lime light before the 1992 multi party elections resulting to what was commonly termed “Wakimbizi” or “Internal refugees”. The root cause for this was more political as the government of the day intimidated the supporters of opposition who were a challenge to its legitimacy (Kamungi, 2002). The same case was witnessed in 1997 with the climax in 2007/2008 resulting to over 500,000 IDPs. Theses incidences led

to the conflict and IDPs being associated with election and politics. However, it is worrying that 17 months after the end to conflict occasioned by 2007/08 conflict, more than 90% of the genuine IDPs were still in main camps, transitional camps or pitched tents in their farms. It is from this backdrop that this study sought to assess the factors affecting the integration of IDPs in Kenya.

### **Research Objectives**

- i) To assess the root causes of politically motivated internal displacements
- ii) To evaluate the perception of ethnic groups against each other
- iii) To assess the reasons for IDPs being in the camps for too long
- iv) To evaluate the challenges of resettlement and integration of IDPs

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is beneficial to the government as it will expose the root causes of conflict not only in the study area but to the country at large. Further it will expose the challenges faced by IDPs still in the camps and the challenges to long term integration.

The communities will also benefit, since on unearthing the root causes of conflict, solutions will be proposed to avert any future conflict. For the IDPs still in the camps, the study will propose possible ways of resettling and integrating them. On exposing the challenges to integration of IDPs, recommendations given will be beneficial to the IDPs struggling with the integration process.

### **Research Methodology**

The study employed a survey research design. According to Gay (1983), a survey research is an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variable. The target population for the study was persons/households affected by conflict to the extent of being internally displaced and who had either returned to their homes or were still in the camps. In Uasin Gishu Districts, the 2007/8 post election violence generated 31,189 internally displaced persons all of whom formed the target population. In addition, the host community (natives) who were believed to be the perpetrators of the conflict also formed part of target population. According to the 2009 census, the district had a population of 289,380 persons (KNBS 2010). Also included in the study were government officers in the District and Divisions who were 5 (1 District commissioner and 4 District officers) and 5 NGO dealing in assistance of IDPs. From the target population, a sample of 100 IDPs in main or transitional camps, 100

households of the host community, 5 provincial administrators and 5 representatives of NGO's were picked. The sample was picked using stratified sampling, simple random sampling, transect walk and census sampling techniques. The data were collected by use of questionnaires, interview, observation and documentary analysis. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively while qualitative data were analysed using the five thematic steps according to Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011).

## Results and Discussion

### The Root Causes Political Internal Displacement

The study found out that internal displacement in the study area was a perpetual problem. The district had witnessed internal displacements in 1992, 1997 and 2007/8. In fact a majority of the respondents 85% who are current IDPs indicated that this was not the first time they had been displaced from their homes and their property destroyed. They categorically noted that they were displaced in 1992 and 1997. However, in the 1992 and 1997 displacements they were in the camps for a period of 4-9 months. The reasons for the perpetual displacements are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Reasons for Conflict and Displacements

Cause of conflict and displacement	Response in %				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Land	55	20	0	20	5
Ethnic hatred	70	25	0	5	0
Political incitement	65	35	0	0	0
Unfair distribution of resources	20	15	0	5	60
Political Ideological difference	55	40	0	5	0
Economic advantage of one ethnic group over others	50	35	0	10	5

N=100

The findings above reveal that land problems were associated with the conflict and consequently displacement of persons in the study are as revealed by 75% of the respondents who agreed that this was one of the root causes. The main reason for this was that the 'natives' viewed land owned by the 'aliens' as originally belonging to their fore fathers. Aliens (IDPs) were therefore perceived to be infringing on the rights of the locals to occupy the land and therefore when an opportunity arose, they took advantage of it to threaten or evict the 'aliens'.

Ethnic hatred was also associated with the perpetual displacement of persons as 95% of the respondents to this fact. The ethnic problems arose as one of the alien ethnic groups which also happened to be the most affected

by the displacements was perceived to be arrogant, proud and abusive. Therefore, given a chance the native community would use the opportunity to reduce this pride and arrogance through conflict and consequently displacements.

Political incitement also contributed to conflict and consequently internal displacements as 90% of the respondents agreed to the fact. Political incitements were used during campaigns as a way of intimidating the alien communities to vote for the persons endorsed by the local community. This was associated to the belief that most alien communities did not vote in line with the native community preferred candidates. In fact an interview with one respondent revealed that during this time, the local community was informed by politicians to be aware of '*madoadoa*' which means dirty spots which may spoil their purity in voting. They were also told to remove '*sangara*' a very fast growing weed which is grass like and which reduces crop yields. In the political context this meant that they could reduce the votes meant for preferred candidates. Such statements ignited conflict between the different ethnic groups leading to displacements.

Political ideological differences between ordinary people, politicians at local and national levels were also cited as a root cause to conflict. This was revealed by 95% of the respondents who agreed to the fact. A point in time was the 1992 displacement where politicians allied to the natives were supporting single party rule while politicians allied to the aliens were in support of multi party idea thus resulting to conflict and internal displacements. In the 2007 political campaigns, the politicians allied to the natives were of federalism ideology while those allied to the 'alien' ethnic group were for the unitary system of government thus resulting to conflict of ideology and real conflict and displacements.

Finally, economic advantage of the alien community over the native community was also a contributory factor to displacement of persons as 85% of the respondents agreed to that fact. This economic advantage was attributed to the alien community being hard working. However, according to the natives, the economic advantage was due to unfair distribution of resources, banks favoring the alien community in giving loans, unfair trade practices and theft among others. This economic gap created bad blood between the communities to a point that when an opportunity arose aggression was meted against the alien community. this was aimed at economically disempowering the community in a bid to make it vulnerable.

### **The Perception of ethnic groups against each other**

The study found out that the alien community and the native community had very varied perceptions of each other. Some of which were positive while others were negative thus perpetuating conflict. To begin with,

the alien community expressed that the native community hated other communities and especially the Gikuyu, are jealousy of other communities and that they are inhuman. On the positive, a majority indicated that persons of the native community are good since they had stayed together in peace for a long period of time but were only incited by the political class to partake to conflict. Interview respondents in support of this noted;

*‘For now, they are good people and they seem ashamed of what they did. However, I don’t know if they are serious in welcoming us or they are just pretending, but all in all, they are welcoming us back home’*

Another respondent positively commented;

*‘Currently, there is no bad relationship since we do meet and greet one another even though I may not know what is in their heart. But all in all they have been and still are good people and we love them. May God forgive them and help me forget what they did to me’*

A third interviewee positively indicated:

*‘Currently, we have sat down with them and we have forgiven each other. Now they are at least welcoming. I pray to God to forgive them for what they did to me’.*

On the other hand, the native community had their own perception of the alien community. Some respondents indicated that the two communities were like water and paraffin which can never mix. They associated this to the fact that the alien community was an imposter who has no respect for the host community and were a traitor especially during elections and that they had taken away land, businesses and jobs which were meant for them and their children.

On the positive, the Agikuyu and the Gussi community most of who were affected by the conflict were perceived by the host as industrious, creative and hard working. In fact other communities including the host community had learnt a lot from these two communities and it was for this reason that they even inter married. In support of this, one of the old men in an interview noted;

*These two communities have taught us a lot. They are good in almost everything; business, farming...name it. In fact I encourage my two sons to marry a Gikuyu girls. ...I wonder fighting occurs between us (the kalenjini) and these communities (Interview with a village elder).*

The mixed reactions between the different ethnic groups have not been conducive and as such it has led to tension between the different communities thus leading to conflict and consequently internal displacements. With these mixed reactions on the perceptions of the different communities against each other, it is clear that a lot needs to be done to

create a conducive atmosphere for co- existence of the different communities as there seemed to be a lot of suspicion among the community members.

### **The Reasons for Being in the Camp for Too Long**

After the violence that rocked the country in December 2007 and extended to February 2008, the study revealed that in the study area, 90 percent of the IDPs were still in the main and transition camps. The study therefore sought to analyze why the IDPS had been in the camps for such a long time. The findings are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Reasons for Being in the Camp for Too Long

Reason	Response in %				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Fear for renewed violence</b>	50	35	0	10	5
<b>The host community not welcoming</b>	55	35	0	5	5
<b>Threats from the host community</b>	60	25	0	5	10
<b>Lack of economic resources to start life</b>	65	25	0	10	0
<b>Lack of support from provincial administration</b>	65	15	0	10	10
<b>Land/business premise taken away</b>	0	0	10	65	15
<b>Mistrust among the various ethnic groups</b>	75	15	0	10	0

N=100

The study found out that fear for renewed violence was identified as one of the reasons as to why IDPs were too long in the camps. This was opined by 85% of the respondents who agreed to this fact. This was associated to the fact that tension was still high, and therefore fears that in case any political upheaval conflict would ensue leading to more deaths and destruction of property. A case quoted by many respondents was when the country was awaiting announcement of a new cabinet and there were rumors that a powerful politician from the rift valley was not in the list. A second scenario was during the censure motion targeting the minister for agriculture believed to have been financed by a politician belonging to the alien group and finally when the Waki Commission forwarded the controversial envelop to the chief mediator Kofi Annan. These three scenarios led to tension in the area to a point that the alien communities sought refuge with relatives in the urban areas and even outside the district.

The ‘host’ community had not been very welcoming. Although a lot of peace and reconciliation meeting were held and host community agreed to welcome the IDPs back to their homes, the pace was slow indicating

unwillingness. This was revealed by 90% of the respondents who agreed that the host community was not warm and welcoming. There were also threats from host community especially the youths who would have wished that the alien community never came back so that they could take possession of the economic resources formally owned by the IDPs. This was supported by 85% of the respondents who agreed that treats from local community members forced them to remain in the camps longer. This was revealed in *Jasho* farm where in one of the farms, a sign has been written in Kiswahili '*ngoja, mambo bado, ngojea 2012*' which meant 'just wait, war is still on, wait for 2012'. In a separate case, the threats were put in practice in Lelmolok farm when one old woman in a transition IDP camp had gone to check on her farm, she was brutally killed by youths.

Lack of economic resources was another reason for IDPs being in the camps for too long as opined by 90% of the respondents agreed to that. The IDPs did not have any income generating activity to either take their children to school or feed them. Therefore staying in the camps was a solution since they got well wishers who often gave donations in terms of food and even scholarships for their children. The government on the other hand had not compensated the IDPs adequately. An interview with a member of the provincial administration revealed that IDPs had been given ksh.10,000 to help them kick-start life. However, this amount for most families was too little to even feed them.

The provincial administration was expected to be pivotal in the resettlement process. However, this was not the case as the chief and assistant chief, were suspected to be partisan and not genuine in the resettlement process. This was revealed by 80% of the respondents who agreed that there was lack of genuine and adequate support from provincial administration (chiefs and assistant chiefs). In fact it was revealed that after location and sub-location peace meetings these leaders held night meetings whose agendas were never known but the reluctance of the local community to accommodate the IDPs could be related to these meetings.

Failure to resettle was not associated to economic resources being taken over by the host community. Surprisingly, all the land and business premises formally owned by the IDPs were still intact. This was revealed by 80% of the respondents who disagreed that that their land/business premises being taken over was a reason for being too long in the IDP camps or taking too long to resettle. However, mistrust among various ethnic groups was a key reason for non-resettlement. This was opined by 90% of the respondents who agreed to the fact. For some reason the different communities did not trust each other therefore leading to tension between the ethnic groups.



## The Challenges to Resettlement and Integration of IDPs The IDPs Perspective

Form the IDP's perspective especially those who had returned to their homes, there were several challenges which hindered their economic, social and political integration. The findings for are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Challenges to Integration of IDPS

<i>Challenge</i>	<b>Response in %</b>				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Economic assets destroyed	65	20	0	5	10
Crops are grazed and therefore no harvest	20	5	0	70	5
Bread winner killed in the violence	5	15	0	70	5
Lack of trust for other community	70	15	0	10	5
The trauma	55	35	0	5	5
Ethnic hatred	50	90	0	5	5
National politics causing division among different communities	65	20	0	5	10
<b>Political mistrust among various tribes</b>	60	25	0	5	10

N=100

On economic integration, the fact that all economic assets were destroyed during the violence had been a challenge to the integration of IDPs. This was opined by 85% of the respondents who agreed to that fact. Therefore starting to accumulate the economic assets so as to have income generating activities had been a challenge for many families most of which were female headed. In fact, it was realized that most families had lost hope in life especially on recounting the loss they encountered during the violence.

For most households, there land was still intact as it had not been taken away by the native communities. However, for most of them the land was used for grazing by the native community thus resulting to tension and mistrust. This was revealed by 65% of the respondents who agreed to the fact that their land was being used for grazing. In fact when owners of land resisted, tension and sometimes conflict ensued. For instance, an old woman was killed in Lelmolok farm as she was resisting her farm being grazed on. However, up on tilling land and planting of crops, it was rare for the crops to be grazed on. This was revealed by 75% of the respondents who disagreed to the fact that their crops were grazed on.

Death of the working class or the bread winner had not been a challenge to integration. This could be because most of the families did not lose their bread winners to the violence may be because most of them stay in the urban areas and were therefore not caught up in the conflict. This was

revealed by 75% of the respondents who disagreed with the fact that death of bread winner was a challenge to their integration. Therefore, challenges to integration could be associated to other factors other than death of a bread winner.

Lack of trust for the other community was challenge to social integration. This was highlighted by 85% of the respondents agreed to the fact. This implied that even with the dialogue, peace and reconciliation committees among other initiatives there was still mistrust among the communities. The trauma of the events witnessed during violence was also a factor to reckon with as it had been hard for families to psychologically accept the loss to their property and relatives thus continuing to feel unsafe. This was opined by 90% of the respondents who agreed that trauma of the events to the violence was a challenge to their resettlement and integration. Ethnic hatred and ethnic ideological difference were other factors affecting resettlement and integration of IDPs. Politically, national politics caused division among different communities at the local level creating political mistrust among the people at the local level.

### **The Governments' Perspective**

The government on the other hand had its share of the challenges to the resettlement and integration of IDPs. To begin with, there was lack of finances to adequately compensate the IDPs. For instance, the IDPs received the ksh.10,000 to start life after the PEV, an amount which even the government officials noted was too little. The government was also supposed to give, ksh.25,000 to each household for reconstruction of houses, however, in the district only 3,621 households had received the money not forgetting that amount was too little to construct a house. In addition, upon receiving the money, most of the displaced diverted it into other use with the hope that they would receive more finances from the government and other donors thus remaining in the camps for a longer period of time. There was also the problem of the same family owning several tents with the aim of multiple gains in terms of finances, donations and relief food among others.

In some areas, penetrating peace and reconciliation had become difficult. In fact most of the peace meeting organized by the government and NGOs were not well attended by the host community and for the few that attended, their contribution was very minimal. This was an indication that the 'host' community was not ready to accommodate the victims to the violence. In addition, most of the peace and reconciliation meetings were held in big hotels and were attended by power brokers who purported to represent the local people.

There was also lack of information on genuine IDPs especially within the town as the list grew bigger day by day even one year after the end of

violence. With some people pretending to be IDPs while they were not. In addition, those IDPs who were tenants insisted that they have to be paid the ksh. 25,000 for reconstruction of houses yet their houses were not burnt thus a strain on the meager resources set aside for the displaced.

Lack of political good will from the local politicians had played negatively on the resettlement process as well. The political class in the area had adopted a silence attitude towards the resettlement an indication that they may have been against it or did not support it all together. In fact tension was high whenever one of them or the community was mentioned as was the case during the censure motion against the Agriculture Minister, the Mau forest saga, and the Hague debate among others.

Finally the housing programme by the government and NGOs (Danish Refugee Council) had taken a very slow pace, leading to the displaced living in torn and leaking tents for a long period of time. For instance, 17 months after the displacements, only 450 houses had been reconstructed by the ministry of special programmes and the Danish Refugee Council. This was a worrying trend as it meant that it could take more than 5 years to complete the reconstruction.

## **Conclusion**

The study concluded that, the root causes of perpetual displacements in the District included land problems, ethnic hatred and political incitements. Economic advantage of one community over others, ideological differences among the common people and among politicians also resulted to conflict and perpetual displacements.

In addition, more than 90% of the IDPs were still living under tents in main and transition camps. The reasons for non-resettlement included fear for renewed violence, the ‘host’ community not welcoming and threats from community members especially the youths. Other reasons included lack of economic resources due to non compensation, lack of support though provincial administration and mistrust among different ethnic groups.

The challenges to integration of IDPs were diverse and classified as economic factors such as economic assets having been destroyed by the violence and their land being used for grazing by the native community. Other factors include lack of trust among communities, trauma, national politics causing division and political mistrust.

The government had its share of challenges which included lack of adequate finances, peace and reconciliation not being effectively done leading to tension and the slow pace of housing programme.

## **Recommendations**

The study recommends that;

The process of resettlement and integration of the displaced should be hastened. This can be achieved through identification of genuine IDPs, the government fulfilling its pledge on reconstruction by providing construction materials instead of money and the same delivered to the farms of those with pitched tents in their farms. In addition, since most the conflicts arose due to land issues or problems, there is need for a comprehensive land policy.

To avoid any further chances of conflict, peace and reconciliation should be a continuous process where all actors should be involved at different levels but with the main players being the host communities and the displaced persons. In addition, before any resettlement is done, psychological counseling should be done to reduce the trauma of the aftermath of the violence and build confidence among the affected members.

To ensure that IDPs are economically integrated they should be provided with farm inputs for at least five years continuously. In addition, politicians should be warned against making statements that may jeopardize the resettlement and integration process and when they do so, they should be punished severely.

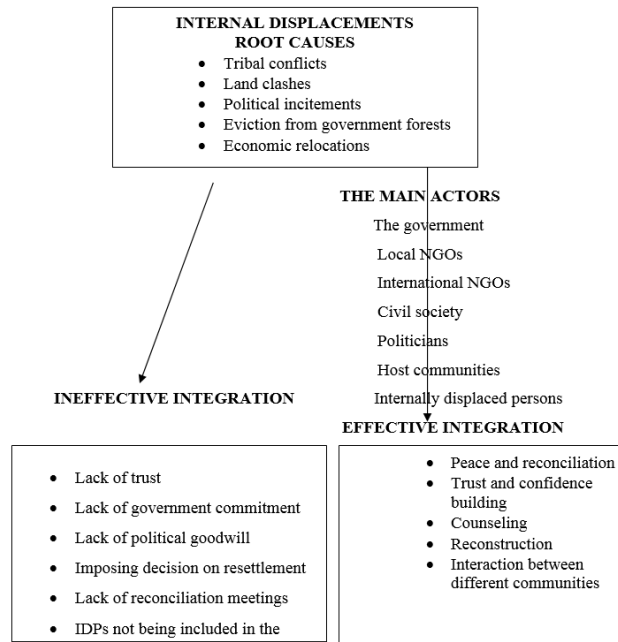


Figure 1: Framework for Effective Integration of IDPS

Finally, the study recommends that that effective integration of IDPs calls for all actors to participate with a lot of dedication to the resettlement process, peace building and actual integration. Right from the displaced and the host community who should come together and iron out their differences. On the other hand, the government should through its mechanisms provide a

conducive environment for integration by provision of security, finances, and other resources. The political class should provide their good will to the process and local and international NGOs provide services mandated by their memorandum such as relief food, reconstruction, counseling among others. To effectively manage the IDPs and problems associated with their resettlement; the study proposes that all the main actors be involved at every stage of the entire process. The model guiding effective resettlement is shown in figure 1.

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