

A.15 Kenya (Dadaab) – 2011 – Famine / Conflict

Update:

Keywords: Planned and managed camps, Emergency shelter, T-shelter, Core housing, Site planning, infrastructure,

Country:

Kenya

Project location:

Dadaab

Conflict / disaster:

July 2011 famine and continuing conflict

Camp population:

At maximum over 450,000 registered refugees

Project outputs:

Camp planning and site construction for 76,000 people on two sites

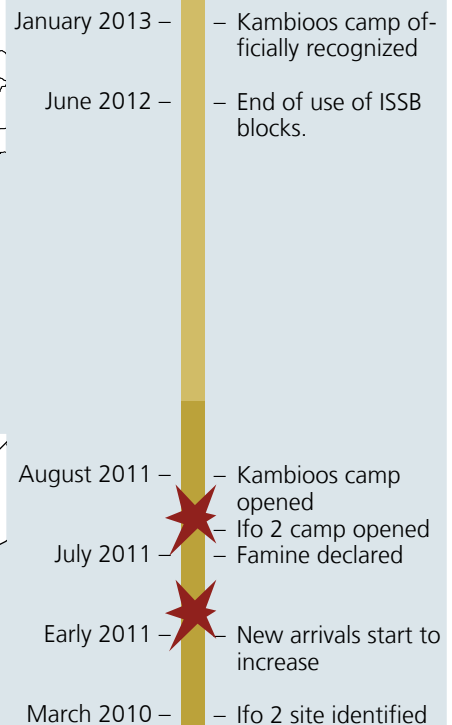
Plot size:

Up to five people: 10m x 12m

More than five people: 12m x 15m



Project timeline



Project description

Following a massive influx of Somali refugees to the camps at Dadaab in Kenya, two new camps were planned and built. Camp services were set-up and a refugee-led committee was established to manage the camps. Planning was for 200,000 people, but poor security and lack of government recognition meant that far fewer people settled at the sites. The majority of families were sheltered in tents. Later shelters were built with plastic sheet on timber frames. As families became established, many built their own structures. After some initial construction, use of Interlocking Stabilised Soil Blocks (ISSB) was prohibited by the government.

Strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ Qualified and experienced technical experts oversaw camp planning and construction.
- ✓ The Government of Kenya supported site identification, physical planning, shelter construction and registration of refugees.
- ✓ Significant refugee and host community participation in the project.
- ✓ Complete settlement services were established. (including water supply and sanitation, health, education).
- ✓ Settlements were built rapidly once there was agreement to start.
- ✓ Site planners learnt lessons from the current camps and paid particular attention to improve firebreaks.
- ✗ The camp populations removed vegetation and damaged the surrounding environment.

- ✗ There were difficult labour relations between the host community and the refugee population, initially exacerbated by different policies by different implementing organisations.
- ✗ Security was poor and the lack of official recognition of Kambioos camp meant police presence was insufficient.
- ✗ Poor security, challenging host community relations and difficult access meant that the camps ended up being much smaller than planned. The growing population of the camps at Dadaab, ended up moving into the existing densely populated sites.
- ✗ There were insufficient materials available to the refugee population for shelter construction and fuel.
- After 300 shelters were built with Interlocking Stabilised Soil Blocks (ISSB), the government prohibited further construction to avoid the sites becoming permanent camps.



New sites were identified, planned and constructed within 20km of the existing town of Dadaab to cope with major new influxes and a backlog of non-registered new refugee arrivals. Initial planning was for sites for 200,000 people.

Photo: Joseph Ashmore

Background

(See *Shelter Projects 2009*, A.10)

The conflict in Somalia led to forced migration of thousands of Somali nationals into the neighbouring countries, including Kenya. Since 1991, the Garissa County of Kenya became a home to refugees fleeing war torn Somalia. Dadaab, a small town within the County is located 100km from Garissa town and 90km from the Somali border.

In 2009, Dadaab had a population of 250,000, mainly Somali refugees. They were settled in to three major camps known as Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera.

Continuous drought inside Somalia coupled with persistent fighting led to further displacements from Somalia into the existing camps in Kenya. By mid-2011, up to 1,400 Somalis were arriving per day, leading the camp population to increase to over 450,000 people.

Site selection

The massive influx of refugees led to the need for new camps.

The process to identify new camps began in 2009 with three possible sites being identified for Kambioos in Fafi district and one site for Ifo extension in Lagdera District.

After a series of negotiations with the respective host communities, it was agreed that the two camps were vital for decongesting the existing camps.

During these negotiations, there was a significant concern from the

government that additional camps would signify increased insecurity, not a positive message for Kenya to be promoting internationally. Additionally, there was the concern that refugees would clear vegetation, potentially causing conflict with the host communities.

Site planning

Both camps were planned based on a community concept with 10 or 12 shelters.

Each camp was planned with an 8m wide sanitation line between communities. This break was for sanitation facilities, including communal showers, latrines and garbage pits for the initial settlement. Roads were 15m wide.

Strong camp management was required to enforce these breaks, as there was a tendency for households to build fences out of thorns and brushwood that encroached on them. This had also been an issue in existing camps in Dadaab.

The camps were built in phases. Each of the phases of "Ifo 2" camp was planned to measure 2.5km x 1.5km. Kambioos site was built in four planning phases each with 10 sections and seven residential blocks.

Each plot initially measured 10m x 12m. However, as households encroached on sanitation lines and roads, the plot sizes were adjusted to 12m x 15m when relocation of refugees living in the outskirts began in mid-2012. Depending upon their size, larger families were allocated two or three plots.

Family latrines and showers were built at the corner of each individual plot, 8–10m from the shelter. It was expected that refugees would take proper care of them and not allow foul smells to develop. When a latrine was full it would be decommissioned, backfilled and replaced with another one close by.

Implementation

Parts of "Ifo 2" camp had flood zones. As a result a Topographical Survey was conducted in 2011 and recommendations were made for flood mitigation and control measures.

The site of Kambioos had fewer flooding issues, but there were initially concerns about the water scarcity, and the additional challenges caused by the sandy soil and a bedrock. This created issues in pitching tents and digging latrines, while access roads, both to and within the site were a challenge.

Both sites had significant security issues, hampering access, with major incidents, including kidnappings occurring at both sites.

The following roles were taken on by different organisations in the two camps:

- **Camp management agency:** responsible for site planning and shelter in the two camps. A team of 6 surveyors and planners per camp and one overall site planner was responsible for supervision of all works.
- **Construction:** responsible for roads, schools, health facilities and general infrastructure provision in the two camps



The site of Kambioos was covered in dense and thorny vegetation and had very sandy soil, requiring additional care to be taken with construction of shelters, latrines and other infrastructure. Photo: Joseph Ashmore

(six staff were involved). An organisation assigned two engineers in Kambioos and another two in "Ifo 2" to directly monitor the works that were sub contracted to local building contractors.

- **Shelter partner:** responsible for emergency shelters in the two camps (four staff were involved).
- **Operating partner:** responsible for sanitation and hygiene in Kambioos alone and over 40 labourers to support in latrine construction (six staff were involved).

Most of the challenges experienced in the site construction were labour related. Early on in the construction, different partners paid different wages to labourers. Wages for labourers were later standardised to reduce delays. Pay delays also caused strikes for up to 7 days.

Initially there were challenges in identifying who represented the host community, as many forceful individuals claimed to be a representative.

Shelter

At Ifo 2 camp, a total of 16,000 tents were issued to refugee families during the relocation in July – October 2011. By the end of 2012, they were in a bad condition and 6,000 were replaced with new tents.

Tents in the camps had a limited lifetime averaging just over 6 months. Although many of the arriving families from Somalia were accustomed to nomadic and moveable structures, training in maintaining tents was required.

Over time, many of the refugees covered their tents with plastic sheets while others purchased iron

sheets which they used to construct shelters in addition to the tents.

To provide families with a more durable solution, Interlocking Stabilised Soil Block (ISSB) shelters were built from May 2012 onwards. The plan was to construct 16,000 shelters in a 2 – 3 years period.

By the end of June 2012, 296 of these shelters had been completed. In July 2012 however, the Kenyan government stopped the production of ISSB shelters stating that these were permanent structures rather than refugee shelters.

In November 2012, the construction of temporary shelters was approved by the Kenyan authorities. These had timber frames, plastic sheeting walls and a corrugated iron roof. This design was an interim structure, to facilitate rapid delivery of a durable roof, while negotiations on other shelter options continued.

Tents were also used for shelter at Kambioos camp, and plans were put in place to replace these with temporary shelters as well.

Services

When the sites were set up, water was brought in by truck. Boreholes were made and 16.5km of water pipeline, 41 tap stands and 246 taps were later installed.

By the end of 2012, one operational borehole in Kambioos camp delivered sufficient water for its population to receive 20 litres per person per day. A health post and primary schools were also serving the population, and plans to build a secondary school were underway.

Camp management structures were established in both camps (one chairman and one chair lady)

with Section Leaders, Community Peace and Protection Teams, Site Planning, Shelter, Food Advisory WASH and Graveyard committees.

The future

Kambioos camp suffered from several serious security incidents. One of the reasons for poor security at the Kambioos camp was that there was a lack of police presence, despite a plot measuring 300m x 300m had been allocated for a police station. By 2013 plans were underway to construct police station.

Police were not deployed since the site was not officially recognized by the government until 2013. As a result, financial resources were limited, and only 18,000 people moved into the camp initially planned for 150,000 people. Similar issues were faced at Ifo 2 camp with a total population of 69,000 by the end of 2012. The rest of the new arrivals settled in the outskirts of existing but congested camps.

No significant fires were reported in either camps. This was attributed to the proper planning and good management, reducing encroachments into open spaces and effective firebreaks. This was in contrast with the congested old camps.

On 11th January 2013 Kambioos camp was officially recognized by the government, and became "foreseen as one of the camps where refugees residing in urban areas in Kenya will be relocated to, in accordance with the government Directive issued in December 2012 calling for the relocation of refugees and asylum-seekers from urban areas to refugee camps".



Top to bottom: Site marking; Tent erection on a windy day; Newly established blocks at IFO camp extension. Camps were organised into a) plots, b) communites, c) blocks, and d) sections. Photo: Joseph Ashmore

Kenya- Fafi District Kambioos Refugee Camp Overview

As of June 2012



Sources; UNHCR, LWF/DWS-Dadaab ©2012
Datum: WGS 1984
Projection: UTM Zone 37
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

