PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL HABITAT IN DOOLOW

2022-2024

Introduction and objectives

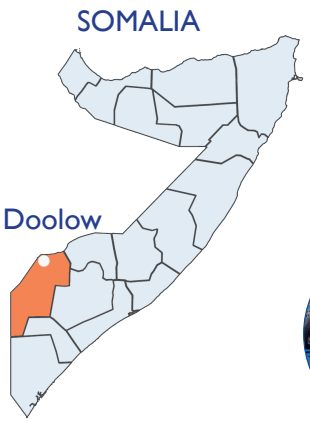
IOM in collaboration with CRAterre conducted a participatory assessment of local habitat and building cultures in Doolow, Somalia, from November 2022 to January 2023. The assessment focused on the Ladan and Kabasa IDP sites.

Objectives:

- Evaluate existing local building practices and lifestyles.
- Train local staff on assessment methodologies.
- Contextualize and localize IOM shelter projects.
- Contribute to sustainable shelter solutions in Somalia.
- Develop a local building practices profile (Shelter Response Profile) for Somalia.

Assessment activities

- Research of secondary sources.
- Preparatory work, adaptation of assessment materials and coordination with authorities.
- Training sessions for enumerators and IOM staff to build local capacity.
- Community consultation: accompanied visit (12), collective interview (10), women's FGD (7), builders and construction workers FGD (4), household interviews (6).
- Direct observation and transect walk.



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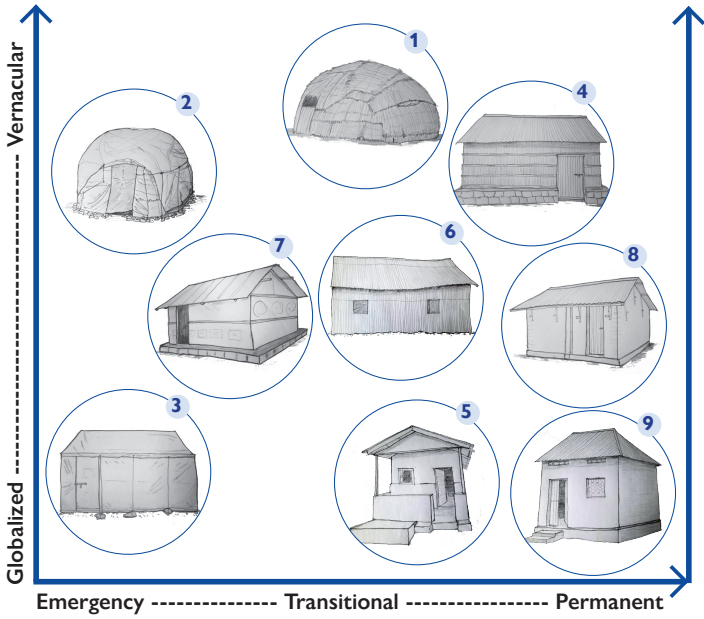
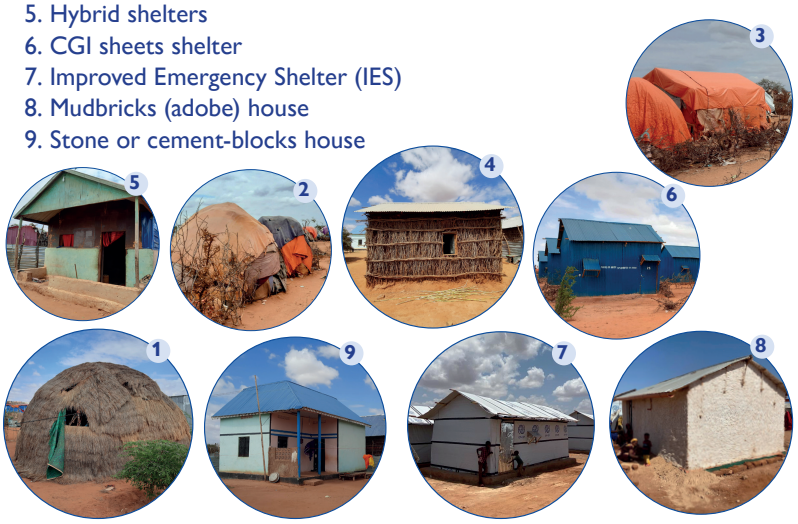
AFFORDABLE HOUSING / SHELTER CONSTRUCTION TYPOLOGIES



1. Aqal
2. *Buul* or *buush*
3. ESK (Emergency Shelter Kits)
4. Wattle-and-daub rectangular plan constructions "*baraako*" / "*cariish*"
5. Hybrid shelters
6. CGI sheets shelter
7. Improved Emergency Shelter (IES)
8. Mudbricks (adobe) house
9. Stone or cement-blocks house



KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

► **Exposure to risks:** Doolow faces hazards including flooding mainly from poor drainage, fire risks from dense housing and flammable materials. → ***Improve drainage systems, elevate houses, and construct waterproof doorsteps to mitigate flooding. Space housing plots and design cooking areas to avoid fire risk.***

► **Site and infrastructure:** Many IDPs consider that public spaces do not meet their needs in terms of security (lack of lighting at night), or quality of the spaces (lack of trees or shadows to meet with others. → ***Plant trees for shade as social spaces and solar lighting for improved living conditions and security.***

► **Water, health, hygiene, and sanitation:** Access to water is a very time consuming activity, mainly for women and children. Sanitation is poor, with high ratios of users per latrine. Health hazards from poor sanitation and defficient waste management, lead to waterborne diseases. → ***Establish wells and promote rainwater harvesting. Also, health improvements require more latrines, and community-based waste management systems.***

► **Community engagement and skill transfer:** Construction is often a communal effort, fostering social cohesion and ensuring the transfer of building knowledge. Mutual support systems such as the traditional "*goob*" are used in construction. → ***Encourage mutual aid practices and create income-generating opportunities through construction. Train local labor in alternative construction methods to build capacity and ensure sustainability.***

► **Sustainable use of materials:** Locally sourced materials are used in construction due to their availability and affordability. However, the overuse of timber is leading to deforestation. On the other hand, carbon footprint is an important issue created by imported materials (plastic or CGI sheets and cement). → ***Promote the use of local techniques (wattle-and-daub) within a forestry management framework. Mudbricks (not a local technique, thus training and supervision are needed) can be a sustainable alternative, reducing deforestation and carbon footprint.***

► **Cultural adaptation:** Most shelters do not provide privacy, enough rooms for gender separation or are not secure enough. → ***Promote dignified shelter solutions with big enough plots facilitating extensions, enough rooms or shelter surface, partitions, incremental shelters...***

► **Housing conditions:** Most shelters are small and overcrowded, many are in poor condition and lack durability (e.g. *buul* or ESK), and others lack thermal comfort as they are inadapted to local climate conditions (e.g. CGI sheets shelters). → ***Vernacular techniques suit the local climate and expertise. Industrial materials like cement, concrete blocks, and corrugated iron sheets can play a positive role regarding durability when used in good combination with local materials (e.g. cement and stone foundation, CGI sheets roofing).***

Conclusion

The assessment underscores the need for sustainable, locally adapted building practices to improve the living conditions of IDPs in Doolow. By leveraging local materials and techniques within an environmental management framework, sustainable and culturally appropriate shelter solutions can be developed. Regular updates and community validation of findings are essential for the ongoing relevance of the assessment.