

SUSTAINABLE URBAN INTEGRATION OF DISPLACEMENT - AFFECTED COMMUNITIES (SUIDAC) PROGRAMME

First Regional Dialogue
Jigjiga, Ethiopia

17 - 19 February 2025



Funded by
the European Union

Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

Hosted by
UNOPS



This report provided highlights of the discussions at the first SUIDAC Regional Dialogue co-organised by Cities Alliance, the Municipality of Jigjiga and OWDA and financed by the European Union (EU).

Contributors: This publication was produced through a collaborative effort by the Cities Alliance team.

Reviewer: Florence Lozet, Urban Forced Displacement Lead and SUIDAC Programme Coordinator, Cities Alliance.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the corporate policies or viewpoints of Cities Alliance Secretariat, its members, or UNOPS.

Photo credits: Linda Leila Diatta, Senior Communications Officer, Cities Alliance, and the Jigjiga City Administration.

| Contents

4

OVERVIEW

14

THE SUIDAC PROGRAMME

34

TECHNICAL SESSIONS

78

SUIDAC: INITIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

20

INTRODUCTIONS

46

FEASIBILITY STUDIES

80

SITE VISITS

8

PARTICIPANTS

30

UPDATES ON THE REGIONAL
NETWORK AND DIALOGUE:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CRRF

50

KEY FINDINGS BY
COUNTRY

82

REFLECTIONS





OVERVIEW

This report captures the key discussions, insights, and outcomes from the first regional dialogue of the Sustainable Urban Integration of Displacement-Affected Communities (SUIDAC) Programme, organised by Cities Alliance and financed by the European Union (EU). The event took place in Jigjiga, Ethiopia, from 17 to 19 February 2025 and was the first in a series of six regional dialogues aimed at strengthening urban resilience and inclusive development in cities hosting displaced populations.

The dialogue was hosted by the Jigjiga City Administration in partnership with the Organization for Welfare and Development in Action (OWDA), and organised by Cities Alliance with funding from the EU. It focused on improving the self-reliance of displaced populations and host communities while strengthening local governance through inclusive urban planning and sustainable infrastructure projects. Participating municipalities presented findings from their feasibility studies, conducted over a six-month analytical phase, and engaged in peer learning and discussions on best practices for urban displacement management.



ABOUT CITIES ALLIANCE

Cities Alliance is a global partnership fighting urban poverty and supporting cities to deliver sustainable development. It focuses on improving the well-being of the most vulnerable people in cities through innovative, multisectoral solutions that address climate change, migration and forced displacement, gender equality, and economic development in secondary cities, primarily in the informal sector. Hosted by UNOPS, Cities Alliance operates a multi-donor fund to manage its activities and support its mission.

More information: <https://www.citiesalliance.org>



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cities worldwide are facing an unprecedented refugee crisis, as over 120 million people are displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, and climate change. Most settle in urban areas, straining fast-growing secondary cities in developing countries that already struggle to meet the needs of their populations. The Horn of Africa, which hosts one-fifth of the world's refugees, is particularly affected.

Addressing urban displacement requires city-driven solutions that connect immediate humanitarian response with long-term urban development. Recognising this, the SUIDAC Programme takes a holistic approach that focuses on governance, citizenship, environmental and financial sustainability, economic realities, and service delivery to support displaced communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. SUIDAC works in nine

secondary cities with large displaced populations: Kananga and Tshikapa (DRC), Assosa and Jigjiga (Ethiopia), Borama and Gabiley (Somalia), Atbara (Sudan), and Koboko and Arua (Uganda).

SUIDAC seeks to influence the narrative on migration, acknowledging it as a lasting reality rather than a crisis and shifting the focus from restriction to opportunity. Instead of seeing migration as a challenge to control, SUIDAC emphasises solutions rooted in communities that allow cities to innovate, grow, and build more inclusive urban spaces and economic opportunities.

Through regional dialogues, the SUIDAC Programme elevates cities' priorities on national and international platforms, advocating for stronger policies and support. They create a network that catalyses engagement of Displacement-Affected Communities (DACs) in local planning and serves

as a peer-learning platform for discussing needs, challenges and solutions. SUIDAC builds on lessons from the EU-funded Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action (2019-2023).

The inaugural dialogue in Jigjiga provided participating cities with the rare opportunity to play a leading role in an international discussion on urban displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa. These cities and their stakeholders began working together to shape solutions and craft sustainable, inclusive strategies that address their unique needs, while ensuring that their voices are heard and their challenges recognized at the global level.

The second Regional Dialogue of the SUIDAC Programme will be held in Arua City, Uganda, from 22 to 25 September 2025.





PARTICIPANTS



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

- Augustin Kamba Malumba, Provincial Government of Kasai, Tshikapa
- The Honourable Faustin Lumulwabo Wetu, Mayor of Tshikapa
- The Honourable Muadi Musube Rose, Mayor of Kananga
- Irene Velarde, AVSI, Project Manager, Tshikapa and Kananga
- Jean Pierre Kashala Ntumba, Mayor's Assistant, Tshikapa
- Mukengeshayi Malumba Zacharie, AVSI, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Expert, Kananga
- Mukinayi Tshidibi Crispin, Provincial Government of Kasai Central, Provincial Head of Urban Planning Division, Kananga
- Mukombozi Kahindo Samy, Head of the National Commission for Refugees (CNR), Tshikapa
- Mwamba Kabwe Charles, Mayor's Assistant, Kananga
- Ngindu Kanyinku Innocent, DAC Representative, Kananga
- Nkole Nkole Martin, Traditional Chief / Host Community Representative, Kananga





ETHIOPIA

- Abdulahi Ahmed Farahi, DAC Representative, Jigjiga
- Abraham Yirgalem, Programme Head, Refugees and Returnees Agency (RRA), Somali Region
- Ahmed Dekene Mohamed, Organization for Welfare and Development in Action (OWDA) / MEAL, Jigjiga
- Ahmed Hassen Sharmarke, Private Sector Representative / Chamber of Commerce Manager, Jigjiga
- Ahmed Ismail, OWDA, Food Security and Livelihood Sector Coordinator, Jigjiga
- Ahmed Ismail Hussien, Humanitarian Senior Advisor, Somali Regional Government, Office of the President
- Ahmed Sahal Ali, Regional Coordinator for the Urban Productive Safety Net and Jobs Project (UPSNIJ), Somali Regional State Urban Development and Construction Bureau
- Andwalem Tenaw, Executive Director, Ethiopian Cities Association, Addis Ababa
- Dr. Hussein Hashi Kasim, Chief of Staff, Office of the President of the Somali Regional State, Jigjiga
- Eyoel Ephrem, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Grants Manager, Assosa
- Farah Ziyaad Muhumed, Head of the Women and Children Office, Jigjiga
- Genet Gebreyesus, Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure, Head of Planning, Addis Ababa
- H.E. Fenta Dejen Wudu, State Minister of Urban and Infrastructure, Ethiopia
- The Honourable Abdulkereim Abdurehim Hojele, Mayor of Assosa
- The Honourable Shafi Ahmed Mealin, Mayor of Jigjiga
- Isam Abdurehim, City Coordinator, Assosa
- Kadar Muhumed Ismail, Deputy Mayor, SUIDAC Coordinator, Jigjiga City Administration
- Kassahun Kumsa, IRC, MEAL Specialist, Addis Ababa
- Kulmiye Mohamed, Host Community Representative, Jigjiga
- Mohamud Abdinur Sayid, Early Warning and Response Directorate Director, Disaster Risk Management Bureau (DRMB), Jigjiga
- Muhidin Jemal, OWDA, Project Manager, Jigjiga
- Musa Mohammed Eisa Abaker, DAC Representative, Assosa
- Neway Mengistu, Refugees and Returnees Service Programme Coordinator, Assosa
- Sintayehu Mebrate Kute, Senior Governance Manager, IRC, Assosa
- Tinsae Sewualem Mekonnen, IRC, MEAL Specialist, Assosa
- Yusuf Osman Mohamed, Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery Directorate Director, DRMB, Jigjiga



SOMALIA

- Abdi-Malik Moussa Elmi, Private Sector Representative, Gabiley
- Abdirahman Ahmed Omer, Chamber of Commerce Chairman, Borama
- Abdishakur Dahir, Somaliland Association for Youth Salvation (SAYS), MEAL Specialist, Borama
- Adna Cumar Odowaa, Host Community Representative, Gabiley
- Zakaria Dahir, Advisor to the Vice-President of Republic of Somaliland, Somaliland Government, Hargeisa
- Hassan Hussein Nouh, Taakulo Somali Community (TAAKULO), MEAL Specialist, Gabiley
- Hodan Omer Ismail, Head of the Protection Department, National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA), Gabiley
- The Honourable Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed Isood, Mayor of Gabiley
- The Honourable Mustafe Farah Qabile, Mayor of Borama
- Mohamed Abdilahi Mohamud, Awdal Regional Secretary, Borama
- Mohamed Mohamoud Aden, Program Manager, TAAKULO , Gabiley
- Mohamed Mohamoud Hassan, SUIDAC Coordinator, Borama City Administration
- Mohamoud Mohamed Duale, Executive Director, TAAKULO, Gabiley
- Nour Adan Shirdon, SAYS, Executive Director, Borama
- Omar Mohamoud Qayad, Horn Migrants Support Organization (Homso.org), Executive Director, Borama
- Sharmarke Hussein Mohamed, Representative of the Vice-President of Somaliland, Hargeisa
- Stephen Mwalo, SAYS, Expert Consultant, Borama
- Yasir Mohamoud Abdi, Mayor Representative, SUIDAC Coordinator, Gabiley City Administration
- Yuusuf Sh. Muxumed Faarax, DAC/Refugee Representative, Gabiley



SUDAN

- Afaf Tagelsir Mohammed Abdellh, Humanitarian Aid Commissioner, River Nile State, Atbara
- Eiman Halouf, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Sudan, Atbara
- Hala Moawia Ahmed, Sudanese Development Call Organization (NIDAA) Representative, Atbara
- The Honourable Dr. Tahani Margany Abdalhafiz Ahmed, Minister of Social Welfare, River Nile State Representative, Atbara
- Naveed Anjum, IOM Sudan, MEAL Specialist, Atbara
- Reem Abdelfatah Abdelkareem Hassan, Urban Planning Representative, Atbara Locality Office, Atbara



UGANDA

- Asiku Denis, SUIDAC Focal Point, Arua City
- Azabo Joel, SUIDAC Focal Point, Koboko
- David Aziku, MEAL Specialist, ACAV West Nile, Koboko and Arua City
- Draecabo Trinity Ceaser, President, Arua City Development Forum (CDF) and Private Sector Representative, Arua City
- Giselle Kapalata, Executive Director, CORA, Arua City
- Hellen Drabrezu, Host Community Representative, Arua City
- The Honourable Dr. Sanya K.F. Wilson, Mayor of Koboko
- The Honourable Wadri Sam Nyakua, Mayor of Arua City
- Malish Bonjira Asu, Executive Director of the South Sudanese Refugees Association (SSURA) and Refugee Representative, Koboko and Arua City
- Moses Acole, Project Manager, ACAV West Nile, Koboko and Arua City
- Moses Akuma Odims, Executive Secretary, WENDA, West Nile, Arua City
- Solomon Sonko, Senior Development Economist, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) / CRRF Secretariat, Kampala
- Ssonko Moses, Principal Economist, Ministry of Finance, Kampala



PROGRAMME DONORS AND PARTNERS

- Alemayehu Semunigus, EU Delegation, Ethiopia
- Adrian Fernandez Dickmans, EU Delegation, Sudan
- Carla Atzeni, EU Delegation, South Sudan
- Charles Obila, Coordinator for Migration and Forced Displacement, Health and Social Development Division, Intergovernmental Authority on Development IGAD
- Nimo Ahmed, UNHCR Senior Protection Associate and Sub-National Protection Cluster Coordinator
- Vittorio Capici, Programme Officer for Forced Displacement, Migration Management, Borderlands and SUIDAC Programme Manager, European Commission



CITIES ALLIANCE

- Abdifatah Fahiye, Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Borama, Somalia
- Amaia Celaya, Urban and Migration Expert
- Anais Fasano, Programme Management Associate
- Augustin Blaise M. Mapendo, Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Tshikapa, DRC
- Bashir Abdi Ali, Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Gabiley, Somalia
- Bongo Patrick Namisi, Programme Management Support Senior Officer, West Nile, Uganda
- Cedrick Kalenga C., Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Kananga, DRC
- Dr. Caroline Wanjiku Kihato, Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Department of International Development (ODID), Oxford University, Urban and Migration Expert
- Dr. Patrick Lamson-Hall, Urban Planning and Management Specialist
- Elmi Samatar, Technical Advisor, Ethiopia and Somalia
- Florence Lozet, Urban Forced Displacements Lead and SUIDAC Programme Coordinator
- Hodan Abdulkarim Kassim, Programme Management Support and Senior Officer, Jigjiga, Ethiopia
- Linda Leila Diatta, Senior Communications Officer
- Mara Forbes, Technical Advisor, Uganda, Sudan and DRC
- Meseret Assefa Weldegiorgis, Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Assosa, Ethiopia
- Mohammed Almotasim, Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Atbara, Sudan
- Dr. Loren Landau, Oxford University and University of the Witwatersrand, Urban and Migration Expert
- Samuel Mabala, In-Country Coordinator, Uganda
- Senjovu Andrew, Senior MEAL Specialist
- Tsigereda Tafesse, In-Country Coordinator, Ethiopia and Somalia





THE SUIDAC PROGRAMME

Context for the Programme

The SUIDAC Programme (2024-2028) aims to foster the sustainable integration of displaced populations and their host communities in nine secondary cities across five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that share significant challenges in hosting displaced populations.

It seeks to improve the living conditions of DACs¹ by enhancing public service delivery, creating livelihood opportunities, and strengthening protection services. It also builds the capacity of local authorities in urban governance and planning, while fostering city-to-city learning within the region to sustainably integrate displaced communities.

SUIDAC enhances municipalities' ability to address the needs of DACs amid urban challenges caused by forced displacement. This empowers host cities and local stakeholders to become key leaders of their own development, more resilient, and better prepared for the impacts of human mobility.

The EUR 30 million programme is funded by the EU and implemented by Cities Alliance in partnership with six technical implementing partners (TIPs) and nine municipalities through direct implementation and grants.

¹ This programme defines Displacement-Affected Communities (DACs) as both the forcibly displaced populations (refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees) and host communities.



A Localised Approach to Displacement

Cities, many of them among the world's most vulnerable, are on the front lines of managing the migration and displacement of large populations driven by crises such as climate change, conflict, and economic instability.

This shift to viewing migration through an urban lens requires an approach that considers the broader impacts of human mobility on the city - making the city the primary focus of programming as it looks for ways to meet the needs of all residents, including DACs.

It requires a dual focus that differs from interventions in camps and settlements: Engaging local and national authorities from the outset to ensure ownership and directly targeting programme activities to DACs so that they are not excluded.

Since 2019, Cities Alliance and the European Union Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF-Africa) have partnered to implement programming aligned with this approach. The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action (2019-2023) piloted new approaches to integrating displaced persons in Koboko, Uganda, and Assosa, Ethiopia and established a regional network of cities to share knowledge and experiences. SUIDAC builds on and expands the CRRF Action to nine cities in five countries.

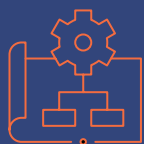
Why is SUIDAC innovative?



SUIDAC APPLIES AN URBAN LENS TO MIGRATION CHALLENGES, recognizing that displacement is increasingly an urban phenomenon requiring city-led solutions.



SOLUTIONS ARE LOCALLY DRIVEN, developed through an analytical and inception phase that directly involves refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, and municipal authorities.



MUNICIPALITIES LEAD THE IMPLEMENTATION, supported by competitively selected Technical Implementing Partners (TIPs) who provide light, targeted technical assistance as needed.



CITIES ALLIANCE OFFERS TARGETED TECHNICAL SUPPORT to each municipality and TIP throughout both the design and implementation phases.



DIRECT GRANTS ARE PROVIDED TO MUNICIPALITIES, even in fragile contexts, empowering them to take full ownership of programme design and delivery.



SUIDAC PROMOTES SUSTAINABILITY AND OWNERSHIP by requiring 20% in-kind or cash co-financing from both municipalities and TIPs.



MUNICIPALITIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUB-GRANT TO REFUGEE-LED ORGANIZATIONS (RLOS) AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOS), strengthening grassroots engagement and local impact.



NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEES ARE ESTABLISHED to align SUIDAC activities with national priorities, reinforcing coherence with broader development and displacement agendas.



A REGIONAL DIALOGUE PLATFORM CONVENES LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS FROM ALL SUIDAC CITIES EVERY SIX MONTHS, fostering knowledge exchange, innovation, and collaboration to promote social cohesion.



Women retrieving water at Kebele 11 Water Point in Jigjiga, Ethiopia

Inception and Implementation

SUIDAC begins with a six-month design phase led by mayors and communities with technical support from the TIPs and Cities Alliance to create actionable urban plans and design projects that meet their needs. This phase concludes with the submission of one Feasibility Study per city followed by a 36-month implementation phase. Steering Committees in each participating country ensure strategic oversight inclusion in national programming and a participatory approach with the national stakeholders.

After a competitive Call for Proposals in July 2024, the following TIPs were selected for the SUIDAC inception phase:

Arua and Koboko:

Associazione Centro Aiuti Volontari (ACAV)

Assosa:

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Atbara:

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Borama :

Somaliland Association for Youth Salvation (SAYS)

Gabiley :

TAAKULO Somali Community (TAAKULO)

Jigjiga:

Organization for Welfare and Development in Action (OWDA)

Kananga and Tshikapa:

Associazione Volontari per lo Sviluppo Internazionale (AVSI)

During the implementation phase, SUIDAC will offer direct grants to selected municipalities, requiring 20 per cent co-financing (in-kind or cash), as well as technical assistance. The programme awards up to two grants per city: One to the municipality (when technically possible), and another to a TIP who provides technical assistance to the municipality and mitigates risk. Both grants are closely interlinked in their execution.

Additionally, Cities Alliance has established a local office in each of the SUIDAC target cities to provide technical expertise and facilitate coordination between the municipality and the TIP.



SUIDAC Anticipated Outcomes



Improving self-reliance and social cohesion

by reducing distress and enhancing access to essential services such as health, nutrition, education, and housing for DACs. It also aims to increase livelihood opportunities so that displaced persons will have greater economic independence and improve access to documentation and legal assistance so that they receive needed protections.



Strengthening local governance

via a mechanism that provides direct grants to municipalities, placing local authorities at the forefront of decision-making. Municipalities will be able to sub-grant to local community-based organisations (CBOs), fostering capacity building at the community level. It will also facilitate key infrastructure projects that embed environmentally sustainable practices. Activities such as urban expansion planning and peer-learning between cities are part of this result.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR INCLUSIVE REGIONAL DIALOGUE



This dialogue is the first in a series of six. SUIDAC promotes a multi-level policy dialogue to strengthen responses to urban displacement, foster regional networks among cities, and encourage knowledge exchange and joint problem-solving among a diverse range of stakeholders and partners.



These include mayors, national and local governments, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, Cities Alliance, the EU, the IGAD, and other international partners and donors.



The regional dialogue serves as an inclusive platform where marginalised voices, including refugees and vulnerable host communities, are heard alongside policymakers. It is held every six months, rotating among SUIDAC Programme partner cities.



INTRODUCTIONS

Opening Remarks



Honourable Shafi Ahmed Mealin
Mayor of Jigjiga City Administration

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to your home – Jigjiga, the City of Peace and Diversity, the future “Dubai of East Africa” and the capital city of the Somali Regional State.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Jigjiga is one of the fastest-growing cities in East Africa. Over the past six years, its area has doubled, expanding from 7,000 hectares to 12,500 hectares. Jigjiga is strategically located along the Berbera Corridor, one of the key gateways for over 120 million Ethiopians and a critical trade route linking Ethiopia to the Red Sea.

Unfortunately, a growing number of IDPs and refugees along the corridor are arriving in Jigjiga daily. This is driven by climate change, regional conflicts, and economic hardship, as people seek a better life. This massive influx of IDPs and refugees in our city is placing a critical burden on existing infrastructure, including water supply, electricity, schools, and healthcare facilities.

At times, conflicts of interest and competition for resources between the host community, refugees, and IDPs create security challenges in the city.

Jigjiga also faces urban management issues, including land management challenges, violations of the city plan, and housing shortages due to the unplanned arrival of large numbers of IDPs and refugees.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Somali Regional State is hosting the largest number of refugees in Ethiopia.

We treat refugees as part of the host community by providing essential services, including water, education, and healthcare, shared with the local population.

I hope that the SUIDAC Programme will play a key role in supporting both municipal and regional efforts to improve services for refugees, IDPs, and host communities, fostering self-reliance and social cohesion.

I believe this regional dialogue will serve as a valuable platform for peer learning and fruitful discussions that will lead us toward better solutions for our cities.

Lastly, I call on other donors to join this effort, providing additional financing and technical support to strengthen our cities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to say once again, welcome to your city, Jigjiga, Ethiopia.



Vittorio Capici, Programme Officer for Forced Displacement, Migration Management, Borderlands and SUIDAC Programme Manager, European Commission

It's a pleasure to be here in the company of His Excellency Fenta Dejen Wudu, the State Minister of Urban Infrastructure for the Somali State in Ethiopia; The Honourable Shafi Ahmed Mealin, the Mayor of Jijjiga; and Dr. Hussein Hashi Kasim, Chief of Staff of the Somali President's Office.

I am also pleased to be joined by colleagues from Cities Alliance, IGAD, and my EU colleagues: Adrian Fernandez Dickmans from the EU Delegation in Sudan, Carla Atzeni from the EU Delegation in South Sudan, and Alemayehu Semunigus from the EU Delegation in Ethiopia.

Most importantly, we are here with the mayors and colleagues from Jijjiga and Assosa in Ethiopia, Koboko and Arua City in Uganda, Atbara in Sudan, Boroma and Gabiley in Somalia, and Tshikapa and Kananga in the DRC.

With a budget of EUR 30 million over the next four years, we aim to work together to strengthen your cities as they bear the burden of hosting so many refugees and IDPs.

In this endeavour, we extend our gratitude to OWDA, IOM, ACAV, IRC, SAYS, AVSI, TAAKULO, and Cities

Alliance for supporting mayors and municipalities in building inclusive and strong cities that can continue to provide for refugees and IDPs while improving conditions for all members of the host communities.

I would also like to take a moment to explain why the EU is investing in this programme. Recent events in the region, ranging from climate change to conflict, have significantly increased human mobility, making the role of cities more important than ever. We sincerely thank you for the work you do every day in being open and hosting all these people coming into your cities and to ensure that they have access to the same essential needs, services, and opportunities as native residents.

This region hosts 19 million IDPs and 6 million refugees – one of the highest displacement figures globally. Your cities have demonstrated remarkable openness in hosting these populations, allowing them to move freely and safely across the region. We are grateful for this commitment. However, this is only sustainable if cities continue to adopt, and through this programme, increase multi-sectoral and urban-focused approaches to managing this emergency and to take it not just as a crisis, but as an opportunity for growth and development.

Finally, we strongly believe in the importance of this regional network, as it provides a valuable opportunity for you to exchange knowledge, learn from colleagues across the region, share lessons learned, navigate challenges together, and develop shared approaches that will drive this programme forward.

On behalf of the EU, I would like to sincerely thank all of you for being here with us and for sharing this journey, which is centred on your cities and their needs. This is the first time the EU has financed a programme of this kind: A regional initiative targeting forced displacement in cities across this region.



Florence Lozet, Urban Forced Displacement Lead SUIDAC Programme Coordinator, Cities Alliance

Your Excellency the State Minister, Honourable Regional Ministers, Honourable Mayors, esteemed colleagues, and valued partners:

It is truly an honour to stand before you today. Thank you all for traveling from far and wide to be part of this milestone – the first SUIDAC regional dialogue. Your presence here is a testament to the importance of this initiative, and I am deeply grateful for your commitment.

**SUIDAC is not just
another development
programme; it is a
programme built by
cities, for cities.**

You, as mayors and municipal representatives from five different countries, alongside community leaders, TIPs, and urban experts, have shaped this initiative from the very beginning.

Thanks to SUIDAC, we now have a unique opportunity to place cities at the heart of programme development. The reality is that people on the move – whether migrants, refugees, returnees, or IDPs – will continue to be drawn to cities. Cities are economic hubs, social lifelines, and safe havens, and secondary cities like yours, located along key migration and displacement routes, will continue to grow.

This is why it is essential to look at migration and displacement through an urban lens. It requires a shift in perspective—instead of viewing people solely through their legal status, we must focus on how human mobility shapes the city itself and integrate human displacement into city planning.

Meetings like today are critical because they provide a space where displaced communities and policymakers can engage as equals. Too often, the voices of displaced people are marginalised in decision-making processes. SUIDAC offers a unique platform where those voices can be heard, and where collaborative, inclusive solutions can be developed. I therefore encourage you to exchange ideas as much as possible over the next three days.



Charles Obila, Coordinator, Migration and Forced Displacement Health and Social Development Division, IGAD

It is great to reconnect with both familiar and new faces, almost a year on since our last meeting in Djibouti in April last year. It is great to see that the family has really grown.

First, I wish to thank the Mayor of Jigjiga for hosting us and appreciate Cities Alliance for convening this first regional dialogue for the SUIDAC Programme, through the generous contribution of the EU. We are happy to be members of SUIDAC.

I wish to commend both the EU and Cities Alliance for sustaining the momentum of this network and expanding it to cover additional cities in Sudan and the DRC.

While urbanisation levels within the region are still very low at 34 per cent, the region is experiencing one of the highest rates of urbanisation averaging 4 per cent per annum, largely as a result of rural-to-urban migration displacement and the transformation or reclassification of rural areas into urban settings.

As you may all be aware, human mobility in the IGAD region is both a lifeline and a lifestyle for the majority of the population in the IGAD region.

Urbanisation across the region is quite complex and is largely driven by high population growth, climate change, displacement, economic disparities, and, at times, social and political instability.

Generally, within the IGAD region, migrants and displaced populations in urban areas are perceived to be the most self-reliant as they are more likely to find or create jobs and have more access to basic social services such as health and education.

Similarly, migrants and displaced populations in urban areas often face greater challenges, as they are seen as a hidden or floating population and face

discrimination in regards to the right to participate in local development planning and the provision of basic social services, such as healthcare, affordable housing, employment, and education.

Cities' and local authorities' role in addressing migration and displacement has been formally recognised in both the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

Both compacts call on governments and international organisations to apply a whole-of-government approach to the governance of migration to ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence across all sectors and all levels of government. Both compacts also specify the necessity to involve and support local authorities.

Several countries and cities in the region have made pledges and commitments to support local authorities in addressing forced displacement and promoting local integration.

Examples include:

States:

The Government of South Sudan committed to creating enabling conditions for sustainable returns of South Sudanese, enhancing peacebuilding, and provision of basic services through inclusive re/integration and participation of refugees, returnees, IDPs, and host communities, improving access to justice barriers for women and other vulnerable groups.

The Government of Somalia pledged to integrate displacement issues into government policies and climate actions at all levels, from national to state level and municipalities.

The Government of Ethiopia committed to transforming selected refugee camps into sustainable urban settlements by enhancing the quality and availability of shelter, infrastructure, and public services, such as roads, electricity, water, sanitation, health, and education, by aligning them with adjacent towns' master plan by 2027.

Cities and local authorities:

Hargeisa committed to working with the Daami community, an informal settlement of IDPs in a flood-prone area of Hargeisa, to relocate 100 households to safer areas of the city. Each

household would receive land ownership and housing in parts of the city more closely connected to public services and job opportunities, allowing them greater security of tenure and access to services, while moving them out of harm's way. In addition, Hargeisa will provide interested heads of household with resources to start their own businesses, including business grants and direct cash assistance, with a focus on women-headed households.

Jigjiga committed to supporting the livelihoods of IDPs and rural-urban migrants in and around the city through inclusive climate actions. The city government will implement a project to revitalise the city's agricultural systems by rehabilitating dry valley production, including tree planting, water management, and infrastructure upgrading, as well as agricultural livelihood training for IDP households. The city will also engage in participatory land planning to develop Community Action Plans, with a focus on building resilience to climate shocks for communities with a high presence of IDPs and migrants.

Koboko committed to continuing the municipality's local implementation of the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility project to strengthen the inclusion and participation of displaced persons and refugees in the economic and social life of the municipality, improve livelihoods, and offer greater access to quality basic services.

As we embark on learning and exchanging ideas over the next three days, I am particularly looking forward to the findings of the feasibility studies on the unique needs and opportunities within each urban setting.

I am keen to know whether there are any similarities or differences in approaches across the different cities and contexts.

For IGAD, I can already identify two opportunities where the initiatives, best practices, and lessons learned from SUIDAC and this regional network can be presented: This year's IGAD regional scientific conference, which focuses on the theme of Migration, Displacement, and Urbanisation in May 2025; and the annual ministerial stocktaking meeting of the IGAD Support, scheduled for September 2025. This could serve as a platform for advocating for additional support from member states and international partners.

I wish you all productive deliberations and look forward to the outcomes of this dialogue.



Dr. Hussein Hashi Kasim, Chief of Staff, Office of the President Somali Regional State, Jigjiga

Your Excellency Fenta Dejen Wudu, State Minister of Urban Infrastructure Development; Vittorio Capici from the EU; Florence Lozet from Cities Alliance; Mr. Charles Obila from IGAD; invited partners and guests from UNHCR, IOM, and UN-Habitat; the mayors from different countries in the Horn of Africa; the Honourable Mayor of Jigjiga; and other invited guests:

Good morning again. It is an honour to be here. This is a great opportunity to reflect on the growth of Jigjiga as a city. It is encouraging to see Jigjiga hosting an international gathering like this.

This is a city that has gone through a lot over the past few decades, so it is reassuring to see Jigjiga hosting this kind of conference. It shows that there is peace. It shows that there is partnership, within the country and with other cities both inside and outside the country. It shows that the necessary facilities are in place. It demonstrates the commitment to ensuring the growth of the city. So, we are pleased that you regard Jigjiga

We are the region that hosts the largest number of refugees in Ethiopia - close to 400,000 - and there are nearly one million IDPs in this region. So, the question of how to integrate refugees and IDPs into cities is a significant one.

highly and that you have chosen to host the meeting here.

For me, I want to sincerely welcome you to Jigjiga and share a few remarks about the status of refugees and IDPs and how we are working toward their integration into cities.

It is a question we have been grappling with. As I mentioned, we developed the Durable Solutions Strategy, which outlines the best approaches to addressing IDP issues. One of the key points to highlight is that we integrate IDPs voluntarily, ensuring that they settle in communities where they feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging. Given the social structures here in the Somali region, these communities can relate to the host communities. So, we facilitate their voluntary integration into these communities.

We also strive to create opportunities in different sectors where IDPs may have a comparative advantage or relevant skill sets. For example, in agriculture, take Qolaji, the largest IDP camp, which is not far from Jigjiga. Many of the communities in that camp have agricultural backgrounds, so they are actively engaged in that sector, both in the area around the camp and in locations where they have been relocated. This demonstrates that while IDPs may be displaced, they are not without skills. These are people with expertise, and it is important to recognise that.

So far, a few hundred thousand individuals have been successfully relocated to different parts of the region. But what is even more significant is that many of them have also come to Jigjiga from the camps to work; not only as daily labourers, but also in more productive sectors of the economy. For instance, close to 8,000 individuals are now living and working in Jigjiga. The feasibility study that the Jigjiga team is conducting will shed more light on these aspects.

More broadly, it is valuable to share experiences from different cities. It is encouraging that each city will present its experiences and feasibility studies, as this will create an opportunity for mutual learning.

As a state, we want to reassure you that we will not only host gatherings like this but will also take the policy recommendations from these discussions very seriously and implement them.

IDPs should not be viewed as a separate group outside of the citizenry that we are responsible for. Many of them are productive members of our society; they have simply been displaced due to various shocks, whether climate-related or conflict-induced. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that they are integrated into our communities in a sustainable manner.

It is essential to move beyond viewing IDPs solely as individuals with a refugee or displacement status and instead acknowledge their skills, support them, and provide them with opportunities so they can contribute productively to society.

Finally, I would like to thank the EU for funding this initiative, as well as the various development partners. I also extend my gratitude to the mayors who have travelled from different countries to be here in Jigjiga. I hope you have a wonderful stay and take the opportunity to explore the city. I know the mayor has told me that there is great energy and enthusiasm here. We wish you all the best and a very fruitful discussion.





His Excellency Fenta Dejen Wudu, State Minister of Urban and Infrastructure Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

I am very pleased to welcome you to Ethiopia, and to Jigjiga City, for the first regional dialogue of SUIDAC. I am honoured to be here because this gathering is an important step towards fostering inclusive, resilient, and prosperous cities for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Africa is witnessing an unprecedented increase in human mobility. According to the 2023 report of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, over 20 million Africans are currently displaced, with more than 5 million new displacements occurring in 2022 alone. In East Africa, including Ethiopia, rural-urban migration and displacement are driven by a complex interplay of environmental crises, conflict, and economic hardships.

Despite facing its own challenges, Ethiopia remains one of Africa's largest refugee-hosting nations. As many reports of humanitarian and development agencies indicate, many displaced people seek refuge in cities, aspiring for employment and a dignified life. This trend is evident in Ethiopia's urban centres, with over 80,000 urban refugees residing in Addis Ababa alone, according to UNHCR's report of 2023. Similarly, secondary cities such as Jigjiga and Assosa accommodate a significant share of displaced people.

Cities have become preferred destinations for both local and international migrants due to their economic opportunities and relative adaptability. However, the rapid influx of people presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, migration can drive economic growth, innovation, and cultural enrichment. On the other hand, it can strain existing infrastructure, widen service gaps, and exacerbate social tensions.

The key determinant of success lies in the ability of cities to proactively prepare for and manage migration-induced population growth.

That is why mayors and city leaders as well as national and regional governments must recognise the far-reaching implications of migration on their cities' social, economic, political and environmental landscapes.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, strengthening the role and capacity of urban local governments is crucial in addressing challenges posed by migration and leveraging the opportunities that come with it. However, limited awareness and constraint of technical and financial resources make this a difficult task. This is precisely why the launch of SUIDAC is a timely and relevant initiative that will bring a new and practical approach to addressing the impact of migration on urbanisation and sustainable development.

By enhancing the technical capacity of municipalities and improving access to services for displacement-affected communities, SUIDAC will serve as a critical pillar in equipping secondary cities across Africa to effectively manage and leverage migration.

The Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure of Ethiopia is committed to strengthening the capacity of urban local governments to this end. Over the past two decades, my ministry - in collaboration with regional administrations, secondary cities, and international partners - initiated and implemented several reforms and programmes aimed at improving the governance and service delivery capacity of cities nationwide.

At this time, my ministry recognises migration as both a humanitarian and an urban development priority that must be addressed with urgency and diligence. Therefore, the Ministry of Urban and Infrastructure will use the SUIDAC programme as a learning and piloting opportunity to develop and scale up instruments that will increase the resilience and migration management capacity of our cities. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm my ministry's unwavering commitment to fostering partnerships and ensuring the successful implementation of the SUIDAC programme.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Cities Alliance for its many years of partnership and commitment to support the urban agenda in many African cities, including in Ethiopia. I also would like to thank the EU for pioneering a new approach to supporting migration-affected secondary cities by integrating technical capacity building with financial instruments for better service delivery to displacement-affected communities. My ministry acknowledges the trust that the EU and Cities Alliance have placed in secondary cities to lead the implementation of SUIDAC. I assure you that we will provide the necessary support to ensure that our cities will meet the expectations and achieve successful implementation of the projects planned within SUIDAC.

Finally, I want to underscore the importance of collaboration among diverse stakeholders to implement and scale up SUIDAC. By working together, we can build cities that are inclusive, resilient, and prosperous for all residents.

I wish you productive discussions during this first regional dialogue of SUIDAC and an enjoyable stay in Jigjiga.





UPDATES ON THE REGIONAL NETWORK AND DIALOGUE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CRRF

Florence Lozet, Urban Forced Displacement Lead and SUIDAC Programme Coordinator at Cities Alliance, delivered an insightful presentation on the SUIDAC Action, emphasising the critical role of regional dialogues and the key lessons drawn

from the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action.

The session highlighted key themes, including regional collaboration, peer-learning, and

evidence-based urban planning, as essential for addressing displacement challenges in secondary cities. It set the stage for a deeper discussion on how cities can lead sustainable and inclusive urban development, with a focus on integrating DACs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1

The CRRF Initiative: Laying the Groundwork for Urban Inclusion

One of the central themes of the presentation was the impact of the CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action and the lessons it provided for sustainable urban migration management. Implemented between 2019 and 2023, the Action aimed to shift migration and displacement responses from short-term crisis management to structured, long-term urban development strategies.

The initiative successfully brought together key stakeholders, including mayors, municipal authorities, civil society representatives, and refugee-led organisations, to collaborate through peer-learning events. These gatherings helped cities share experiences and develop effective solutions for integrating DACs into urban life.

One of the most notable successes of the CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action was the Koboko model. With direct funding and technical support from ACAV, the Koboko Municipal Council took full ownership of its displacement response by integrating DACs into municipal planning and service delivery. The success of this approach generated interest from other cities looking to replicate similar strategies, reinforcing the idea that local governments can lead the way in managing urban migration effectively.



“SUIDAC is more than just a programme, it is a transformative opportunity. It does not just support refugees. It empowers leaders to step up and demonstrate their commitment to inclusive development. In our cities, no one should be left behind because everyone matters. Inclusivity is not just a value; it is a promise we live by. As a mayor, I will continue to champion these principles, ensuring our cities are places where everyone has a voice and a place.”

Dr. Sanya Wilson

Mayor of Koboko, SUIDAC spokesperson and 7th President of the East African County and Local Government Association (EACLGA)

2

Persistent Challenges in Urban Displacement Management

Despite the progress made under the CRRF initiative, several ongoing challenges that continue to hinder the sustainable integration of DACs in secondary cities have been flagged:

Weak local government capacity. Many municipalities lack the technical expertise, financial independence, and institutional support needed to develop and implement inclusive urban migration strategies. Without the right tools and resources, cities struggle to meet the demands of both displaced populations and host communities.

Inadequate urban infrastructure. Many cities face severe infrastructure deficits, particularly in housing, water, sanitation, healthcare, and education. The influx of displaced populations puts additional strain on already underfunded and overstretched municipal services, making it difficult to create sustainable urban environments.

Lack of reliable data on urban migration. Without accurate and up-to-date statistics on the number of DACs and their needs, city officials and urban planners struggle to allocate resources effectively. A lack of data-driven planning can lead to service gaps, inefficient policies, and missed opportunities for integration.

Tackling these challenges requires a coordinated effort among municipal authorities, national governments, and regional partners to ensure that cities have the financial, technical, and institutional support necessary for long-term, sustainable migration management.

3

Strengthening Regional Networks to Support Municipal-Led Solutions

A significant outcome of the CRRF Action was the establishment of a structured regional network of secondary cities designed to strengthen knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and policy alignment.

A [Five-Year Strategy](#) outlining governance frameworks, financial sustainability, and policy coordination to align urban migration policies with broader development goals was developed and will be implemented through SUIDAC.

By institutionalising these frameworks, the regional network positions secondary cities as proactive leaders in migration governance, not passive recipients of national or international aid. This shift empowers cities to take ownership of their migration policies and implement solutions that work for both DACs and host communities.



4

The Next Phase: Scaling Up Inclusive Urban Development with SUIDAC

Building on this progress, SUIDAC scaled up efforts to create a structured and sustainable regional network of its nine partner secondary cities, ensuring that DACs are fully integrated into urban planning and governance processes.

Ms. Lozet reinforced a critical message: Secondary cities must be at the forefront of migration governance, leading the way in developing inclusive and sustainable urban solutions.

As the SUIDAC Programme moves into its implementation phase, the focus will be on empowering local governments, fostering regional collaboration, and ensuring that DACs are fully integrated into urban life – not just as beneficiaries, but as active participants in building resilient, inclusive, and thriving cities.



“Meetings like today are critical as they provide a space where displaced communities and policymakers can engage as equals. Too often, the voices of displaced people are marginalised in decision-making processes. SUIDAC offers a unique platform where those voices can be heard and where collaborative, inclusive solutions can be developed. I therefore encourage you to exchange as much as possible during the next three days.”

Florence Lozet

Cities Alliance Urban Forced Displacement Lead and SUIDAC Programme Coordinator





TECHNICAL SESSIONS

SESSION 1: Visibility or Stealth in the Politics of Inclusion? Making Local Government Networks an Effective Urban Displacement Planning Tool

Facilitators



DR. LOREN LANDAU

is a leading scholar in migration and urban studies, with a PhD from UC Berkeley and an MSc from LSE. He has published widely on displacement, xenophobia, and migration governance in Africa. His current work explores how mobility is reshaping politics and governance in rapidly diversifying urban spaces.



DR. CAROLINE WANJIKU KIHATO

is a Visiting Researcher at Oxford University and a Global Scholar at the Wilson Center. Her work bridges academia and the non-profit sector, with a focus on migration, gender, governance, and urbanisation in the Global South. She is the author of *Migrant Women of Johannesburg*, and her work was featured at the 2023 Venice Biennale.

At the first regional dialogue in Jigjiga, four technical sessions provided valuable insights into key aspects of urban displacement planning, migration management, and programme implementation. These sessions brought together experts, policymakers, and practitioners to exchange knowledge and discuss innovative approaches to addressing the challenges faced by DACs and their host municipalities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

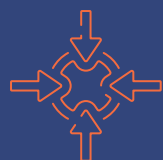
This first session explored the role of local government networks in urban displacement planning. It examined how cities can navigate the politics of inclusion, build sustainable capacities, and leverage coordinated networks to enhance the protection and integration of displaced populations.

Dr. Kihato emphasised the critical role of cities in addressing contemporary global challenges, particularly in relation to displacement and urban development. She underscored that secondary cities are often excluded from global urban planning discussions, despite their growing importance in accommodating displaced populations.

A key message from her presentation was the need for regional coordination between local and national governments to build collective capacity and resilience. She highlighted that SUIDAC serves as a vital tool in strengthening urban governance, ensuring that cities are equipped to respond effectively to displacement and migration. She also stressed that urban planning and local government networks must engage with the global agenda, demonstrating to international stakeholders that meaningful action is taking place at the municipal level.

Dr. Kihato highlighted the critical role of secondary cities in managing urban growth and displacement, emphasising that they are often excluded from global urban planning discussions despite their rapid expansion. She framed the conversation within the context of two major global agendas – the SDGs and the global migration agenda, both of which recognize the central role of cities in fostering inclusive, just, and sustainable urban environments.

Another key message was the importance of creating opportunities for all. Dr. Kihato raised critical questions about how cities can support unrepresented newcomers and future arrivals, especially given scarce resources. She outlined three key pillars for addressing this challenge:



REGIONAL COORDINATION.

Cities must form alliances across sectors and governance levels to strengthen urban resilience.



PROTECTION. Policies must safeguard not just refugees and IDPs, but also host communities and future urban populations.



CAPACITY BUILDING. Cities must develop the institutional and planning capabilities necessary to meet the growing demands of their populations.



Dr. Kihato underscored that SUIDAC is a crucial intervention because it focuses on strengthening secondary cities, ensuring that they are not overlooked in global discussions on urban displacement and resilience-building.

Prof. Landau expanded on these themes by drawing lessons from the CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action and discussing how municipalities have navigated integration challenges in resource-scarce environments. He structured his insights around three fundamental concepts:



PROTECTION BEYOND SURVIVAL. Protection must extend beyond legal documentation to enhancing access to opportunities, fostering diverse pathways to inclusion, and ensuring social justice. Supporting only displaced populations, without considering host communities, can fuel resentment, underscoring the need for balanced interventions.



CAPACITY BUILDING AS A LONG-TERM STRATEGY. Capacity should not be viewed merely as short-term financial and infrastructural support, but rather as long-term investments in planning, data collection, cross-sector engagement, and regional cooperation. Municipalities must develop the ability to manage displacement beyond just technical solutions, ensuring sustainability in governance and service delivery.



COORDINATION BEYOND MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES. Effective urban displacement planning requires multi-level governance and cross-sectoral coordination, including partnerships with the private sector, civil society, international organisations, and higher levels of government. Refugees and host communities must be central to this process, with planning done with them, rather than for them.

He also explained the “frontstage” and “backstage” narratives that cities adopt in managing displacement. On the frontstage, municipalities engage with local constituencies, demonstrating their ability to deliver services and framing inclusion efforts as

opportunities for urban development. This approach, which he termed “stealth humanitarianism,” presents refugees as a potential resource rather than a burden, easing tensions within host communities. On the backstage, a network of mayors, urban

activists, and local stakeholders share experiences, challenges, and strategies, strengthening advocacy and coordination efforts. This networking is a crucial element of SUIDAC, as it fosters peer learning and long-term collaboration among city leaders.



Both speakers concluded by challenging participants to reflect on SUIDAC's long-term impact: How can cities use the programme to drive sustainable urban inclusion? How can they build resilient institutions that outlast political cycles? These reflections set the stage for deeper discussions on policy, governance, and the role of networks in advancing displacement-sensitive urban development.



"Integrating refugees goes beyond technical capacity, it requires understanding the environment and engaging multiple municipalities. Building networks, sharing strategies, and fostering relationships are key to unlocking resources and driving sustainable solutions for refugee integration."

Dr. Caroline Wanjiku Kihato
Visiting Fellow, ODID, Oxford University

"SUIDAC is not just about us in this room trying to make an address. This group is speaking to the global agenda. It says to the global agenda that here we are trying to do something."

Prof. Loren Landau
Oxford University and University of the Witwatersrand



SESSION 2: Urban Planning: Spatial Planning for Migration Management

Facilitator



PATRICK LAMSON-HALL

is an urban planner and Fellow at NYU's Marron Institute, and Urban Planning Specialist at Cities Alliance. He co-developed the Atlas of Urban Expansion and leads major planning initiatives in India, Ethiopia, and the Caribbean. His work focuses on spatial planning, urban density, and innovative tools like satellite imagery for city development.

Over the next three decades, Africa's urban population will experience rapid growth, doubling the number of people living in cities. According to data from Africapolis, by 2050, the continent's urban population will have grown from 704 million to 1.4 billion, and two out of three Africans will live in an urban area. As urban agglomerations expand, the demand for land, housing, infrastructure, and services will increase rapidly.

This accelerating growth calls for proactive planning to avoid unregulated sprawl, which can result in high infrastructure costs, inadequate

service provision, and heightened vulnerability for displaced and low-income communities.

Dr. Lamson-Hall presented urban expansion planning as a critical tool for managing this growth in a structured and sustainable way. He highlighted that 66 per cent to 90 per cent of new residential growth in African cities is informal, making it three to seven times more expensive to install infrastructure compared to planned developments. Without intervention, cities risk chaotic expansion, leading to housing shortages, poor access to services, and increased exposure to climate risks.



To address this, Dr. Lamson-Hall introduced the “Making Room Paradigm,” a structured approach to orderly urban expansion and densification. He outlined a five-step planning model to help cities anticipate and manage growth effectively:



PREDICT. Use data to estimate how much land the city will need for the next 30 years.



CONTROL. Designate and integrate expansion areas into city planning.



PRESERVE. Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas.



PLAN. Develop a structured grid of arterial roads (at least 30m wide, spaced 1 km apart).



PROTECT. Secure land for planned roads and infrastructure before development takes place.

A key takeaway from his presentation was the importance of arterial roads in shaping urban expansion. Reserving land for roads before development ensures efficient land use, improves connectivity, reduces future displacement, and lowers service delivery costs. He presented case studies from Ethiopia and other African cities, demonstrating that proactive urban expansion planning leads to tangible economic and social benefits. In planned expansion areas, households experienced a 9.4 per cent to 19.4 per cent increase in monthly income, were 37 per cent more likely to

use public transport, and had significantly shorter travel times to work and essential services.

Dr. Lamson-Hall emphasised that urban expansion planning is a municipally led approach that requires capacity-building for local governments, cross-sector coordination, and political commitment. He encouraged participating cities in the SUIDAC Programme to adopt this methodology to ensure that DACs and host populations benefit from sustainable, inclusive, and well-integrated urban development.



SESSION 3: Partnerships - Lessons Learned from the CRRF Programme

Facilitators



MUSTAFE FARAH QABILE

served as Mayor of Borama, Somalia, until May 2025. With over 14 years of experience in academia, public service, and NGOs, he championed inclusive development with a focus on women's rights, youth empowerment, and community-led solutions. His leadership combined policy advocacy and research to enhance service delivery and social welfare in the city.



BONGO PATRICK NAMISI

is a development professional with 20 years of experience in humanitarian and community-led initiatives in Uganda. He currently serves as Project Management Support Senior Officer for Cities Alliance in West Nile and President of the Koboko Municipal Development Forum. He holds a Master's in Development Studies and has led major programmes on refugee integration and inclusive urban development.



TSIGEREDA TAFESSE MULUGETA

is an urban development specialist leading the Cities and Migration Programme in Ethiopia and Somalia. With a background in governance and policy advisory, she has supported secondary cities in designing inclusive, long-term urban expansion plans. She holds a Master's in Public Policy and Management from the University of London.



This session highlighted how municipalities can strengthen partnerships to improve urban resilience and the inclusion of DACs. Drawing from experiences under the CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action, speakers emphasised the critical role of municipal leadership in shaping local responses and ensuring sustainable service delivery. Participants explored practical approaches to multi-stakeholder collaboration, particularly between local governments, national authorities, international organisations, and the private sector.

A key takeaway was the need for sustainable financing and long-term planning. Lessons from Uganda's

implementation of the Action **underscored the importance of revenue generation strategies, donor coordination, and private-sector engagement to sustain DAC-focused urban initiatives.**

The discussion also stressed **data-driven decision-making**, highlighting the role of evidence-based policies in improving service delivery and urban planning.

Community engagement emerged as a crucial theme. Speakers shared insights on how inclusive governance structures and participatory planning mechanisms can help DACs become active

contributors to urban development rather than passive beneficiaries. The integration of DACs into municipal development frameworks was identified as a critical step in fostering social cohesion and long-term stability.

The session concluded with a call to action for cities to institutionalise partnerships through structured coordination platforms, align local policies with national frameworks, and advocate for increased funding and technical support. Moving forward, SUIDAC municipalities will work on applying these lessons to strengthen urban resilience and improve DAC integration.



SESSION 4 : SUIDAC MEAL System - Reporting and Logframe

Facilitator



SENJOVU ANDREW

is a programme manager and senior MEAL specialist at Cities Alliance with over 12 years of experience across East and West Africa. He specialises in results-based M&E, data systems, and participatory evaluation for development programmes. He holds a Master's in Programme M&E and a Bachelor's in Quantitative Economics.

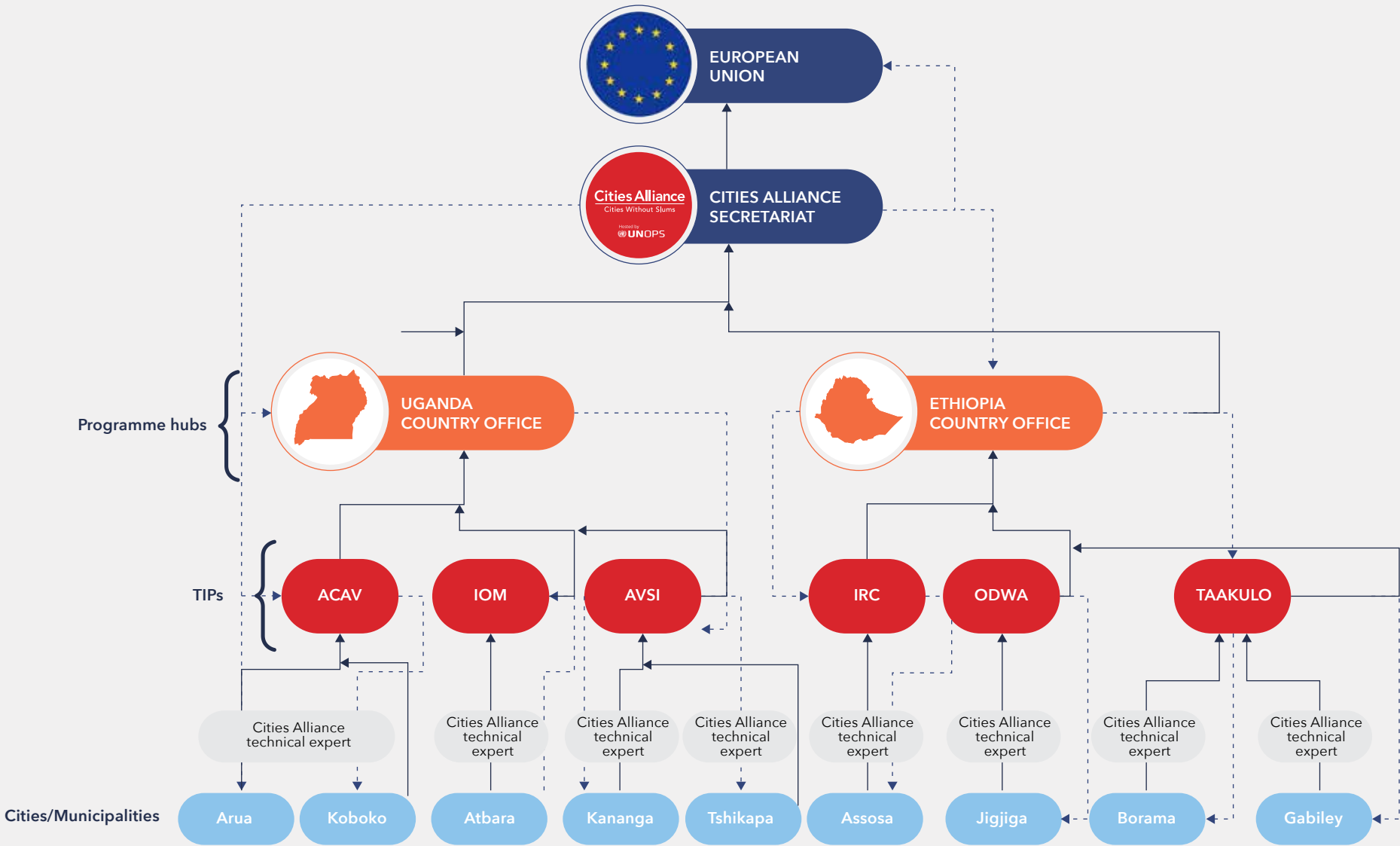
This session focused on how Cities Alliance and its TIPs will monitor, evaluate, and learn from the results of the SUIDAC Programme over its implementation period (2024-2028).

Designed exclusively for MEAL officers for the cities/municipalities and the TIPs, the session provided a critical opportunity to establish a mutual understanding among TIPs and external stakeholders on the methodologies and processes that will be used to track performance, ensure data quality, and improve programme effectiveness.

A key focus of the session was developing a robust data system for the programme. Mr. Andrew introduced participants to the objectives of the data system, which include ensuring verifiable results, providing regular updates, reducing human error, and enhancing efficiency through automation. The session also covered aligning project-specific indicators with the overall programme indicators and the Global European Results Framework (GERF), ensuring consistency across different levels of programme implementation.

Data quality assessment was another major component discussed, emphasising the importance of evaluating data accuracy, completeness, and reliability. The MEAL team introduced a mixed-methods approach to data collection, combining both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to fully capture programme successes and lessons learned. This was supported by an overview of the Theory of Change illustrating how SUIDAC interventions contribute to a chain of results that lead to intended impacts.

A data flow diagram visually mapped how data moves from cities and municipalities to TIPs, then to Cities Alliance, and finally to the EU:



The session also introduced various data collection tools and methodologies for updating the MEAL plan regularly, ensuring continuous tracking, reporting, and programmatic improvements.

The key steps included:

- Quarterly in-country M&E sessions with TIPs and municipalities for ongoing capacity building.

- Development of project-based MEAL plans, ensuring alignment with the SUIDAC framework.
- Support for cities and TIPs in customising data collection tools tailored to their specific project needs.

By establishing structured MEAL processes, the session reinforced the importance of evidence-based decision-making, accountability, and continuous learning within the SUIDAC Programme to effectively address urban displacement challenges.





FEASIBILITY STUDIES

Following an intensive six-month analytical phase, the nine participating cities successfully drafted feasibility studies for the SUIDAC Programme. Led by each municipality and conducted in collaboration with Cities Alliance, TIPs and local stakeholders, these studies provide a comprehensive assessment of the key challenges, needs, and opportunities for improving the inclusion of DACs in urban planning and service delivery in each SUIDAC partner city.

The regional dialogue in Jigjiga provided an opportunity for cities to share the findings of their feasibility studies and discuss common challenges, exchange best practices, and explore strategies to enhance regional cooperation.

Methodology

The feasibility studies combined both quantitative and qualitative research methods:

- A perception survey of 400 households, including displaced people and host communities, captured community perspectives and priorities.
- Qualitative studies through focus group discussions and key informant interviews engaged DACs members, host community representatives, municipal authorities, and non-government actors to gain deeper insights.
- A rapid city assessment outlined key urban challenges and opportunities, providing a foundational analysis for targeted interventions.
- A review of secondary data sources supplemented the research, ensuring a comprehensive and data-driven understanding of local needs.

These studies enabled municipalities and implementing partners to identify and design targeted interventions addressing the most pressing challenges. To ensure the accuracy and relevance of proposed projects, the feasibility studies underwent rigorous reviews by the SUIDAC team and external experts.



Findings

The findings from the perception surveys revealed critical gaps in infrastructure, social services, and economic opportunities, particularly in education, healthcare, water, sanitation, and livelihoods.

In each city, municipal authorities and TIPs identified tailored interventions to address these issues, ensuring that solutions are context-specific,

inclusive, and sustainable. The studies also emphasised the importance of strengthening local governance, improving revenue mobilisation, and fostering community engagement to build resilience and social cohesion.

With these in-depth feasibility studies completed, the SUIDAC Programme now has

a clear roadmap to drive impactful, inclusive urban development.

The findings will inform strategic decision-making and lay the foundation for sustainable, community-driven solutions that respond to both immediate and long-term urban displacement challenges.

WHY ARE FEASIBILITY STUDIES NEEDED?

- Feasibility studies are critical in ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of DAC-focused projects. They provide decision-makers with key insights into financial viability, regulatory compliance, social impact, and environmental sustainability. Without them, projects risk failure due to financial instability, lack of stakeholder support, or unforeseen risks.
- Financial viability is a key consideration for feasibility studies, as it determines the project's ability to attract funding and ensures long-term sustainability. Ensuring financial stability before implementation is essential to prevent project failures.
- Actively involving communities in feasibility studies leads to more inclusive and relevant interventions, strengthening stakeholder support and ensuring alignment with local needs.
- A localised approach allows feasibility studies to tailor solutions to regional challenges, improving overall effectiveness.
- Feasibility studies help assess economic opportunities for DACs, identifying pathways for employment, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion.
- Strategic urban planning, including transport and utilities, is crucial for the long-term integration of DACs. Feasibility studies help align development strategies with local urban challenges.
- Findings from feasibility studies are instrumental in shaping government policies and regulations, ensuring that urban development aligns with DACs' needs and long-term sustainability goals.



Crowds gather at the local market in Jigjiga



KEY FINDINGS BY COUNTRY

Note: The findings presented in the section below are drawn from the SUIDAC Feasibilities Studies conducted between December 2024 and February 2025 by each municipality and their Technical Implementing Partners, with technical support from Cities Alliance.

DRC: Kananga and Tshikapa

KANANGA

The Kananga feasibility study session was coordinated by Cedrick Kalenga C., Programme Management Support Senior Officer at CitiesAlliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Kananga; Rose Muadi Musube, Mayor of Kananga City Administration; Irene Velarde, Project Manager at AVSI; and Mukengeshayi Malumba Zacharie, AVSI MEAL expert.

Kananga, the capital of Kasai-Central Province in the DRC, has long been a commercial and administrative hub in the Kasai region. Strategically located along the Lulua River, a tributary of the Kasai River, the city has historically been a centre for trade, governance, and migration. However, rapid population growth, displacement, and limited infrastructure have created significant urban and socio-economic challenges.

Kananga's population has experienced a demographic shift, growing from 26,934 inhabitants in 1950 to an estimated 1,739,000 in 2024. Remarkably, projections indicate that by 2030, the population could surge to 2,239,860, an increase of over 500,000 people in just six years, effectively doubling the city's population within a decade. This unprecedented rate of urbanisation highlights the critical urgency for proactive and sustainable urban planning.

The city's history has been shaped by waves of migration, land disputes, and profound socio-economic and urban challenges. The area has experienced a history of conflict, notably the Kamuina Nsapu crisis, which left lasting scars on Kananga, displacing thousands and deepening socio-political instability. According to the OCHA Humanitarian Information Note for the Kasai Region (2021), between January 2020 and July 2021, over 3,200 returnees were recorded in the Tshibala and Luiza health zones. From April to October 2021, an estimated 30,800 people returned to Kakenge (Mweka Territory) and Bena Leka (Demba Territory) health zones, accounting for 80 per cent of the 36,000 individuals who had fled inter-community clashes in Kasai-Central earlier that year.

The return of displaced populations has exacerbated Kananga's pre-existing vulnerabilities, including underdevelopment, limited infrastructure, and high poverty rates, straining resources, services, and economic opportunities. However, it has also reshaped the municipality's socio-economic landscape, creating both challenges and opportunities.

While Kananga has not been at the epicentre of recent conflicts affecting the eastern DRC, the city faces ongoing development challenges that require urgent intervention.



KANANGA'S POPULATION
grew from

26,934 INHABITANTS
IN 1950

to an estimated

1,739,000 IN
2024

PROJECTIONS INDICATE THAT BY 2030
the population could surge to

2,239,860 AN INCREASE OF OVER
500,000 PEOPLE

in just six years

doubling the city's population within a decade.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

In Kananga, access to safe water is critically low. Only 9% of households purify their water, while 70% of sources are contaminated, exposing communities to diarrhea and typhoid. The city relies on a mix of piped water, boreholes, rainwater, open wells, and river water, many of which remain unimproved and unsafe.

Sanitation conditions are dire. 53% of households use unimproved latrines, and 20% either lack latrines or practice open defecation, worsening health risks in informal settlements.

Access to healthcare is severely limited, particularly in Katoka and Mabondo, where poor roads and long distances isolate residents. The situation is compounded by shortages of medicine, high treatment costs, and a 56% lack of health facilities, with 15% of children never vaccinated.

The education system is overwhelmed by rapid population growth. While 1,324 schools serve 360,761 students, infrastructure gaps leave over 100,000 children out of school, especially in peri-urban communes like Nganza and Lukonga.

Secondary education remains largely inaccessible, and teaching conditions are difficult.

Unemployment and economic exclusion are widespread. Only 11% of residents have formal employment, while 49% depend on subsistence farming.

Opportunities for vocational training and entrepreneurship are scarce, limiting prospects for self-reliance.

Meanwhile, erosion and flooding affect 54% of households, damaging roads and threatening homes. With poor road infrastructure, no public transport, and limited access to electricity and water connections, daily life remains precarious for many.

Without urgent intervention, these overlapping crises will further weaken Kananga's resilience, making sustainable urban development even more challenging.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SUIDAC project in Kananga aims to enhance resilience, autonomy, and social inclusion for DACs while strengthening the capacity of municipal authorities to manage urban development and social cohesion effectively.

The primary objectives include:

- Improving access to social and economic services, particularly in education, vocational training, and essential infrastructure;
- Reinforcing institutional capacities for sustainable urban management; and

- Promoting urban and environmental solutions to mitigate climate risks.

The project is being implemented through a partnership between the Municipality of Kananga and the AVSI Foundation, in close collaboration with CBOs and the Ministry of Urbanism and Housing.

Key intervention areas include the neighbourhoods of Mabondo and Katoka, identified for their high concentrations of DACs, critical infrastructure gaps, and heightened socio-economic vulnerabilities. In these areas, project efforts focus on improving access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) through the installation of boreholes, construction of sanitation facilities, and implementation of hygiene promotion campaigns. Additional activities planned include erosion control measures, education infrastructure improvements, and legal protection services, all aimed at enhancing resilience and social inclusion in Kananga's most underserved communes.

Cedrick Kalenga C. emphasised the importance of community-led approaches, stating that community participation is at the core of the initiative to ensure that DACs are actively involved in urban planning and decision-making processes. He also added that the project supports local economic initiatives by providing grants and small business opportunities for women and youth to foster economic independence.



“Urban development must be forward-thinking and community driven. By strengthening local governance, improving infrastructure, and empowering vulnerable populations, we are ensuring that Kananga is not just managing displacement, but transforming it into an opportunity for growth.”

Cedrick Kalenga C.
Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Cities Alliance

“Empowering women is key to Kananga’s future. Many have returned with nothing, yet they are eager to work and rebuild their lives. Through SUIDAC, we can strengthen their skills, provide financial support, and create sustainable businesses. Training alone is not enough; we must ensure that women have the resources to thrive long after the programme’s end.”

Honourable Rose Muadi Musube
Mayor of Kananga City Administration

“Access to water, education, and economic opportunities should not be a privilege but a right for all. Through this project, we are bridging gaps and giving displaced communities the tools to rebuild their lives with dignity and stability.”

Irene Velarde
Project Manager, AVSI

DRC: Kananga and Tshikapa

TSHIKAPA

The Tshikapa feasibility study session was coordinated by Augustin Blaise M. Mapendo, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Tshikapa; The Honourable Lumulwabo Wetu Faustin, Mayor of Tshikapa City Administration; Irene Velarde, Project Manager at AVSI; and Mukengeshayi Malumba Zacharie, AVSI MEAL expert.

Located in Southwest Kasai and strategically positioned at the confluence of the Tshikapa and Kasai rivers, approximately 165 kilometres north of the Angolan border, Tshikapa was established in 1907 following the discovery of diamonds and quickly became a major mining centre. Connected to Kinshasa via the critical Route Nationale 1 (RN1), the city also historically served as a vital commercial and transportation node. Despite its rich economic potential and early establishment, it was not officially recognised as an urban centre until 2003.

Migration has played a defining role in Tshikapa's history. Following the liberalisation of artisanal diamond mining in 1973, the city experienced rapid urban expansion and became a bustling trade centre, attracting significant population inflows.

Over the decades, Tshikapa's population has grown significantly, from around 38,900 in 1970 to over 4.2 million in 2024, driven by both economic migration and repeated waves of displacement. In neighbourhoods such as Mbumba, Mabondo, and Dibumba II, IDPs and returnees constitute 67-70% of residents. The city has a high proportion of youth, presenting both developmental potential and intense socio-economic pressures.

In the 1990s and 2000s, Tshikapa also became a refuge for people fleeing wars and inter-ethnic violence, further fuelling unplanned urban growth and exerting pressure on housing, services, and resources.

The 2016-2017 Kasai crisis marked one of the most devastating chapters in the region's history. At its peak, the Kamuina Nsapu conflict displaced 1.4 million people in the Kasai region, many of whom settled in Tshikapa. In 2020, Kasai Province recorded the arrival of 23,688 deportees from Angola between January and October, according to the provincial General Directorate of Migrations (DGM).

Though Tshikapa itself escaped direct fighting during the Kamwina Nsapu rebellion, the wider conflict deeply affected the city. Tshikapa absorbed thousands of people fleeing violence in neighbouring territories, reshaping its demographic profile. This rapid population growth overwhelmed existing infrastructure, resulting in overcrowded informal settlements, housing shortages, food insecurity, and heightened social tensions. Underlying vulnerabilities and tensions persist today, underscoring the need for conflict-sensitive development approaches.



population growth

38,900 in 1970
4.2 million in 2024

This rapid population growth overwhelmed existing infrastructure, resulting in overcrowded informal settlements, housing shortages, food insecurity, and heightened social tensions.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Tshikapa is grappling with severe development pressures fueled by rapid population growth and displacement. Access to basic services, especially when it comes to clean water and sanitation, is dangerously low: 93% of households do not purify their water, and 60% leave waste near their homes, contributing to serious public health risks.

Livelihoods are fragile. Nearly 70% of households face hunger, and economic opportunities remain limited, especially for women and youth. While 90% of children attend school, the education system is overstretched, with overcrowded classrooms, poor infrastructure, and under-supported teachers undermining quality.

Health services are difficult to access, with long travel times and high exposure to waterborne diseases. Meanwhile, only 8% of women hold formal jobs, and many report facing specific safety concerns.

Environmental risks add further strain. Erosion has created deep gorges that cut off neighbourhoods, while unregulated urban expansion increases the city's vulnerability to floods and landslides.

Addressing these interconnected challenges will require coordinated investments in water, livelihoods, infrastructure, education, and inclusive urban governance.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SUIDAC project in Tshikapa prioritises access to social and economic services, ensuring that DACs can participate fully in community life. Education, vocational training, and infrastructure development are key areas of intervention, creating opportunities for displaced populations to rebuild their lives.

The project is being implemented mainly by the Municipality of Tshikapa and the AVSI Foundation, in collaboration with local and international NGOs, and with the involvement of representatives from key ministries, including the Ministry of Territorial

Planning, the Ministry of Urbanism and Housing, and the Ministry of Interior and Security.

Interventions will target neighbourhoods with high DAC concentrations – such as Mbumba and Mabondo, where infrastructure and services are under strain, with the aim to rehabilitate public spaces and improve living conditions for both DACs and host communities.

Irene Velarde, AVSI Project Manager, emphasised that collaboration with key stakeholders is

central to the project's success. Local authorities and municipal services will play a leading role in improving governance, while civil society organisations (CSOs) and technical partners will facilitate engagement and provide expertise in urban planning and social development. She added that host communities and DACs will be actively involved in decision-making, promoting social cohesion and economic inclusion. These combined efforts will help create a more resilient and inclusive urban environment in Tshikapa.



"The SUIDAC Programme is not just improving services; we are empowering people. Through enhanced access to education, water, and economic opportunities, we are enabling displaced communities to reclaim their dignity and contribute to Tshikapa's growth."

Augustin Blaise M. Mapendo
Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Cities Alliance

"The people of Tshikapa have always been resilient, but resilience alone is not enough. We must create opportunities for displaced populations to integrate, become self-reliant, and contribute to the city's growth. With the support of the SUIDAC Programme, we can turn displacement into an opportunity for sustainable urban development, ensuring that no one is left behind."

The Hon. Lumulwabo Wetu Faustin
Mayor of Tshikapa City Administration

"Tshikapa is at a breaking point. Without urgent action, the challenges we face - lack of clean water, high unemployment, and increasing environmental risks - will become unmanageable. This project is an opportunity to turn the tide and build a stronger, more inclusive city."

Irene Velarde
Project Manager, AVSI

Ethiopia: Assosa and Jigjiga

ASSOSA

The Assosa feasibility study session was coordinated by Meseret Assefa Weldegiorgis, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Assosa; The Honourable Abdulkarim Abdurehim Hojele, Mayor of Assosa City Administration; Isam Abdurehim, SUIDAC Coordinator for Assosa City Administration; and Sintayehu Mebrate Kute, Senior Governance Manager at the IRC.

Nestled in western Ethiopia, Assosa City serves as the capital of the Benishangul-Gumuz Region and stands as a key transit hub near the Sudanese border. Its strategic location has made it a central point along Ethiopia's northern migration route, attracting a continuous flow of migrants, IDPs, and refugees.

Over the past decade, Assosa has witnessed unprecedented urban expansion, driven by economic growth, rural-urban migration, the influx of DACs, and infrastructure development. This rapid transformation has tripled the city's population in 12 years, reaching 101,851 as of October 2024.

The Benishangul-Gumuz Region hosts several refugee camps, including Bambasi, Sherkole, Tsore, and Ura, which collectively accommodate 90,177 refugees fleeing conflict zones in Sudan, South Sudan, and the Great Lakes Region. The presence of these camps has placed considerable pressure on Assosa's resources, infrastructure, and public services. The city's capacity to provide essential services has struggled to keep pace with the growing population, increasing tensions between displaced populations and host communities.

Since the outbreak of the conflict in Sudan, displacement figures have continued to rise week after week, spreading across the region. More than 10 million people have been forced to flee, including seven million new IDPs and at least two million refugees and returnees in neighbouring countries. While many of them remain within settlements, a growing number are migrating into Assosa City, seeking improved livelihoods and long-term stability. In December 2024, Assosa's city boundaries expanded, incorporating around 16 rural kebeles' administrations, further increasing urban pressures.

The surging population has exacerbated challenges in housing, sanitation, education, and employment, with the municipal administration struggling to keep pace with rising demands on land, services, and economic opportunities.



The city population of Assosa has tripled in

12 YEARS reaching
185,957 as of
Feb. 2025

In December 2024, Assosa's city boundaries expanded, incorporating around 16 rural kebeles' administrations, further increasing urban pressures.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

The displacement crisis in Assosa has intensified the demand for healthcare, water, education, and economic inclusion, yet limited long-term planning leaves many DACs vulnerable. Expanding informal settlements worsen housing and land tenure issues, while legal and economic barriers restrict access to formal employment and financial systems, leaving many DACs trapped in subsistence-level work.

Meanwhile, Assosa's health system is overwhelmed; Assosa General Hospital and Assosa Health Centre handle twice the standard capacity of 40,000 patients annually. A severe shortage of maternity

waiting homes has further contributed to high maternal and infant mortality rates. Similarly, the water supply network is unable to meet rising demand, resulting in frequent shortages and service disruptions.

The education infrastructure is also struggling, with primary schools facing a student-to-classroom ratio of 1:116 and secondary schools at 1:64, far exceeding Ethiopia's national standard of 1:50. According to the Ethiopian Statistics Service (2021), unemployment stands at 26.7 per cent, disproportionately affecting youth and women, while more than 56 per cent

of DAC households experience severe financial hardship. Additionally, GBV, child trafficking, and weak legal protection services pose significant threats, particularly for women and children.

The integration of DACs into Assosa's urban fabric remains a major challenge. Initially, local resistance to refugee settlement was widespread due to legal uncertainties and resource scarcity. Today, the strain on essential services, housing, employment, and food security, continues to fuel tensions between displaced and host communities, as both compete for limited land, water, and jobs.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SUIDAC project in Assosa is being implemented mainly by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) as the TIP, the Assosa City Administration as the local implementing partner, and Assosa University as the research consultant.

The project aims to strengthen municipal governance, upgrade critical infrastructure, expand healthcare and education services, promote economic inclusion, and foster social cohesion to better manage urban growth and support displacement-affected and host communities.

Intervention areas include urban and peri-urban settlements, markets, business centers, and educational and healthcare institutions, where DACs and host communities interact. These areas have been identified as priority zones due to infrastructure gaps, service shortages, and high vulnerability to displacement pressures.



“This SUIDAC project in Assosa is about more than just infrastructure. It is about empowering communities, strengthening institutions, and creating economic opportunities that benefit both host communities and DACs.”

Isam Abdurehim
SUIDAC Coordinator, Assosa City Administration

“SUIDAC is not just about providing immediate relief; it is about building long-term sustainability. We need solutions that will continue to benefit Assosa even after the project ends.”

The Honourable Abdulkarim Abdurehim Hojele
Mayor of Assosa City Administration

“Without urgent investment in service delivery and infrastructure, Assosa risks deepening inequalities and further marginalising displaced communities. Our approach must prioritise sustainable, long-term solutions that integrate DACs into the city’s urban planning strategy.”

Sintayehu Mebrate Kute
Senior Governance Manager at IRC

Ethiopia: Assosa and Jigjiga

JIGJIGA

The Jigjiga feasibility study session was coordinated by Hodan Abdulkarim Kassim, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Jigjiga; Kadar Muhumed Ismail, Deputy Mayor and SUIDAC Coordinator for Jigjiga City Administration; and Ahmed Ismail, Food Security and Livelihood Sector Coordinator at OWDA.

Located in the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia, Jigjiga has long served as a transit hub for migration along both eastern and western migration routes. Over the decades, Jigjiga City has been shaped by conflict, political instability, and climate-induced displacement.

The historical context of internal displacement in the Jigjiga area reflects a combination of environmental and conflict-related factors. Prior to 2014, drought was the main driver of low-level displacement, with IDP numbers under 100,000. However, this changed dramatically after 2016 with the escalation of violent conflict between the Somali and Oromia Regional States, combined with worsening climate conditions. By 2018, IDP numbers had surged to over one million, making the Somali Regional State one of the most affected regions in Ethiopia. Approximately 495,929 IDPs were linked to the inter-regional conflict, while 593,854 were displaced due to drought and other climate-related factors – the highest number of drought-induced IDPs in the country, accounting for 67 per cent of Ethiopia's national drought caseload.

For example, the city's proximity to major IDP camps such as Qoloji I and II, which together host 85,000 IDPs, has made it a natural destination for those seeking urban opportunities. These communities are distributed across 12 kebeles in Jigjiga City.

Since the 1990s, Jigjiga City has been a vital refugee and IDP-hosting city. According to the Jigjiga City Administration, the total population is estimated at 720,000, with DACs accounting for approximately 48,900. This represents about 6.79% of the total population or 1 in 14 residents.

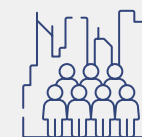
DACs in Jigjiga City come from diverse backgrounds, including climate migrants, IDPs from conflict-affected areas, returnees from Yemen, and refugees from nearby camps. Most face inadequate housing, food insecurity, limited economic opportunities, and exclusion from city planning, often describing themselves as a "forgotten lot." Their precarious situation underscores the urgent need for inclusive, rights-based urban responses.



Jigjiga City's urban population

720,000

with a significant share made up of displacement-affected residents.



Jigjiga City is home to approximately

48,900
displacement-affected
individuals

nearly 1 in 14 residents.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

The rapid urban expansion of Jigjiga has placed immense strain on housing, infrastructure, and basic services, particularly in areas with high concentrations of DACs. The growing demand for land, water, electricity, and public services has outpaced municipal capacity, leading to overcrowded settlements, service gaps, and increased competition for resources.

Water scarcity is among the most pressing challenges. Many kebeles receive water only once a week, forcing residents, including IDPs and host communities, to endure long queues and heightened tensions over limited supplies. Vulnerable groups, especially women and children, bear the burden of fetching water from distant locations, exacerbating their social

and economic hardships. The crisis extends to health centres, where inadequate water access undermines hygiene standards and patient care, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases.

Beyond water shortages, healthcare, education, and sanitation services remain critically underfunded. Many schools lack classrooms, sanitation facilities, and reliable water access, forcing students into overcrowded and unsanitary learning conditions. Similarly, hospitals and clinics operate with limited capacity, causing delays in medical treatment, particularly for maternal and child health services. Meanwhile, insufficient public sanitation infrastructure leaves large segments of the population without proper waste disposal systems, further threatening public health.

Environmental degradation worsens these challenges. Deforestation, poor waste management, and unregulated urban sprawl have led to land erosion, pollution, and increased vulnerability to floods. Without urgent action, these risks will further destabilise infrastructure, weaken public health systems, and hinder urban resilience.

Economic marginalisation remains a significant issue, particularly for women and youth. With high unemployment and limited job opportunities, many DACs face poverty and dependency, lacking access to vocational training, business support, and formal employment pathways. Women experience even greater barriers due to gender disparities in education, work opportunities, and social protections, deepening their vulnerability.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SUIDAC project in Jigjiga is being implemented mainly by the Jigjiga City Administration and OWDA, with support from regional and national government authorities, CBOs, UN agencies, and technical experts.

Key intervention areas include Jigjiga's 12 DAC-concentrated kebeles, identified based on

high displacement rates, critical service gaps, infrastructure deficiencies, and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

As Ahmed Ismail, Food Security and Livelihood Sector Coordinator at OWDA, emphasised, the challenges in Jigjiga are not just about numbers,

but about real people and their livelihoods. He stressed the urgent need for integrated solutions that address both infrastructure development and social cohesion while ensuring economic empowerment for displaced and host communities alike.



"SUIDAC will be implementing projects in Jigjiga, bringing significant benefits to numerous DAC communities. This initiative not only strengthens local efforts but also serves as an inspiration for other donors and organisations to contribute."

Hodan Abdulkarim Kassim
Programme Management Support Senior Officer at
Cities Alliance

"Jigjiga is one of Ethiopia's fastest-growing cities, surrounded by both IDP and refugee camps. This proximity attracts many displaced people seeking better opportunities - not only IDPs, but also people from various regions of Ethiopia - placing considerable pressure on the city's limited resources and service capacities. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensuring the inclusive and sustainable growth of Jigjiga."

Deputy Mayor Kadar Muhumed Ismail

"The city's most pressing issue is the lack of water, a basic human necessity. We are working diligently with the Jigjiga Municipality to address this challenge. We are therefore very pleased that SUIDAC's intervention areas include water provision."

Ahmed Ismail
Food Security and Livelihood Sector Coordinator at OWDA

Somalia: Borama and Gabiley

BORAMA

The Borama feasibility study session was coordinated by Abdifatah Fahiye, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Borama; Mohamed Mohamoud Hassan, City Coordinator for Borama Municipality; and Nour Adan Shirdon, Executive Director of SAYS.

Situated in the Awdal region, Borama has long served as a vital hub for migration due to its relative peace, educational institutions, economic opportunities, proximity to Ethiopia, and historical trade routes that have shaped its development.

Over the years, the city has attracted displaced communities, including IDPs, refugees, and returnees from Ethiopia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Its strategic location and expanding economy have fueled urban growth but have also placed immense pressure on local infrastructure and services. The city's stability, commercial appeal, and academic resources, such as the esteemed Amoud University, continue to make it a preferred destination for migrants and displaced populations from across the region.

Borama has welcomed waves of migration throughout its history, from Somali communities seeking refuge from conflicts in the region to returnees who left during periods of political instability. The presence of armed groups and smuggling networks along migration routes further complicates the protection environment for displaced individuals. In recent years, climate-induced migration has increased, with prolonged droughts and desertification forcing rural populations to relocate to cities like Borama in search of better livelihoods and services.

Rapid urbanisation has significantly reshaped Borama's landscape, with a 124 per cent increase in built-up areas between 2005 and 2023. The estimated population is now 368,000, with an annual growth rate of 2.9 per cent, making it one of Somalia's most rapidly expanding urban areas. The expansion has placed immense pressure on municipal services and infrastructure, particularly in housing, healthcare, education, water, and employment. Additionally, the influx of displaced populations has intensified competition for limited resources, underscoring the urgent need for inclusive urban planning and sustainable service delivery.

As Borama continues to grow, ensuring equitable access to services and economic opportunities remains a priority for municipal authorities and development partners.



Borama's landscape has seen a

**124%
INCREASE**

in built-up areas between 2005 and 2023.



Borama has an estimated population of

368,000

growing at an annual rate of 2.9%.



DACs

75,000

in Borama

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

As of 2024, the population of DACs in Borama is estimated at approximately 75,000, representing around 25 per cent of the city's total population. The city also has a notably young demographic, with approximately 47 per cent of residents under the age of 15, placing significant pressure on the education system and social services. The host community shares limited resources with DACs, often resulting in tensions over access to essential services.

Healthcare, education, and water supply remain critically inadequate, with health facilities stretched beyond capacity and schools unable to accommodate demand. Meanwhile, poor waste management is causing serious environmental and public health risks, as unregulated disposal continues unchecked.

Economic hardship remains widespread, particularly among DACs, with most residents relying on informal employment, leaving them vulnerable to income instability and financial shocks. Limited access to banking services further deepens financial exclusion, making it particularly difficult for women and youth to achieve financial independence.

Unregulated urban expansion has worsened the housing crisis. Rising land prices and a lack of zoning regulations have forced many DACs into overcrowded informal settlements, while uncertain land tenure prevents long-term investment in housing solutions.

The Borama City Administration faces significant capacity constraints in responding to these challenges. Low municipal revenue limits investment in basic services, while a shortage of urban planners and financial managers hampers strategic development. Outdated financial systems and a lack of digital governance tools further weaken transparency and efficiency in service delivery.

Legal barriers also marginalise DACs; many lack official documentation, restricting their access to employment, education, and legal protections. In addition, weak regulatory frameworks leave them vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion from social assistance programmes.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SUIDAC project in Borama aligns with national and regional strategies for urban displacement management and focuses on key areas such as education, WASH, energy, livelihoods, financial services, legal assistance, urban planning, and governance, ensuring a comprehensive approach to urban resilience.

Building on its collaboration with Cities Alliance through the EU-funded CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action, the Borama local government has taken steps to mainstream displacement considerations into its urban planning, poverty reduction strategies, and broader development agenda. However, despite these efforts, the city continues to grapple with significant challenges that hinder the full realisation of inclusive urban development.

Interventions are concentrated in DAC-hosting areas within Borama Municipality, notably Qoorgaab, Hayayaabe, Faaraxyood, Xaaslay, and Siitee Haddi, five hotspot neighbourhoods identified by the Ministry of Resettlement and Humanitarian Affairs (MoRHA) as hosting significant numbers of DACs and facing increased pressure on already limited services.

Main implementing partners include Borama Municipality and TAAKULO, with support from regional and national government authorities, CBOs, UN agencies, and technical experts.



“The SUIDAC Programme is a game-changer for Borama. It will help us expand education centres, improve sanitation, and promote the full integration of DACs so they can enjoy the same rights as host communities.”

The Honourable Mustafe Farah Qabile
Mayor of Borama.

“Effective governance is the backbone of sustainable urban development. Our plan is to improve financial systems, urban planning, and service delivery, and to lay the foundation for a stronger and more inclusive Borama.”

Mohamed Mohamoud
Coordinator, Borama Municipality



Somalia: Borama and Gabiley

GABILEY

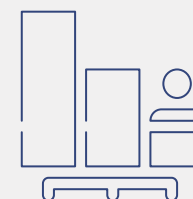
The Gabiley feasibility study session was coordinated by Bashir Abdi Ali, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at CitiesAlliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Gabiley; Yasir Mohamoud Abdi, Representative of the Mayor and SUIDAC Coordinator at Gabiley City Administration; and Mohamed M. Aden, Programme Manager at TAAKULO.

Gabiley is a key administrative and economic centre located in the Maroodi Jeh region. Bordering Ethiopia to the south, Baki District to the west, Farawayne District to the east, and Aden Bay to the north, Gabiley's strategic position along major trade routes has strengthened its role as a hub for commerce, agriculture, and migration. The city lies along the main highway connecting the western regions with the capital, Hargeisa, and plays a critical role in regional development planning.

Gabiley's fertile lands and seasonal rainfall have made it one of the leading agricultural producers in the region, contributing significantly to national food security through crops such as maize, sorghum, and wheat, alongside a strong livestock sector. Over the years, the city has also become a major destination for IDPs, returnees, and refugees, drawn by relative safety, economic opportunities, and access to services. According to estimates from the National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA) and the Gabiley Municipality, DACs represent approximately 33,000 individuals, accounting for around 15% of the city's total population. While Gabiley offers a degree of stability, displaced communities continue to encounter significant barriers to housing, healthcare, education, and sustainable livelihoods.

With its growing population, the city faces increasing pressure on its infrastructure and service delivery systems, alongside a struggling economy. Displaced and marginalised groups in Gabiley are particularly vulnerable due to overlapping challenges, including lack of formal documentation, inadequate shelter, limited access to basic services, and exclusion from municipal planning. Many reside in informal settlements, often without legal recognition or infrastructure, and are at heightened risk of food insecurity, unemployment, and marginalisation.

Addressing these issues requires coordinated, inclusive urban planning and enhanced municipal capacity to respond to the complex needs of both host and displaced populations.



DACs in Gabiley represent approximately

**33,000
INDIVIDUALS**

accounting for around 15% of the city's total population.

With its growing population, the city faces increasing pressure on its infrastructure and service delivery systems, alongside a struggling economy.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Gabiley faces significant challenges in urban services, infrastructure, and governance, particularly when it comes to meeting the needs of DACs.

Education infrastructure is severely strained, with 35 per cent of pupils lacking access to primary education. Schools suffer from overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and a shortage of qualified teachers and resources. Many students drop out due to low awareness of the importance of education and insufficient support for attendance, while unpaid teachers and inadequate facilities further undermine education quality.

Healthcare services remain limited, with few emergency and specialised facilities, forcing many to seek treatment elsewhere. High costs and inadequate services further prevent vulnerable households from receiving timely care. WASH deficiencies continue to pose serious environmental and public health risks. Defective sewerage systems and poor waste management have worsened hygiene conditions, while unreliable water sources exacerbate sanitation challenges. Inadequate solid waste disposal has led to pollution and increased health risks in residential areas.

Economic opportunities remain scarce, especially for DACs and informal workers. Without access to banking services or financial support, many rely on unstable informal employment with little chance for long-term growth. Financial exclusion makes self-reliance even more difficult.

Weak governance further hampers urban planning and service delivery. Many policies are outdated or lack enforcement, particularly in land use, revenue generation, and procurement. Strengthening municipal institutions and policy frameworks is essential to ensuring that urban development meets the needs of both DACs and host communities.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Gabiley local government, which previously partnered with Cities Alliance for the CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action funded by the EU, has already committed to integrating displacement-specific elements into development plans, poverty alleviation initiatives, urban planning processes, and other relevant programmes.

Building on this commitment, the SUIDAC project in Gabiley focuses on integrating DACs into the social and economic fabric of the city, ensuring

inclusive urban development and strengthening resilience among both displaced populations and host communities.

The project also prioritises legal and policy support to enhance land tenure security, access to justice, and municipal planning capacities.

The project is being implemented mainly by Gabiley Municipality and TAAKULO, with additional support from national government ministries, CBOs,

and technical partners. These stakeholders work together to ensure interventions are contextually relevant, community-driven, and sustainable.

The scope of the project focuses on key urban areas within Gabiley City, particularly the villages of Laag Barako, Wadajir, 18-May, and New Gabiley, which are home to a significant portion of DACs. The interventions target urban service expansion, infrastructure development, and economic empowerment to support both displaced and host communities.



"We must stop looking at the problem and start implementing solutions. The time for discussions is over. It is time to build, invest, and transform our city."

Bashir Abdi Ali
Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance

"True progress in Gabiley hinges on strong partnerships and inclusive governance. With the collaboration of local authorities, technical partners, and community leaders, we are creating a blueprint for cities that are not just growing, but thriving, where displaced families and host communities can build a shared, prosperous future together."

Yasir Mohamoud Abdi
Mayor Representative and SUIDAC Coordinator at Gabiley City Administration

"Cities Alliance has been instrumental in helping Gabiley navigate the integration of displaced communities. Their support gives us hope and the tools to create lasting change."

Mohamed M. Aden
Programme Manager at TAAKULO

Sudan: Atbara

ATBARA

The Atbara feasibility study session was coordinated by Mohammed Almotasim, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Atbara; The Honourable Dr. Tahani Margany Abdalhafiz Ahmed, Minister of Social Welfare and River Nile State Representative in Atbara; and Eiman Halouf of IOM Sudan in Atbara.

Atbara, the main industrial city in River Nile State and capital of Atbara locality, has long been recognised as a centre of labour, industry, and political activity in northern Sudan. Historically shaped by the presence of the Sudan Railways Corporation and later by the rapid growth of the cement and mining sectors, Atbara attracted workers from across the country and emerged as a politically engaged and diverse urban centre. As of the latest available data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2008), Atbara comprises more than 22,000 households, representing an estimated population of approximately 110,000 individuals.

Before the 2023 conflict, the city was known for its vibrant economic activity, public service sector, and strong trade union heritage. The outbreak of armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023 has profoundly transformed Atbara's demographic and socio-economic landscape. As violence spread across the country, Atbara became a critical destination for people fleeing from Khartoum, Al Jazira, Sennar, and other conflict-affected regions. By December 2024, the city was hosting more than 144,847 IDPs, more than doubling its original population.

This influx includes diverse groups: former Atbara residents returning with property and skills; skilled professionals like doctors and engineers who have integrated into local institutions; and vulnerable populations from marginalised ethnic groups with limited resources and integration capacity. More recent arrivals include large families displaced from Eastern Al Jazira and returnees from abroad. Additionally, the city hosts foreign migrants, including Syrians, Palestinians, Ethiopians, and Eritreans, some of whom are recent arrivals displaced by the same conflict.

Although Atbara has been largely spared from direct ground combat, targeted drone attacks by the RSF on military infrastructure in 2024 have heightened insecurity. The city's strategic location, industrial legacy, and emerging administrative functions make it likely to continue receiving displaced and transitory populations, placing increasing pressure on already strained services.

At present, Atbara is grappling with overcrowded schools, insufficient healthcare facilities, a need for water infrastructure rehabilitation, and rising social tensions linked to ethnic diversity, land disputes, and service delivery gaps.



By December 2024
the city was hosting more than
144,847 IDPs
more than doubling its original population.

This has placed enormous pressure on Atbara's urban infrastructure, public services, and economic systems,
**CHALLENGING ITS CAPACITY TO PROVIDE FOR BOTH
LONG-TERM RESIDENTS AND NEW ARRIVALS.**

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Atbara is facing severe challenges due to the unprecedented influx of IDPs and DACs, who now outnumber the host population. This rapid population surge has overwhelmed housing, healthcare, water, and sanitation services, while heightening social tensions as communities compete for scarce resources.

The economic impact has been severe, with 70 per cent of households reporting insufficient income to meet basic needs, forcing many to rely on informal livelihoods. Limited access to formal employment and vocational training has hindered economic resilience, particularly for women and children, who also face heightened psychosocial distress and increased vulnerability due to displacement.

Ongoing conflict in Sudan has worsened administrative and operational challenges, delaying humanitarian interventions due to difficulties in acquiring Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) permits.

Governance and response capacity remain strained. Atbara's municipal administration is centralised under the Atbara Locality Executive Office, led by the Executive Director with support from State Ministry departments. To coordinate humanitarian assistance, the State Humanitarian Committee, led by the State Governor and managed by the State Ministry

of Social Welfare and HAC, oversees relief efforts. However, displacement at this scale, coupled with resource scarcity, continues to limit local governance structures' ability to meet growing needs.

Addressing these challenges requires urgent and sustainable solutions, including strengthening local governance, expanding economic opportunities, and improving access to essential services.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SUIDAC project in Atbara includes rehabilitating health infrastructure, improving water and sanitation, and supporting employment initiatives, particularly in agriculture and small industries.

The project is being implemented mainly by the Executive Office of Atbara Locality and IOM, in collaboration with the Sudanese Development Call Organisation (NIDAA), with support from the State Ministry of Social Welfare, HAC, and the State Ministry of Urban Planning.

Key intervention areas focus on IDP gathering sites and neighbourhoods in Atbara and its surroundings with significant service gaps and socio-economic vulnerabilities.



"SUIDAC is not just responding to immediate needs; we are building long-term solutions. We need to ensure that projects initiated under SUIDAC continue beyond the funding cycle."

Mohammed Almotasim

Programme Management Support Senior Officer, Atbara, Sudan

"Refugees arriving in the River Nile need more than just shelter. They need healthcare, education, and opportunities for stability. We are ready to welcome them, but we need the necessary resources to make integration sustainable."

The Honourable Dr. Tahani Margany Abdalhafiz Ahmed

Minister of Social Welfare and River Nile State Representative

"This project is about creating a model for sustainable urban integration, where displaced populations and host communities can thrive together. It will ensure that Atbara's local authorities and communities are equipped with the tools and resources to manage displacement challenges effectively."

Eiman Halouf

IOM Sudan

Uganda: Arua and Koboko

ARUA

The Arua feasibility study presentation was coordinated by Bongo Patrick Namisi, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Arua; His Worship Wadri Sam Nyakua, Mayor of Arua City Administration; Asiku Denis, SUIDAC Focal Point for Arua City; and Moses Acole, Project Manager at ACAV West Nile, covering both Koboko and Arua City.

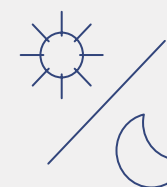
Arua City is one of the newest cities in Uganda, established by the Ugandan Parliament in April 2020 and operational since July of the same year. A rapidly growing urban centre in northwestern Uganda, Arua serves as the largest commercial and social coordination hub for the entire West Nile region and neighbouring countries, including the DRC and South Sudan. Spanning 401.5 km², Arua is a key gateway for cross-border trade, labour mobility, and tourism.

Arua has experienced a notable population increase. According to the Uganda National Population and Housing Census main report (2024), the city has a day population of 440,540 and a night population of 384,656, making it the second most populated city after the capital, Kampala. While Uganda's refugee policy initially placed refugees in designated settlements alongside host communities, its open-door approach grants them the right to freedom of movement. As a result, many refugees and migrants have chosen to self-settle in urban centres like Arua. Key factors driving this migration include access to better healthcare, education, business opportunities, and the impact of ongoing conflicts.

Arua City hosts about 23,917 self-settled refugees and asylum seekers, representing 6% of its total population, with most of them children, youth, and women. Fifty percent of refugees come from South Sudan, with the rest hailing mostly from the DRC, Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia.

Because of Arua City's strategic location near two international borders (DRC and South Sudan) and refugee settlements in West Nile, it continues to receive significant numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, and forcibly displaced persons who are often ill-prepared for life outside settlements.

Arua benefits from strong political will and a structured development framework, including the Five-Year Comprehensive Development Plan, which aligns with Uganda Vision 2040 and the Sustainable

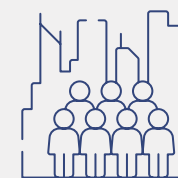


day population

440,540

night population

384,656



Arua City hosts about

23,917

self-settled refugees and
asylum seekers representing
6% of its total population.

A rapidly growing urban centre in northwestern Uganda, Arua serves as the largest commercial and social coordination hub for the entire West Nile region and neighbouring countries, including the DRC and South Sudan.

Development Goals (SDGs). Collaboration with civil society, government agencies, and development partners reinforces governance and policy execution. However, resource limitations hinder its ability to adequately serve its growing population, including DACs.

Arua has significant opportunities to enhance urban resilience and integrate DACs. The next Five-Year City Development Plan (2025/26–2029/30) aims to incorporate DAC needs, complementing Uganda's refugee policy review and the City Contingency Plan. However, conflicts in neighbouring DRC, reduced development aid, and climate change threaten the city's stability and growth.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Arua City is under immense strain from a high influx of refugees, overwhelming its infrastructure and public services.

Education facilities are severely overcrowded, with insufficient classrooms, poor sanitation, and limited teacher training programmes. Healthcare facilities face equipment shortages, understaffing, and rising mental health cases. Meanwhile, DACs have limited access to jobs, market spaces, vocational training, and financial services, hindering their economic stability.

Urban expansion and constrained agricultural resources are worsening environmental degradation

and food insecurity. Additionally, limited legal protections leave DACs vulnerable, requiring stronger advocacy, legal aid, and community outreach.

Arua's urban planning and governance capacity remain weak, necessitating updated expansion strategies, policy reforms, and governance training. Regional conflicts, declining development aid, and climate change further threaten the city's stability and service capacity.

Targeted investments in infrastructure, livelihoods, governance, and social cohesion are critical to overcoming these challenges.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The SUIDAC project in Arua City aims to promote the sustainable integration of DACs by strengthening self-reliance, social cohesion, and institutional capacity for DAC support. It will operate mainly in Ayivu and Central divisions.

The project has two key objectives: Promoting self-reliance and social cohesion among DACs, ensuring equitable participation in economic and social life; and strengthening the capacity of Arua City administration, national agencies, and regional bodies to effectively address DAC needs in urban areas.

The programme in Arua City builds on several years of collaboration between Arua City and Cities Alliance to strengthen urban migration governance frameworks. This includes contributing to the development of an Urban Refugee Policy that extends protections and support to refugees beyond Kampala, and shaping a local migration policy aimed at improving labour access, settlement assistance, and the inclusion of migrants in city services.

In line with recommendations from the Cities Alliance Migration Programme, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), SUIDAC will also support the use of an identified space within the Arua City Youth Hub as a registration and reception centre for refugees. Additionally, the programme continues to partner with key local stakeholders, including refugee-led organisations, to ensure that interventions remain inclusive, relevant, and responsive to the needs of displacement-affected communities.

This phase of work is rooted in Arua's prior involvement in Cities Alliance's migration-focused portfolio, including its role as a partner city in the CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action, funded by the EU, and as a beneficiary of the Migration Programme's Phases I and II, supported by SDC. These past experiences have provided a strong foundation for the SUIDAC interventions selected for Arua City, which will allow the city to build on lessons learned and scale inclusive urban development practices.

The Arua City Council is leading implementation in partnership with local organisations, with technical support from ACAV. It is coordinating with Ugandan ministries, including the Office of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Local Government, and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, among others.

The project further collaborates with selected refugee-led local organisations such as the Rural Initiative Alliance for Development (RIAD) and the Global Rehabilitation and Transformation Response (GRTR), as well as host community-led organisations including West Nile Community Action for Rural Development (WN-CARD) and the Community Empowerment for Transformation Action - West Nile (WN-CEFTRA). Additional partners include the West Nile Development Association (WENDA) and international agencies such as UNHCR, IOM, and VNG International, with the aim of strengthening advocacy and coordination efforts.



"Our approach in Arua City is to turn challenges into opportunities by ensuring DACs have the tools to contribute, innovate, and belong."

Mr. Asiku Denis
SUIDAC Focal Point for Arua City

"Our biggest challenge is providing essential services - education and healthcare - to a rapidly growing population. With 129 pupils crammed into a classroom meant for 55, and six children sharing a desk meant for three, the strain is evident. We must act now."

His Worship Wadri Sam Nyakua
Mayor of Arua City Administration

"Sustainable urban integration does not happen overnight. It requires vision, persistence, and a commitment to equity. Through the SUIDAC project, we are building a city that recognises the potential of all its residents, regardless of their origin."

Moses Acole
Project Manager at ACAV West Nile, covering Koboko and Arua City

Uganda: Arua and Koboko

KOBOKO

The Koboko feasibility study presentation was coordinated by Bongo Patrick Namisi, Programme Management Support Senior Officer at Cities Alliance, in collaboration with the Municipality of Koboko; His Worship Dr. Sanya K. F. Wilson, Mayor of Koboko City Administration; Azabo Joel, SUIDAC Focal Point for Koboko City Administration; and Moses Acole, Project Manager at ACAV West Nile.

Koboko, located in the extreme northwestern part of Uganda, serves as the administrative and commercial hub of Koboko District. Strategically positioned at the convergence of Uganda, the DRC, and South Sudan, this unique location fosters vibrant cross-border trade and cultural exchanges.

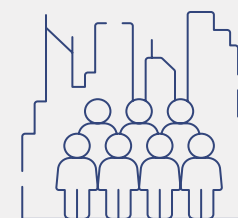
As of March 2025, Uganda houses 1,829,606 refugees and asylum-seekers, with over 6,316 residing in the officially designated Lobule Refugee Settlement in Koboko District. In addition, 39,946 refugees and asylum seekers have self-settled in Koboko District, and 25,719 (11,579 males and 14,140 females) in Koboko Municipality.

These self-settled populations account for approximately 25.7% of the municipality's total population of 99,919, with the remaining 74,200 being Ugandan nationals (38,000 female and 36,200 male).

Most of these refugees, asylum seekers and forcibly displaced persons are children, youth, and women. Fifty percent of refugees come from South Sudan, with the rest hailing mostly from the DRC, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan.

The continued arrival of refugees from neighbouring countries due to regional instability has overstretched the city's limited infrastructure and resources. Schools, healthcare facilities, and water supply systems struggle to meet the needs of both DACs and host communities.

Furthermore conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s left lasting gaps in infrastructure and urban development, further straining services. Limited funding for self-settled refugees makes it difficult for the municipality to meet growing demands.



39,946

refugees and asylum seekers
self-settled in koboko district and

25,719

in Koboko Municipality, representing
25% of the municipality's population

**Most of these refugees, asylum seekers
and forcibly displaced persons are
children, youth, and women.**

**The continued arrival of refugees
from neighbouring countries
due to regional instability has
overstretched the city's limited
infrastructure and resources.**

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

The Koboko municipality faces significant service delivery challenges. Overcrowded schools result in poor education quality, with student-teacher and student-classroom ratios exceeding national standards. Health facilities are under-equipped and understaffed, limiting access to adequate, integrated, and affordable medical care.

Limited access to clean water forces many households to rely on unsafe sources, exacerbating health risks. Financial constraints hinder infrastructure expansion, and donor dependence raises concerns about long-term sustainability.

Unemployment is high, with many residents engaged in the informal economy, limiting local revenue generation. Food insecurity is on the rise, and reliance on charcoal and firewood for cooking accelerates deforestation, with limited access to alternative energy sources.

The municipality seeks to strengthen urban resilience, improve service delivery, and promote inclusive development for both DACs and host communities through partnerships with national, regional, and international stakeholders such as the SUIDAC Programme. While challenges remain, the municipality is committed to transforming displacement into an opportunity for sustainable urban growth and social integration.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Koboko Municipality has actively worked to integrate DACs by fostering collaboration among refugees, host communities, and local authorities. Self-settled refugees who live in urban areas play a vital role in service delivery, urban planning, and economic development. Their skills in trade, agriculture, and entrepreneurship contribute to the local economy, while their active participation fosters social cohesion. Partnerships with NGOs, community groups, and the private sector further strengthen service provision, while available land allows for present and future infrastructure expansion. Koboko also engages in national and regional migration policy discussions, leveraging Uganda's legal frameworks to support DAC inclusion.

One of the most notable achievements of the CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility Action was the Koboko model, a locally driven approach that integrated DACs into municipal planning and service delivery. With direct funding and technical support from ACAV, the Koboko Municipal Council took full ownership of its displacement response. Its leadership in urban migration was nationally recognised, and the success of this initiative drew interest from other cities seeking to replicate similar strategies, reinforcing the idea that local governments can effectively lead urban displacement responses.

Building on this momentum, under the SUIDAC Programme, the Koboko Municipality remains committed to locally implementing the CRRF approach. The objective is to further strengthen the inclusion and participation of displaced persons and refugees in the municipality's economic and social life, improve livelihoods, and expand access to quality basic services.

The SUIDAC Programme in Koboko covers three divisions, ten wards, and 36 villages/cells, prioritising areas with high DAC populations and infrastructure gaps. It addresses education, healthcare, urban planning, livelihoods, environmental protection, and governance to improve urban resilience.

With growing refugee arrivals straining public infrastructure, the initiative plans to strengthen essential services, support job creation, and promote inclusive urban policies aligned with Koboko Municipality's development plan.

The project is being implemented by the Koboko Municipal Council with technical assistance from ACAV, in collaboration with Support for Peace and Education Development (SPEDP), SSURA, and host community-led organisations such as Umoja Rescue Agency (UREA) and Light for Disability Transformation (LIDIT). It also involves national ministries, regional bodies, NGOs, CBOs, and international agencies such as UNHCR and IOM.



"We must prepare for the future. Koboko is on the border of two unstable countries, South Sudan and the DRC. More displaced people will come. Our planning must anticipate this reality."

Mr. Azabo Joel
SUIDAC Focal Point, Koboko City Administration

"Refugees are opportunities that add significant value to Koboko. As a former refugee myself, I know the social and economic value refugees bring to my city. As we welcome DACs, our vision is not just to accommodate, but to integrate them into the very fabric of our municipality, strengthening our social and economic foundation for generations to come."

His Worship Dr. Sanya K. F. Wilson
Mayor of Koboko City Administration

"Koboko's story is one of adaptation and resilience. Through this project, we are not just filling service gaps but fostering long-term solutions that empower communities to shape their own futures in a rapidly changing urban landscape."

Moses Acole
Project Manager at ACAV West Nile, covering Koboko and Arua City

SUIDAC: Sustainability through Revenue Generation

SUIDAC emphasises helping cities strengthen their capacity for their own revenue generation, with a key focus on sustainability. The amount of revenue cities are garnering has a direct impact on their performance.

For example, in Ethiopia, all secondary cities have their own plans for revenue collection and targets for generating and increasing their income led by a dedicated project office, the Revenue Enhancement Project Office, within the Ministry of Urban and Development. Cities

like Assosa and Jigjiga have developed their own strategies to boost revenue generation. These plans will be aligned with SUIDAC to ensure the project's sustainability and facilitate its integration with local plans.

Additionally, the implementation of urban expansion planning in all cities will be used to increase own-source revenue by permitting enhanced tax collection and through other means.

SUIDAC has a specific focus on the informal economy in the secondary cities, as the informal economy is leading to substantial uncollected tax revenue. SUIDAC can address this by emphasising formalising informal businesses led by DAC through training, initial capital, and mentoring. Capacity-building initiatives will be designed to enhance the municipalities' ability to generate more revenue, ensuring sustainability beyond SUIDAC's timeline.





SUIDAC: INITIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The SUIDAC Programme has successfully completed several key activities during its first phase, laying a strong foundation for the effective implementation of its initiatives.

Major milestones include:

- **The formation of National Steering Committees across all participating municipalities.** These committees serve as essential governance structures, ensuring strategic oversight and coordination of programme activities at the national and local levels. To support their operations, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Steering Committees were developed and finalised, defining their roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes.
- **The first Steering Committee meetings were conducted in each participating country, facilitating stakeholder engagement and alignment on programme objectives.** These meetings took place in Uganda and Sudan in December 2024, followed by Somalia, Ethiopia, and the DRC in February 2025. They provided a platform for local authorities, implementing partners, and key stakeholders to assess initial progress, share insights, and define next steps for programme implementation.
- **Development of an Area-Based Data Management and Protection Plan (DMPP) in collaboration with TIPs and municipalities.** This plan ensures structured data governance, protection, and ethical management of information collected throughout the programme. By implementing robust data management protocols, the programme enhances transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.
- **The completion of feasibility study reports.** The final draft reports provide critical insights into the needs, challenges, and opportunities in displacement-affected municipalities, serving as a key reference for the design and implementation of tailored interventions.

These studies will guide the next phase of the SUIDAC Programme, ensuring that interventions are context-specific and aligned with the realities on the ground.

Each municipality, in partnership with its TIP, will begin executing the proposed projects, supported by direct grants to municipalities to ensure effective and timely implementation. These efforts will drive forward inclusive urban development, improve service accessibility for DACs and host communities, and strengthen the long-term resilience of cities in the region.

Collectively, these achievements demonstrate SUIDAC's commitment to participatory governance, data-driven decision-making, and sustainable urban development. By establishing strong institutional structures, engaging key stakeholders, putting municipalities in the driving seat of project implementation, and prioritizing informed planning, the SUIDAC Programme is well-positioned to drive impactful solutions for DACs and their host municipalities.





SITE VISITS

The field visit to Jigjiga's market, school, and health centre provided participants with a firsthand view of service delivery models and infrastructure that cater to both DACs and host communities.

Over 100 participants took part in these site visits across Jigjiga, immersing themselves in

neighbourhoods hosting displaced populations to closely examine the housing, water access, healthcare, and education conditions. They also explored a vibrant local market and witnessed its vital role in fostering economic integration and social cohesion between displaced and host communities.

The practical visits complemented the dialogue's theoretical discussions, showcasing real-world examples of integration challenges and best practices in urban refugee management.





REFLECTIONS

The first Regional Dialogue for the SUIDAC Programme served as a crucial platform for exchanging knowledge, strengthening partnerships, and refining strategies to address urban displacement. By bringing together city administrators, regional leaders, technical implementing partners, and key stakeholders, the three-day dialogue facilitated a peer-learning process that highlighted both shared challenges and localised solutions for managing migration in urban settings.

A core takeaway from the discussions was that SUIDAC represents a significant shift in programme implementation towards an urban-centred approach to displacement management

that emphasises the role of cities as first responders in addressing the needs of DACs. SUIDAC ensures that DACs are included in local development frameworks, urban governance, and service delivery mechanisms. The presentations on feasibility studies from each municipality provided a comparative analysis of priority gaps, local response capacities, and sustainability strategies, enabling participants to fine-tune their implementation plans and strengthen their project frameworks.

Moving forward, the transition from planning to project implementation will require technical assistance and strengthened city-to-city collaboration

to ensure project sustainability and continuous engagement with regional and international partners. The dialogue set the stage for enhanced coordination among municipalities, ensuring that lessons learned from the CRRF Urban Development and Mobility Action are documented, shared, and adapted across the SUIDAC regional network.

Overall, the event reaffirmed the commitment of all participating cities as well as IGAD to advancing sustainable, inclusive, and resilient urban solutions for DACs. As implementation begins, the collaborative spirit fostered during the Regional Dialogue will be instrumental in ensuring long-term impact and meaningful integration across project cities.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY - SUIDAC REGIONAL DIALOGUE

A participant feedback survey was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the regional exchange on displacement and urban integration. The key insights are summarised below:



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS: The majority of respondents identified as local authorities, with others representing DACs, national authorities, or partner organisations.



KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION: All respondents expressed confidence in their ability to apply the knowledge gained, with the majority rating this at the highest level (5).



KNOWLEDGE IMPROVEMENT: Participants widely acknowledged an increase in their understanding of urban governance and integration strategies.



SATISFACTION LEVEL: Most participants rated their overall satisfaction with the event at 4 or 5 out of 5, indicating high satisfaction.



EXPECTATIONS MET: Respondents largely agreed that the event met their expectations, with most scoring 4 or 5.



FUTURE PARTICIPATION: Nearly all participants indicated willingness to join future sessions on similar topics.



PRACTICAL APPLICATION: Most confirmed they would apply the learnings to city-level policy planning and municipal collaboration.



NETWORKING OUTCOMES: Several participants reported making relevant new professional contacts during the event.



TOPICS OF INTEREST: Suggestions for future topics included improved documentation of DACs, inter-municipal coordination, and urban expansion planning.



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT: Common suggestions included enhancing food services and allowing more time for technical discussions with experts.



"This kind of event offers invaluable exposure and a once-in-a-lifetime learning opportunity for newly joined cities. Thank you!"

"To ensure meaningful collaboration, local municipalities should proactively identify their priority challenges and define clear areas where support is needed."

"Participating in this event has been a transformative experience and an invaluable opportunity for newly engaged cities to learn, connect, and grow."

"We are grateful to Cities Alliance and the EU for creating this platform that enhances visibility, fosters dialogue, and strengthens our collective capacity."



A young mother holds her baby in Borama's IDP settlement

Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

Hosted by
 **UNOPS**

Cities Alliance
UN House,
Boulevard du Regent 37
1000 Brussels, Belgium

✕ | CitiesAlliance
🌐 | citiesalliance.org
in | cities-alliance
✉ | info@citiesalliance.org