

Solutions from the Start in Site Management

Key points on early integration of Solutions

- Humanitarian preparedness before and during displacement: Raise awareness of needs and global standards. Post-displacement, the focus should be on scenarios for further movement and climate/environmental challenges.
- Community engagement should, from the start, be used to understand the community's options and opportunities for moving out of displacement.
- Data collection and information management ensure that intentions are tracked, monitored and used for planning purposes to support the community.
- Site Management actors use information from site service monitoring, coordination of stakeholders and community engagement to reflect displaced communities' needs. They coordinate with service providers to address gaps and unite stakeholders for advocacy and solutions from the start.
- Adaptable, area-based Site Management increases flexibility, supports out-of-camp solutions, and reduces reliance on camps as the only option for displaced communities.

Introduction

Building on the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement¹ and the IASC's 2010 Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons Durable Solutions, humanitarian stakeholders have always emphasised the importance of starting to work on solutions from the beginning of a displacement situation. While this has typically proven challenging as there is rarely capacity to focus beyond immediate needs at the early onset of crisis, and historically less awareness of the necessity. The 2025 Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement² developed by the Office of the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, has drawn specific attention to the need to start work earlier in a crisis on durable solutions through adopting medium to long-term approaches “to prevent displacement from becoming protracted and to facilitate an early pathway for IDPs to regain resilience and self-reliance”.³

Site Management actors regularly engage displaced communities on solution-related information needs, including intentions. The sector advocates for durable solutions, designing programming to inform and enable them through practical actions like registration, identifying governance and working with community leadership, and keeping people safe from harm (safe haven) while situations stabilize. This adjusts programming: from camps as last resort, to area-based/out-of-camp guidance, and work on return, reintegration, and relocation, advocacy for durable solutions is a direct next step from the collection and analysis of the information. The 2025-2029 Global CCCM Cluster Strategy includes Solutions from the Start as a key area of focus, reflecting and building on our work connecting to local communities and governance structures, alongside traditional Solutions actors from the outset of a crisis to understand how best to support the community and increase their participation in the process.

The 2025 Humanitarian Reset discussions, which have focused on short term, hyper-prioritised humanitarian aid to save lives (often health, food and shelter interventions). This can create an environment where seemingly, longer term planning beyond covering the immediate emergency needs may become increasingly challenging but is ever more important.

Solutions from the Start and Site Management

Site Management ensures preparedness activities such as advocacy for displacement management, alternatives to camps, solutions, and coping strategies are integrated into national strategies and contingency plans before a crisis begins. After the onset of a crisis, preparedness in Site Management looks towards reducing the risk of further shocks or secondary displacement on the road to a durable solution. Not only does Site Management

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/43ce1cff2.pdf>

² <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/15Apr%20Guidance%20on%20Solutions%20to%20Internal%20Displacement-7.pdf>

³ Office of the Special Adviser on Internal displacement, *Guidance on solutions to internal displacement*, February 2025, p.11

support the decisions of the community but also works with the community to identify broader trends and risks from secondary displacement and climatic shocks, and act ahead of time to reduce the impact on the community. On a more individual level, Site Management works to improve socio-economic inclusion and access to livelihoods and market systems to enable a shift from assistance to self-reliance. Site Management facilitates a shift from dependence on assistance toward resilience and self-reliance, integrating solutions and localization into all phases of response. In doing so, Site Management serves as a critical bridge between humanitarian response and national or local systems that sustain durable solutions.

Site Management works to ensure the participation and protection of displaced populations. Activities by Site Management actors both support emergency response and lay the foundations for solutions through community engagement, advocacy, coordination, and information management. Present from the onset of displacement, Site Management actors are uniquely positioned to embed early intention gathering, coordination with local authorities, and self-reliance planning into the initial humanitarian response.

Site Management team's awareness of intention can also support solutions processes from the start, enabling them to advocate strongly for the wishes of the population. Site Management team's awareness of displaced communities' intentions and barriers can also support solutions processes from the start, facilitating strong advocacy to both national and international solutions actors aligned to the wishes of the population. Displaced people can also be more easily brought into the discussion through Site Management programmes as representative of their communities. Through these area-based and community driven process Site Management ensures community cohesion and conflict sensitivity into the response.

Since 2012 the CCCM sector has recognized that displaced people are not exclusively located in planned sites, and we have therefore found that Area-Based Site Management (ABSM) enables us to meet the needs of the population. While camps and sites are a last resort, Site Management has found that working through an area-based response enables a more equitable approach to displacement. This response mechanism enables support to be provided to IDPs both in and out of camps, as well as the host community, thereby improving relationships where resources may be challenging. Living out of sites and camps can provide alternative pathways to solutions for the displaced population. Site Management operationalizes the principle of Solutions from the Start, integrating preparedness, risk reduction, and socio-economic inclusion into the first phase of response.

Site Management in both traditional collective displacement settings (camp, sites) based and ABSM responses often also enhances the connection to the local authorities and local organisations already working in the area. The opportunity to connect and build capacity through service mapping, direct engagement and capacity building from the earliest outset of the response builds on the localisation agenda and increases opportunities to ensure connection as early as possible in the response.

Conclusion

CCCM recognizes that work on solutions must begin at the earliest possible stage of a crisis. Historically, humanitarian priorities and resource constraints have placed solutions work secondary to immediate life-saving needs. Site Management's work puts Solutions from the Start as a core operational and advocacy commitment.

The Cluster's position is that preparedness, coordination, and community engagement lay the groundwork for durable solutions, preventing displacement from becoming protracted and fostering early self-reliance and resilience. Site Management's role as a coordination and interlocutor mechanism, bridging humanitarian, development, and peace actors, allows it to integrate solutions thinking into site and area-based management from day one. Site Management's collaboration with the DSWG increases the opportunities to directly engage the displaced community in the discussions and for Site Management actors to identify and share from early on barriers to solutions.

By supporting inclusion of displaced populations in national systems and local governance structures, strengthening social cohesion with host communities, and using data on intentions and movements to inform planning, Site Management ensures that early humanitarian action contributes to longer-term recovery and sustainability. This approach transforms Site Management into a platform for participation, resilience-building, and advocacy, ensuring that communities are not only assisted but empowered to pursue their own pathways toward durable solutions.

Risks and Mitigating Measures

Despite the clear benefits of integrating solutions thinking from the onset of displacement, several contextual and operational **risks** can hinder effectiveness:

Risk	Mitigation measure
Funding Constraints Short-term, earmarked funding limits early intention gathering, local governance, and area-based solutions.	Advocacy for Flexible Funding Engage donors/coordination platforms for multi-year funding supporting preparedness and area-based planning from the start.
Political/Security Barriers Restrictions, contested areas, or lack of government support block durable solutions.	Early Engagement with State Actors Dialogue with authorities to build ownership, clarify legal frameworks, and align with national policies.
Land Tenure/Evictions Unclear/contested land leads to evictions and secondary displacement.	Strengthening Tenure Security Coordinate with Protection/HLP/legal aid to document occupancy, prevent evictions, and identify alternatives.
Climate/Environmental Shocks Hazards disrupt planning and create new displacement risks.	Embedding Risk Reduction Incorporate climate/hazard scenarios into planning/contingencies to maintain viable solutions pathways.
General Capacity Gaps	Capacity Strengthening Train humanitarian/government actors using Site Management toolkits for solutions-oriented skills.

Examples of Solutions from the Start in practice

Somalia

- The Cluster in Somalia has already worked on site transition: in some states, IDP sites have been redefined to transition into permanent settlements.
- There is work on durable solutions through consensus-building around when “IDP site status” ceases.
- This is a good illustration of how “solutions from the start” can feed into area-based management and long-term self-reliance.

Nigeria

- The Cluster has piloted a nexus (Humanitarian-Development-Peace) approach in Mafa, Borno State.
- They set up a stakeholder dialogue platform — including security actors, host community leaders, IDP camp leadership — to foster peaceful coexistence and community governance.
- This is a concrete example of coordination, community engagement, and governance being used early to build solutions rather than just manage the camp.

Yemen

- The Yemen Cluster strategy explicitly adopts a “no-camp policy” (camps as last resort) and prioritizes durable solutions via participatory processes.
- This is a vivid example where is advocating for alternatives to camps and embedding solutions thinking early, even in a very challenging political and security environment.

Mozambique

- Following Cyclone Idai in 2018, the CCCM Cluster worked closely with the local authorities to identify safe locations for relocation away from hazardous areas due to cyclical weather-related risks such as flooding and cyclones.
- This demonstrates the opportunity to anticipate future disasters and avoid repeated displacement.