Operationalising a whole-of-society approach

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1 Introduction

Whether people are migrating freely in the hope of improving their quality of life or fleeing as refugees to save their lives in the face of persecution, conflict and violence, the movement of people across the world creates both enormous challenges and great opportunities for societies in every continent. The complex set of drivers shaping people's movements and the large array of stakeholders involved as people leave, pass through or settle in different areas, means that migration and displacement can have profound effects on all parts of society, reaching far beyond the people on the move.[1]

For many years, the greater Horn of Africa has been a region which has been sharply affected by huge volumes of displacement;[2] it has also seen large levels of international migration, both within the region and beyond. In 2022, there were over 4.5 million refugees from the greater Horn of Africa – mainly South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea – of whom over 3.5 million had remained in the region. There are even larger numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), with almost 10 million in Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan. Refugees and IDPs are found in nearly every country of the region, with Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya housing some of the largest populations of refugees found anywhere in the world. In 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) reported that Uganda had 1.5 million refugees, the third largest number in the world.[3] Alongside these very high levels of displacement, the region has seen large numbers of people migrating across its borders in search of economic opportunity and better lives. According to UN population data, there were about 5.5 million international migrants originating from the region, of whom the majority were living in neighbouring countries or elsewhere in Africa.[4]

In the face of such a complex and large-scale phenomenon, the concept of the whole-of-society (Wos) approach to migration and displacement has become increasingly popular among governments and international organisations working in the region. This approach seeks to involve all stakeholders, from governmental authorities, local communities, civil society organisations, the private sector, international organisations and the people on the move themselves, in order to develop and implement policies, programmes and initiatives. By engaging this wide set of stakeholders in interventions, it is hoped that it will make them more effective in addressing the multiple challenges posed by migration and displacement and at the same time produce more just and equitable outcomes.

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[1] In this report, 'migration' refers to movement where people have a relatively high degree of choice in shaping their journey – when they go, how they go, where they go. By contrast, 'displacement' refers to situations where people are forced to move (often under threat of violence) and have fewer options.
[2] Here the greater Horn of Africa refers to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.
[3] All figures from https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics.
[4] The UN Population Division estimated that in 2020 over 10 million international migrants originated from the countries of the region, of whom over 6.4 million moved to neighbouring countries or elsewhere in Africa. These estimates include refugees. Here we have deducted refugees from the totals to estimate the number of international migrants from the region. See https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migrant-stock.

The aim of this report is to show how the WoS approach is being implemented in programming on migration and displacement in the Horn of Africa, to identify its benefits and challenges, and to recommend ways in which these lessons can be applied to strengthen the WoS approach in programming. It particularly focuses on the application of the WoS approach in programmes funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa.

The study is based on a review of the literature, including project and policy documents, reports and evaluations and academic articles, alongside a limited set of ten key informant interviews, with respondents from government, the UN, international and national NGOs and community organisations. We make no claim of having a representative sample of respondents, nor have we attempted to undertake a systematic sweep through all the possible literature. Our reading and discussions suggest that there is limited literature focusing on the WoS approach. It tends to be mentioned obliquely or in passing. This puts the task of a comprehensive review beyond our reach, as it would involve trying to pick up hints and suggestions of the WoS approach within a huge body of material, like looking for a needle in haystack. Instead, for the purpose of this report, we have focused on a few examples, which provide some valuable insights.

In what follows, we begin by outlining the main features of the approach, before discussing how and why it has been widely taken up as part of policy frameworks and programming on migration and displacement. The review will then draw on examples from the greater Horn of Africa to illustrate the implementation of the approach in practice. This is followed by a discussion of its potential benefits, the extent to which it offers anything new, some factors that make it work better and some basic challenges it faces. Finally, the review provides some concluding remarks on the use of the approach in the Horn of Africa and some recommendations for maximising its benefits.

2 The whole-of-society approach

The WoS approach is based on the premise that migration and displacement are not simply individual decisions, but are shaped by the socioeconomic, environmental and political context in which they take place. It is concerned with including a much broader range of stakeholders across all parts of society in initiatives to address migration and displacement issues. It has become particularly important in policy relating to migration issues since it was promoted in the New York Declaration and was subsequently embedded (explicitly) within the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and (implicitly) in the Global Compact on Refugees. The emphasis of this rapid review is on the application of a WoS approach in responses to migration and displacement, with a particular focus on the greater Horn of Africa. We look at this more closely in the next section, but first we start by outlining the way the idea has emerged from other contexts and the different meanings attached to it.

The notion of a WoS approach has been invoked in many varied fields, including in a review of the global development agenda (Cázarez-Grageda, 2018), humanitarian aid for refugees (Post et al, 2019), peace building (Martin et al, 2018), public health (Ortenzi et al, 2022), intelligence services (Ivan et al, 2021), and search and rescue (Kikkert & Lackenbauer, 2021). As might be expected, given

these fields' very different areas of activity, they each have their own interpretation of the term 'whole-of-society approach'. That said, there are some common elements which run through each field, including those of migration and displacement.

First, there is the complex nature of the challenges involved, which demand analysis and responses that cut across sectoral and disciplinary boundaries. Second, and closely related, there is the wide array of actors involved beyond any one sector. As a result, the outcomes of any action will be determined by social, economic, political and environmental factors that lie outside any one sector's immediate sphere of activity.

Here the focus is on including all parts of society to achieve the intended goals. Hence the World Health Organisation defines the WoS approach as one that engages "all relevant stakeholders, including individuals, families and communities, intergovernmental organizations, religious institutions, civil society, academia, the media, voluntary associations and [...] the private sector and industry" (WHO, cited in Ortenzi et al, 2022).

Martin et al (2018, pp 172–173) refer to "thicker engagement" that "requires identification of and systematic involvement with the breadth and diversity of actors which operate at multiple levels related to the conflict environment, from states and international institutions, global civil society, to local actors, as well as the existence of numerous relationships at policy level and on the ground". In a WoS approach, any interventions have to take account not only of the many different stakeholders, but also of the different "formal and informal processes through which actors relate to each other and respond to [the issue of concern]". In Martin et al's case, the issue they are referring to – conflict and peace building – is the area of concern; the same principle could be applied to interventions on displacement or migration.

Martin et al (2018, p 173) suggest that WoS adds a layer of complexity to programming, especially for external actors, who have to manage more intense relationships with multiple actors operating at different levels and the different sets of potentially competing perspectives on the issues to be addressed. However, they argue that this complexity may generate creative interactions so "the question we consider here is not only how to limit the hazards of complex interaction but how to realise its potential".

Such views of WoS are primarily concerned with findings ways to achieve policy and programming goals. The whole of society is concerned with delivering the response to a problem, although, following Martin et al, the definition of that problem may be contested by those engaging in the WoS approach.

A complementary view highlights the whole of society as the target of intervention. This can be seen very clearly in humanitarian interventions, which aim to avoid the narrow targeting of aid to particular groups (such as refugees) but instead to ensure that aid improves outcomes for the whole of society. As a result, this view also aims to contribute to social cohesion between groups (such as refugees and hosts). According to Post et al (2019, pp 3–4), writing of the situation of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, this requires three preconditions:

- all stakeholders share a vision of development that includes the whole population affected by the refugee crisis;

- there is leadership by the government to promote policies that facilitate inclusion of the whole population;

- support from the international community, including co-ordination between humanitarian and development actors, exists.

This view of the WoS approach builds on previous iterations found in refugee aid in Africa going back to the early 1980s. A set of conferences in the continent from 1979 to 1984 contributed to the launch of the 'refugee aid and development' strategy across the world (Gorman, 1993; Rogge, 1987). This expanded the scope of intervention from a narrow focus on refugee settlements to include the wider geographical area affected by the settlement of large numbers of refugees. In the 2000s the 'community development approach' set out to broaden participation and empowerment, working with refugees and other persons of concern as rights-holders rather than beneficiaries (UNHCR, 2008).

One of the challenges of this view of the WoS approach is how to draw the boundaries of interventions. If an important element of the approach is to include all those affected by the issues at hand (say displacement), and those issues are highly complex and have far-reaching implications at all levels of society, there is a danger that programmes over-expand to try to cover too much. This is recognised by Martin et al (2018, p 173), who make the following important observation:

> 'Whole' is not synonymous with 'all'. The aim is not to simply increase the scope of intervention in a potentially infinite extension of inclusivity and comprehensiveness. More comprehensiveness and inclusivity may be neither feasible nor effective and risk diluting rather than improving the appropriateness of external action. Instead, the ability to define priorities and comparative advantages, and work with the fabric of local society based on a more profound understanding of context and changes in context, is proposed as part of a granular approach, which allows external actors to manoeuvre effectively and in a targeted way in complex settings.

In this section, we have seen how the term 'whole of society' has been adopted in various sectors. In particular, we have seen two different views of a WoS approach; one concerned more with including actors in programming; another more focused on ensuring that the (hopefully positive) outcomes of programming are delivered to the wider community rather than being narrowly targeted at limited categories of beneficiaries. The next section turns to look more closely at how the WoS approach has been adopted within policy and programming in migration and displacement.

3 The whole-of-society approach in migration and displacement

The complex set of factors that shape human mobility, the widespread impacts on all levels of society and the need for actors working across many sectors to address the challenges involved mean that migration and displacement are arenas of action that seem fit for a WoS approach. A key question to consider is how far this is making a substantive change to programming and its outcomes. Before getting to that, it is worth looking at how the WoS approach has risen to the fore in policy and programming on migration and displacement.

As noted above, clear precedents to WoS can be seen in the various approaches to expanding the scope of humanitarian aid to refugees, in order to link it more closely to broader development objectives and to ensure that the whole community affected by the arrival of refugees benefits from programmes. For the international community, especially donor nations and bodies (including the EU), an important driving force behind this shift in the 1990s was to make reception of refugees more palatable for African states and local communities. Accepting large number of refugees came at significant cost for host areas, putting pressure on resources and hindering development. Ensuring that refugee aid not only served refugees but could also contribute to the broader development in receiving countries was one approach to reducing the "refugee-related burdens" (Gorman, 1986).

However, the more recent surge in interest in the WoS approach is more closely related to the outworking of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.[5] In this text, UN member states made commitments to develop policies on migration and integration in collaboration with a wide range of actors, including civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, the private sector, employers' and workers' organisations and other stakeholders alongside national and local government. These 'multi-stakeholder alliances' are also to include migrant-, refugee- and diaspora-led organisations.

The New York Declaration laid the groundwork for the subsequent negotiation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The former commits states to adopting a WoS approach, describing it as:

> broad multi-stakeholder partnerships to address migration in all its dimensions by including migrants, diasporas, local communities, civil society, academia, the private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions, National Human Rights Institutions, the media and other relevant stakeholders in migration governance. (GCM, 2018, para 15)

The GCR does not use the term 'whole of society approach' but elaborates a "multi-stakeholder and partnership approach" (GCR, 2018, section 3.2). However, in its preparatory document laying out its road map towards the GCR, UNHCR recognises that the New York Declaration requires the framework for refugee response to adopt a "multi-stakeholder, 'whole-of-society' approach"

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[5] https://www.unhcr.org/57e39d987.

(UNHCR, 2017). Hence, it is reasonable to understand the two terms as equivalent in this context (Domicelj & Gottardo, 2019). The GCR emphasises the importance of including both refugees and host community members in designing, implementing and evaluating programmes (para 34). In the GCR, the whole of society/multi-stakeholder approach is concerned with ensuring the participation of a broad range of stakeholders in responding to refugee situations, rather than seeing the whole of society as the target of interventions (the version adopted by Post et al (2019) – see above). That said, the GCR does commit states and other actors to increase development aid to support not only refugees but also the wider development of the host country and host communities (paras 32, 35). This clearly echoes the earlier initiatives on refugee aid and development – and Post et al's version of the WoS approach. However, the current use of the term 'whole-of-society approach' in refugee aid is primarily concerned with the mode of response rather than its target.

As a result of its prominent position in the debates, documentation and statements around the New York Declaration and the subsequent GCR and GCM, the WoS approach has become a staple ingredient of policy and programming on migration and displacement. However, it is important to note that there are some significant differences in the approach as it might be applied to these two processes.

Consider the latter first. Whether we are concerned with the flight of refugees across international borders, with internal displacement or other forms of forced migration, such as trafficking, displacement always involves the abuse of rights. It is a harmful social process associated with violence, conflict and exploitation. It seems safe to assume that there will be a widespread consensus that displacement is a problem and one of the important aims of policy and programme interventions should be to reduce it and, where possible, address its underlying causes to stop it happening. Of course, like any other harmful social process, there will be actors, such as warlords seizing territory or traffickers, who have a strong interest in its continuation. Echoing the discussion on conflict and peace building (Martin et al, 2018), the WoS needs to take account of these different perspectives and interests, but this does not mean the overall goal of preventing displacement will change.

When it comes to migration, it is much harder to discern a consensus around the desired outcome of programming. While there are many references to addressing the root causes of migration, on closer inspection this is generally shorthand for concern with the root causes of problematic migration. Unlike displacement, the migration of people is not in itself a negative social process. In some circumstances it may be – it may involve dangerous and exploitative journeys, leave people impoverished or create huge problems for receiving states. At other times, it may help people to leave exploitative situations, greatly enhance their livelihoods and sometimes provide enormous benefits for receiving states. Sometimes, it brings both huge harms and huge benefits, accrued to different stakeholders or even to the same stakeholders at different points in time (think of the migrant who pays huge sums to be smuggled across a border, but then successfully establishes a business and creates a new life abroad). This means a WoS approach that involves a wide array of stakeholders in designing and implementing migration interventions could have the potential to go in radically different directions from those originally envisaged.

4 Putting the whole-of-society approach into practice

Reviewing the various policies and programmes that adopt a WoS approach to migration and displacement, there are four elements that define it. First, WoS emphasises the importance of involving all stakeholders in the design and implementation of migration and displacement policies, including civil society, the private sector and local communities. Second, it recognises that migration and displacement are often the result of complex socioeconomic and political factors, and therefore require a comprehensive and coordinated response. Third, the approach recognises that migration and displacement can have varied impacts on societies, and therefore strategies should be designed to maximise the positives and minimise the negatives. Finally, the contemporary WoS approach emphasises the importance of human rights and the need to protect the rights of all migrants and displaced persons. The first element is the most basic. If an intervention claims to adopt a WoS approach but does not include a wide range of stakeholders in its design, implementation and evaluation, it is unclear whether the claim has any merit. The programme is only paying lip service to the WoS approach.

With these criteria in mind, we explore how far WoS has been adopted in some selected programmes, focusing on those supported by the EUTF. An overview of the whole EUTF portfolio showed that, in practice, few programmes explicitly declare that they have adopted the WoS approach. Even where it is mentioned, this is generally with reference to top-level goals or strategies rather than at the level of objectives and implementation. As a result, there is no clear set of indicators or evaluation of how far the approach has been adopted. Therefore, any evidence of the WoS in operation is somewhat haphazardly buried in project documents. Excavating it across the full range of EUTF programming is beyond the scope of this paper: that would require a much larger study. Instead, we have purposively selected some examples that show some evidence of the WoS approach and illustrate general issues that are likely to be echoed more widely in other programming. These examples are discussed in the rest of this section. Acknowledging the potential differences between WoS in migration and in displacement programming, we present these as two sub-sections. We will explore the differences (if any) in the subsequent discussion.

4.1 Migration programming

The Better Migration Management (BMM) project is the largest intervention in the Horn of Africa funded by the EUTF, which has provided €70 million in the first two phases since the start of 2016. It has recently been extended into a third phase, bringing the total EU contribution of €105 million, plus a further €17 million from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to an overall total of €122 million. Not surprisingly, given the size and scope of the programme, there is a lot of variation in its activities in the different countries across the region and it would be impossible to summarise everything here. For the purposes of this review, we offer some broad observations based on EU action fiches and the project briefings provided by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

While the project documentation does not seem to make direct reference to the WoS approach, its work reflects the approach in all its countries of operation. It has three main components: migration governance; supporting effective institutions to address smuggling and trafficking; and protection. The extent to which the WoS approach is being adopted appears to vary across these. When it comes to migration governance, the principal actors are government departments, who may or may not engage with nongovernment actors.

For example, in Kenya, the BMM (Giz, 2022) refers to working in partnership with a number of stakeholders, but the examples given are all government bodies. On migration governance, it supports the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), a government-led body that draws together multiple stakeholders to inform migration policy. This appears to be at the heart of the Kenyan government's adoption of a WoS approach (NCM, 2020). BMM also promotes improved migration governance through its support for the Kenya Institute of Migration Studies, which delivers teaching for a post-graduate diploma to immigration officials. When it comes to addressing smuggling and trafficking, the focus of BMM's work appears to be on collaboration with law enforcement agencies, immigration officials and the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights. It seems reasonable to suggest that this is a whole-of-government approach rather than a WoS approach. There is a much broader set of stakeholders engaged in work around providing protection and assistance targeted at vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking. Here, civil society organisations appear to play a much more central role in shaping the programme activities and they receive substantial support from BMM to do so. This example illustrates a general point seen in other countries across the Horn of Africa: the WoS approach is much more evident in the component of BMM's work around protection compared with the other two components, migration governance and addressing smuggling and trafficking.

Stemming Irregular Migration in Northern and Central Ethiopia (SINCE) was a very different programme, with a much narrower geographic and thematic focus than BMM. SINCE aimed to create greater economic and employment opportunities by establishing inclusive economic programmes for potential irregular migrants, Ethiopian returnees and Eritrean refugees, focusing on young people and women in rural towns and urban areas in the most migration-prone regions of Ethiopia (Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, SNNP and the City Administration of Addis Ababa). Activities included vocational training and supporting the creation of micro and small enterprises and the start-up of small livelihood activities. The project started in 2016 with about €20 million in funding from the EUTF and ran until March 2021.

According to the final evaluation of the project (ARS Progetti, 2021), a key component of the project's operations was the creation of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms that included different levels of government, private sector and beneficiary groups. These provided an important forum for the exchange of information about potential obstacles and successes, sharing good practice and encouraging collaboration between stakeholders. The platforms were noted as being particularly important in building awareness and acceptance of the principles of decent work among government and private sector actors. It is interesting to note that the evaluation report makes no reference to 'rights', although they are implicit in the programme's concern to ensure that it is stimulating jobs for people in *decent* work. There are clear echoes of the WoS approach in the

operation of SINCE and the evidence from the evaluation suggests that it played an important role in helping the programme reach its objectives.

SINCE was addressing one of the underlying drivers of irregular migration in Ethiopia and it offers a good example of the WoS approach in action in migration programming. It is worth noting that, unlike BMM, while the SINCE programme's high-level aim was to reduce irregular migration, its activities were primarily focused around employment creation rather than directly addressing migration issues. This reminds us that, in many respects, the WoS approach can be seen as a reflection of principles of good development programming concerned with participation, effective coordination, doing no harm and focusing on rights.

4.2 Displacement programming

According to one respondent, one of the first initiatives to adopt a WoS approach in the region was Uganda's Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA), launched by the Ugandan government in 2015. This set out a five-year strategy for achieving self-reliance for refugees and social development for Ugandan nationals in refugee-hosting areas as part of the Second National Development Plan (2015–20). It laid out several areas for action: 1) land management; 2) sustainable livelihoods; 3) governance and rule of law; 4) peaceful coexistence; 5) environmental protection; and 6) community infrastructure and access to social services (UNHCR, 2018a).

The STA was an important step towards including refugees in Uganda's overall development planning process. This early initiative laid the groundwork for the country's implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) from 2017. Sectoral refugee response plans have been developed under line ministries for education, health, water and environment, sustainable energy, and jobs and livelihoods, and these are being merged into national planning. Hence, in the Third National Development Plan (NDP III) running from 2020, refugees are now included with the general population. In April 2023, the government launched STA II, a second phase of framework which continues to focus on the same areas for action.

Without trying to go into the all the details of the STA and CRRF in Uganda (for more details see UNHCR & OPM, 2020), for the purposes of this review, the critical point is that they have explicitly adopted a WoS approach. There appear to be two elements to this.

First, there is the overall goal of ensuring the integration of the refugee and host populations, increasingly aligning humanitarian and development responses. This reflects the idea of a WoS approach concerned with the target of intervention. It necessitates a significant broadening of the stakeholders in any plans in refugee-affected areas, to ensure that interventions are designed with a good understanding of the complementary needs and interests of both refugees and hosts. However, rather than limiting this to interactions between agencies – ensuring there is discussion between the Office of the Prime Minister (which has primary responsibility for refugee affairs), district councils, line ministries, UNHCR, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and NGOs – there is an attempt to include some direct representation of both host populations and refugees via seats on the CRRF Steering Group, the high-level body that is the policy and decision–making hub for the implementation of the CRRF across the country. Uganda has also created the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF), which brings together leaders from all the refugee settlements and Kampala. The REF

elects the representatives to sit on the CRRF Steering Group and is supposed to convene each quarter before the steering group meetings to ensure that the concerns of refugees can be brought before them. More recently, it has also established the District Engagement Forum that also feeds into the CRRF Steering Group (CRRF Evaluation Team, 2022).

This is the second aspect of the WoS approach – the thicker engagement of all sections of society in the delivery of programming. This seems to fit closely with the aspirations of the GCR. How well it works in practice is open to debate, however. Bisimwa (2023) argues that the refugee representatives on the CRRF Steering Group are not given time to raise their concerns and their suggestions for action are not properly considered. Nevertheless, he offers a more positive view of the REF and also appears to endorse the overall principle of much closer integration of refugees into the government's development programming.

The EUTF programming in Uganda is closely aligned with these national frameworks, either the CRRF, STA or both (although the relationship is not uniform – see Juška (2020)). The three largest programmes – Support Programme to the Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda (SPRS-NU), Security, Protection, and Economic Empowerment (SUPREME) and Response to increased demand on Government Service and creation of economic opportunities in Uganda (RISE) – are all concerned with improving conditions for refugees and host communities. They adopt the WoS approach as part of the CRRF but it is not clear how far they develop it in more detail in the implementation of the programmes.

While Uganda has tended to take the lead in progressive policy and programming for refugees, the adoption of the CRRF in Kenya and Ethiopia has encouraged new initiatives that seek to integrate humanitarian aid for refugees with development for host communities. The Kalobeyei Integrated Socio-Economic Development Program (KISEDP) in Kenya offers some interesting insights into both the promise and challenges that arise, in particular in the face of a much more restrictive regulatory framework compared to that in Uganda. The EUTF has played a central role in the programme, providing about €15 million in funding for KISEDP as part of its Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP).

The origin of KISEDP lay in the need to expand the land available to refugees arriving in the overcrowded Kakuma refugee camp, which by 2013 was hosting twice as many people as it was designed for. Rather than simply follow the old model of encampment, the Turkana County government offered land to try a new approach that aimed to integrate support for refugees and their Kenyan hosts and to facilitate self-reliance for both refugee and host communities, with backing for agriculture and business development. In particular, an innovative aspect of its approach was to invest in the area to improve services, build skills and create an environment conducive to both refugees and hosts boosting their economic activity and contributing to economic development.

It is aligned with the priorities of both the CRRF and Kenya's national development strategy, Kenya Vision 2030. It is expected to be a 15-year programme in three phases, the first of which ran from 2018 to 2022 and focused on improving access to basic social services and protection, and introducing new forms of delivery, such as cash-based interventions. The overall vision is for the creation of a new economic hub within Turkana County, to benefit from the economic potential of

refugees (Fellesson, 2023). Its work in Phase 1 has focused on eight priority areas: health; education; water and sanitation; protection; spatial planning, infrastructure and shelter; agriculture, livestock and natural resource management; sustainable energy solutions; and private sector and entrepreneurship (UNHCR, 2022).

KISEDP is described as a 'multi-stakeholder initiative' and has been designed around multi-stakeholder consultations that have included representation from among both refugees and hosts. One of its underlying principles is the "centrality of communities"; this means they should be involved in identifying priorities and should be "actively and substantively involved and consulted with regard to legislation and policy formulation affecting their lives and choices" (UNHCR, 2018b, p 7).

While these are critical components of a WoS approach, Felleson (2023) observes that there are some fundamental contradictions between the broad ambitions of KISEDP to promote economic integration and the Kenyan legislative framework. The new Refugee Act (2021) does recognise refugees as economic actors and supports their engagement in the economic and social development of Kenya. However, their economic activities should not have a negative impact on host communities, natural resources or the environment, which leaves them more constrained than their Kenyan hosts. More importantly, they are expected to remain within the areas designated for refugee settlement and they have limited access to work permits. These limits on movement and employment undermine the prospects for self-reliance and the possibility of refugees integrating with hosts to generate sustainable development. This also points to the limits of the WoS approach and multi-stakeholder consultations, which can run into the buffers of national legislation that is largely impervious to the voices of refugees.

5 Discussion

These examples of the ways in which the WoS approach has been adopted in programming across the Horn of Africa show how it is starting to permeate policy and practice. While few programmes explicitly refer to the WoS approach, many seem to be aligning with it and this appears to be generating some benefits. This was reinforced by key informant interviews with officials from government, NGOs and UN bodies.

> The 'whole of society' approach addresses a variety of issues related to migration and displacement, such as economic and social integration, protection, and access to basic services for migrants and displaced persons, security, and sustainable development. It also focuses on recognising the rights of those affected and ensuring their access to justice, as well as promoting public understanding and acceptance of diversity. Finally, it looks at the various aspects of migration, including the factors that drive migration, its positive and negative impacts, and its opportunities and challenges. (Interview with INGO staff member)

5.1 Perceived benefits of the whole-of-society approach

At the most basic level, the WoS approach has helped to embed wider consultation into

programming. One respondent suggested that the WoS approach has to create an environment that enables more collaboration and dialogue between the state and its citizens. It has stimulated some innovation to promote participation and inclusiveness. This can be seen in in the Multi-Stakeholder Platforms in SINCE and the Refugee Engagement Forum created in Uganda. Creating such openings makes it easier for refugees to approach government.

These innovations are not restricted only to ensuring greater participation by community groups. The WoS approach is also credited with encouraging more engagement with the private sector, as seen in KISEDP, where public–private partnerships play a very important role. In another example, a respondent highlighted the collaboration between the NGO Mercy Corps and HuMen, a private corporation, to secure green energy for refugees and the local community in Ethiopia's Somali region.[6]

Many respondents also observed that a WoS approach not only broadened the extent of collaboration, but also strengthened the cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders. One respondent suggested that this way of working helped to overcome the rifts between different sectors, reducing the "battle for roles, responsibilities and recognition". For example, it bridges the divides between those working with refugees and those focusing on immigration affairs. It also encourages better cooperation between agencies working at local and international levels, 'streamlining' interventions to make them more coherent and comprehensive.

For programming concerned with migration and displacement, a distinctive benefit of the WoS approach is its potential to redefine the relationships between people on the move, whether migrants, refugees or returnees, and the communities in which they settle. In particular, as seen in the examples of CRRF in Uganda and KISEDP, the WoS approach attempts to integrate responses to the needs and priorities of both refugee and hosts. It creates space for dialogue that can feed into a broader understanding of each other's situations, fostering trust and understanding across different cultural, religious and lifestyle practices. This offers the potential to reduces the stigmatisation of people on the move and lessen conflict. It helps to bring migrants and refugees into the 'mainstream' and promotes their integration into host communities "in a safe and sustainable way".

By including such a broad array of stakeholders in decision making, monitoring and evaluation, respondents suggested that the WoS approach is making it possible to take account of the different perspectives, making it easier to address contentious critical issues, such as access to services, protection, education and employment. To some extent, by canvasing views so widely, it defuses some of the politics. Also, by ensuring a more open dialogue, it helps set up a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility sharing, and builds confidence in the programme and its stakeholders.

5.2 What is new?

While adopting a WoS approach may produce such (potential) benefits, is it really offering anything new? Many aspects seem simply to reflect good practices in development programming that have been promoted for many years. As noted with the example of the SINCE programme in Ethiopia, the

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[6] https://europe.mercycorps.org/en-gb/press-room/releases/humen-commercial-mini-grid-license.

WoS approach echoes long-standing concerns in development programming to strengthen participation and coordination, avoid harm and put rights at the centre. While none of these elements may be new, what the WoS approach seems to offer is a relatively clear and comprehensive framework that ties these development principles into programming on migration and displacement.

Respondents noted that the approach shifts the perception of refugees (and to some extent migrants) as helpless victims dependent on aid to seeing them as active agents – in the case of KISEDP, active agents with the potential to deliver economic growth to Turkana. How far such promise can actually be realised is yet to be seen. The critical point is that it is changing the terms of the discussion and the ideas of what can be possible. Likewise, by creating more space for civil society and community engagement, the WoS approach pushes these closer to the forefront of debates about designing interventions and finding solutions to problems. The preliminary evidence suggests that there is still a long way to go before this becomes a reality. Nonetheless, by adopting the WoS approach as a priority within both the GCM and GCR and in other policy frameworks, the aspiration to make the engagement of these stakeholders more substantive is now being baked into many programming recipes.

As we have seen in the programmes focusing on refugee situations, the WoS approach builds on old ideas of linking humanitarian and development responses. In particular, area-based programmes such as KISEDP seek to ensure that refugees and hosts alike benefit from interventions. Perhaps where it breaks from the past is in the emphasis on working with local and national governments to ensure that refugees are embedded into development plans. Rather than bringing development approaches to refugee settings, as seen in the Refugee Aid and Development approach of decades past, the WoS approach encourages a view of refugees simply as part of the wider population. This ongoing shift is nicely illustrated by the movement of the strategy for refugee self-reliance and development from an annex of Uganda's NDP II into the main body of the latest national development plan, NDP III.

5.3 Making the whole-of-society approach work

The WoS approach is still relatively new and it is yet to be seen if it can deliver substantive changes in migration and displacement programming. The examples discussed above and the responses of key informants suggest some important conditions that could improve the chances of success.

Putting the WoS approach into practice will inevitably expand the number of stakeholders involved in any project and deepen their engagement. This introduces new challenges of coordinating and managing the variety of often competing expectations. Bringing together refugees, migrants and host communities as stakeholders alongside government officials is not straightforward, especially given the discrepancies in power. One government official noted that that government-led projects in Kenya struggled to include refugees, especially when they were constrained by restrictions on refugees' movements. In Ethiopia, it is hard for some refugees to cooperate with the government as they lack documentation. There are also structural imbalances between the donors who have the money and national and local government and community-level organisations that require funding to take any action.

As one respondent noted, in order to make this work, it is important to spell out the roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders and to seek to mark out each one's areas of 'jurisdiction' or 'mandate'. There needs to be a mutual recognition of the different strengths that each set of stakeholders brings to the table. Government agencies may take the lead in designing policies and creating and enabling environment. Civil society and international organisations are likely to provide specialist expertise, various levels of financial resources, capacity building and research. Community-based organisations can play a critical role in mobilisation, lobbying for change and holding actors to account. All play a part in creating and implementing successful programmes.

Further crucial divisions that need to be acknowledged and managed are those between different social groups, in particular refugees or migrants and the hosts among whom they settle. These may involve rather intractable clashes around culture, religion, social practices or livelihoods, or they could be concerned with competition for resources. For example, one respondent highlighted the challenge in Gambella, Ethiopia, where the number of South Sudanese refugees almost matches the Ethiopian population of the region, which is one of the least developed in the country. The regional government policy supports integration of refugees, but there is opposition from local communities in the area, who are concerned they may be further marginalised in the process (see Oxfam, 2021). Such objections to integration may not come just from the community level. The same respondent also observed that some elements in the private sector were not very keen on the integration of refugees as they were benefiting from their cheap labour. Such differences seem inevitable and cannot be avoided, but they need to be handled skilfully to avoid partisan and powerful voices being heard loudest and to ensure constructive ways forward can be heard.

A respondent noted that one limitation on the engagement of some community groups is their level of education or their limited technical and managerial expertise. It is important to consider such constraints and to be realistic about how far different stakeholders can be involved. While this may limit their immediate high-level engagement with the programme, it should also be a prompt for the programme to invest in education or training to enable them to develop their capacity so they can take on a larger role in time. There may also need to be some training for government and other officials to enable them to improve their communication skills and understanding of different community perspectives.

One response to such challenges is to ensure a commitment to transparency, with open communication and mutual accountability between stakeholders. This requires trust to be built up, which may be easier for programmes working on a relatively smaller scale in contexts of limited diversity rather than across the whole country or region. Whatever the scale, building trust will inevitably take time and require some concrete results. As one respondent said, it is essential that claims are not just theoretical; for instance, if governments say they offer rights, they should be evident in practice. The success of the WoS approach will be seen in visible changes in social and economic outcomes for the most disadvantaged.

5.4 Broad challenges to the whole-of-society approach

This review has also found some profound challenges that may prevent the WoS approach from delivering substantive changes in programming around migration and displacement. Instead, they

could leave it being little more than a momentary aspiration, name checked in proposals and reports but having little noticeable impact.

At the most basic level, there is the constraint of funding. Ambitious programmes such as KISEDP have been established with large budgets, but all too often they face a shortfall. In KISEDP's first phase, the actual funding raised was less than 60% of the planned budget. Following the WoS approach with its demands for extensive consultation requires both time and money. It is not clear how far it may survive in the face of budget cuts.

We found a lot of evidence of a WoS approach being cited with respect to the targeting of interventions, especially when it comes to work in refugee-affected areas to ensure benefits accrue to both refugees and local hosts. There is also much reference to a WoS approach resulting in increased levels of consultation, cutting across all sections of the population. However, it has been noted that some refugees in Uganda had little faith in the attempts to engage them in the CRRF, complaining that their interests were ignored. In our preliminary discussion about the application of the WoS approach to migration and displacement, we suggested the latter may entail greater consensus, as all might agree that displacement is a problem. However, in practice, when programming is focused on those who are already displaced, this distinction does not hold. There is no easy consensus on desired outcomes.

This has been recognised in the EUTF's mid-term evaluation, which noted how the approach's different strategic objectives concentrated on the interests of different actors.

> The Main Finding is that the first two SOs [strategic objectives] have a clear focus on the needs of various categories of migrant (or potential migrant) and the communities from which they come while the two subsequent SOs concentrate on state functions and the capacity of the public sector to cope with the various migration flows. A major challenge in designing a complex programme like this is that the interests of migrant populations are not always compatible with objectives of the state (Disch et al, 2020, p 36).[7]

To some extent, this is echoed in the findings from the BMM project, where there is much more evidence of the engagement of multiple stakeholders, especially at the community level, in its work on protection. It is much less clear how far the WoS approach is being, or could be adopted in the work on migration governance, or tackling smuggling and trafficking. This might suggest that to date the WoS approach tends to be adopted where it is easiest and may present the least challenge to powerful interests.

A big challenge may be how to move the WoS approach beyond a box-ticking exercise and how to assess its value. It is embedded in the GCM and GCR, which have built-in mechanisms for reporting on progress with their implementation. This has generated various country-level reports (in the Horn of Africa, for GCR these reports are on the CRRF). These reports almost inevitably make reference to

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[7] It is also interesting to note that the same evaluation uses the term 'whole of community' rather than 'whole of society' approach, referring to the idea of ensuring that the benefits of programmes are spread between IDPs/refugees and the wider community rather than targeted at particular categories, especially when it comes to building resilience (Disch et al, 2020, p 97).

the WoS. For example, the Kenyan government refers to the operation of multi-sectoral technical and regional committees that include different levels of government and local communities supervising development activities at the county level. It also highlights its collaboration with a wide range of state and non-state actors, both regional and international, in implementing migration-related projects (NCM, 2020). It reports on continuous engagement and dialogue between the Kenya National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which has "significant influence" on present and future policy. It does not give any detail about what that influence is nor how it actually changes things. Likewise, the Ethiopia review of progress on the GCM cites as evidence of the WoS approach the diverse membership of the National Partnership Coalition (NPC), a body convened by the government with a remit to focus on migration issues, which includes government officials, NGOs, faith-based organisations and UN agencies (NPC, 2020).

In many of the reports and other documents, the WoS approach is presented alongside the whole-of-government approach and often the two are effectively elided. For example, a Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (REDSS) briefing on the implementation of the CRRF in the Horn of Africa refers to it supporting a whole-of-society approach, but it is the whole-of-government approach that appears in the main text, where the liaison between different line ministries and from local to national level of government is emphasised (REDSS, 2018).

For now, this suggests some confusion about what is being measured, leaving the WoS approach open to interpretation as all things to all people. This perhaps requires some more consideration at a high level. It seems there may be a choice to be made: either to work towards a clearer idea of what constitutes a WoS approach; or to leave it as an open book. The former has the advantage of potentially pushing forward a stronger voice for migrants, refugees and local community members and helping to institutionalise it in programming. However, it may also introduce a new set of standards, measures and formal systems that sap dynamism from the ideas. The latter may leave things rather vague, but as long as there are aspirations and it remains a living idea, this could leave room for development and change, which may arise in unexpected places.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

With the launch of the GCM and the GCR, a WoS approach has become a staple ingredient of policy and programming relating to migration and displacement around the world. As this review has shown, in the Horn of Africa, it has been taken up in different ways. For some, the main focus of the WoS approach is on ensuring that benefits of programming reach the whole of society – bridging divides between refugees or migrants and host communities. For others, there is more focus on ensuring that the whole of society is engaged with programming, ensuring broader participation and ownership of interventions. These two aspects are interlinked but it does mean that WoS can look rather different depending on the setting.

This study has shown how the WoS approach can bring distinctive benefits for programming on migration and displacement. By drawing migrants and displaced people together with the communities among whom they settle, it can establish space for dialogue and mutual understanding

that may lay the ground for integration. By its explicit recognition of migrants and refugees as active agents, the WoS approach may also be helping to change the conversation about their potential role in society: for example, seeing them as potential customers or producers, rather than beneficiaries.

The report has also highlighted some significant obstacles to the WoS approach delivering such benefits. The extensive consultation involved in the approach demands additional resources. For it to move beyond a tokenistic level of consultation, it also requires a clear acknowledgement of the different interests at stake and the discrepancies of power. This is likely to entail some conflict of interest, such as that noted in the example from Gambella. The huge challenge is finding ways to resolve such conflicts constructively in a way that retains trust and does not simply bend to the most powerful voice.

As we have noted, there is rather limited explicit discussion of the WoS approach in policy documents, reports, evaluations and academic literature. We make no claim that this report is a fully comprehensive review of the WoS approach. It leaves many gaps. For example, we have not discussed the WoS approach in all the countries of the greater Horn of Africa. We have inferred its impacts and some general lessons by a selective analysis of a limited number of interventions. As a result, the findings and conclusions are tentative. Moreover, given the limited time during which the WoS approach has been adopted in programming, it may still be rather too early to see definitive impacts.

Nonetheless, this report does show that the WoS approach is having an influence on how programmes are being designed and implemented, with some evidence of new collaborations, dialogues and so forth that draw together a wide range of stakeholders. What is not yet clear is how far this new language and new initiatives will feed through into substantive change in terms of working relationships – modes of actually working in practice – and impact on the ground, bringing changes in people's lives and improved outcomes of programming. Drawing on the findings of this study, we offer some recommendations to help bring this about.

While noting the lack of assessment of the WoS approach, we also make some recommendations concerned with examining its impact. A starting point for this is establishing a shared definition of the WoS approach – perhaps drawing on the criteria suggested at the start of Section 4 – as a basis for assessment. It is important to ensure that the WoS approach is not simply reduced to a checklist to be ticked off to show alignment with the GCM or GCR. At the same time, it may be useful to map out the boundaries of the WoS approach – at least to know what it is not. As this study has shown, there are various ways of applying the approach, which appear to be delivering positive results. Any definitions and forms of assessment need to be sufficiently inclusive of variations. They have to leave room for further experiment and innovation, which we might expect to emerge from close engagement with the whole of society in many different settings.

6.1 Recommendations

Defining and assessing whole-of-society approaches

- There needs to be more consideration of what the WoS approach means beyond the extended participation of multiple stakeholders. A set of (broad) criteria to define the WoS approach (or

approaches) should be developed and agreed for application in reviews of progress in delivering on the GCM and GCR. A minimum set of criteria could include:
  o active engagement of all stakeholders in the design and implementation of migration and displacement programmes, including civil society, the private sector, and local communities;
  o comprehensive and co-ordinated programmes that take account of the complex array of factors shaping migration and displacement;
  o programmes focusing on maximising the positives and minimising the negative impacts of migration and displacement on different stakeholders;
  o programmes putting human rights and the need to protect the rights of all migrants and displaced persons at the centre of their design.

- Programmes that claim to adopt a WoS approach should include an explicit statement of what this means for its design, implementation and evaluation.

- The impact of adopting a WoS approach should be systematically evaluated in different programming contexts, such as refugee reception, supporting the rights of migrants, improving migration governance and addressing the causes of migration or displacement. Such evaluations may consider how the WoS approach helps programmes work with different elements of the wider community alongside government, humanitarian and development actors; the extent to which this wider engagement improves the analysis of political, societal and economic challenges as well as possibilities for action and opportunities in the short and long term; and how it delivers improved responses. These evaluations in different programme contexts should be synthesised to explore their differences. This will help show how far the WoS approach is appropriate for all programming areas, or how its value and impact varies across them.

- Examples of good practice from evaluations should be documented and disseminated – for instance, where the WoS approach creates space for dialogue and development, what steps ensure that this translates into reducing stigmatisation of people on the move and fostering social integration.

Strengthening the impact of the whole-of-society approach

- Multi-stakeholder engagement should be a standard element at all stages of programming and needs to be resourced adequately and prioritised. As a minimum, the stakeholders will include those who are expected to be directly affected by the planned intervention, including migrants, refugees or IDPs, local communities, local government, civil society and the private sector. Time and money need to be committed to facilitate meetings and discussions.

- A review of the expertise and skills of different stakeholders needs to be conducted. Where necessary, help should be given for building capacity to enable stakeholders to be fully engaged. Training for government and other officials could also be considered, in order to improve communication and understanding of community perspectives.

- Ways to balance voices among stakeholders must be sought – not to eliminate conflict but to ensure that different views and interests can be expressed and acknowledged. One approach

could be to establish a negotiated framework for responsibility sharing among stakeholders so each can recognise and acknowledge the role of others.

- Good practices should be documented and disseminated.

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