

CASE STUDY

# ETHIOPIA 2022 / CONFLICT

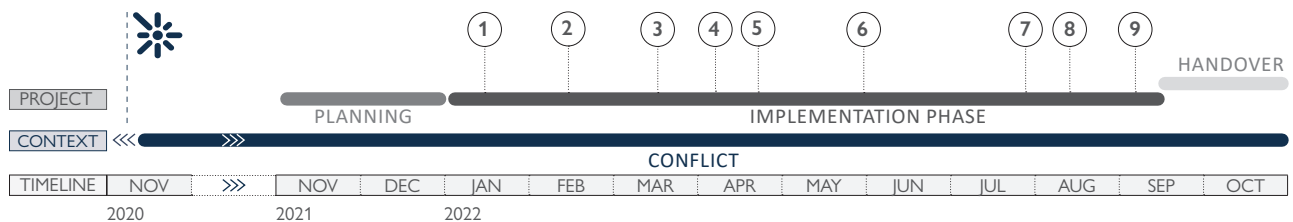
KEYWORDS: Host family support, NFI distributions, Social cohesion

<b>CRISIS</b>	<b>The Tigray War</b>
<b>PEOPLE AFFECTED</b>	<b>5.2 million people*</b>
<b>PEOPLE DISPLACED</b>	Over <b>2 million people</b> (432,358 individuals)* displaced within 1 to 26 June 2021
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Mekelle, Tigray.
<b>PEOPLE SUPPORTED BY THE PROJECT</b>	<b>300 HHs</b> (1,523 individuals)
<b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>	Expansion of shelters of <b>75 HHs of host families</b> Renovation of <b>135 HHs</b> with upgrade to roofs, doors and windows   Rehabilitation of <b>90 HHs</b> with minor shelter repair through Shelter-related NFI and CBI Integration of IDPs in host communities increased for <b>76%</b> of HHs in the project
<b>SHELTER SIZE</b>	<b>21.29 m<sup>2</sup></b> on average
<b>SHELTER DENSITY</b>	<b>4.25 m<sup>2</sup></b> per person
<b>DIRECT COST</b>	<b>USD 200–250</b> for expansion, renovation and rehabilitation activities
<b>PROJECT COST</b>	<b>USD 67,500</b> , with average <b>USD 225</b> per shelter



**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The project targeted the displaced population who arrived to Mekelle city due to the conflict in Tigray region which started in November 2020, and particularly those living with host community families. The assistance provided included different shelter and NFI kits according to the category of the needs identified during the door-to-door assessments conducted (shelters in need of an extension, shelters in need of a major renovation, and shelters in need of minor works). The project aimed to improve the living conditions while increasing social cohesion among displaced and host communities.



**Nov 2020:** Tigray war, that lasted from Nov 2020 to Nov 2022.

- 1 **Jan 2022:** Project sensitization, awareness creation.
- 2 **Feb 2022:** Local authority, IDP and host community engagement.
- 3 **Mar 2022:** Intention survey that examined the readiness of both host families and IDPs.
- 4 **Apr 2022:** Beneficiary and HLP verification conducted.
- 5 **Apr 2022:** Conception of 3 typologies, based on the intention survey results, HLP assessments and response patterns, HH-level observation and technical classifications.
- 6 **May–June 2022:** Procurement of shelter materials from market.
- 7 **Jul–Aug 2022:** Distribution of kits and Cash-based Intervention.
- 8 **Aug 2022:** Supervision and monitoring.
- 9 **Sep 2022:** Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) conducted.



Renovation of roofing and porch in Kedamayweyane sub city, Mekelle.

## CONTEXT

In November 2022, the Tigray regional government and the Ethiopian federal government entered into a conflict that resulted in more than two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and approximately one million households (5.2 million people) in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The capital city of Tigray, Mekelle, had a population of over 550,000 before the war. A large IDP influx to Mekelle occurred during and after the war from the western, eastern, central, and north-western zones of Tigray. The city lies at an elevation of 2,254 meters above sea level in a semi-arid area and is divided into seven local administrations or sub-cities.

### SITUATION BEFORE THE CRISIS

Before the crisis, Tigray specifically and Ethiopia in general experienced fast growth and development with remarkable average annual double-digit GDP growth. In Tigray, approximately 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas with agriculture as their means of primary economic activity.

The typical houses in Tigray are characterized by dry stone walls and flat mud roofs. The local vernacular architecture style is called 'Hidmo'. Rural settlements are dispersed locations across the villages without a clear pattern. In urban areas, buildings are commonly raised using stone, reinforced concrete, and glass. Due to the conflict, many typical vernacular homes as well as modern urban buildings have been damaged to varying degrees.

### SITUATION DURING/AFTER THE CRISIS

Since November 2020, large numbers of IDPs arrived in cities and towns across Tigray and started to settle in collective centers, unfinished buildings, spontaneous camps, and also with host families. Surveys carried out by

the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster in Tigray in July 2021 evidenced that 7 percent and 20 percent of IDPs were still living in collective centers in Shire and Mekelle cities respectively, and a longer term solution was required.

### NATIONAL SHELTER RESPONSE

Initially, a large part of the displaced population settled in makeshift shelters in spontaneous camps. Later, authorities and humanitarian actors set up planned camps and provided emergency shelter assistance to those staying also in unfinished buildings and collective centers.

The partners of the Shelter and NFI sub-Cluster in Tigray, in coordination with relevant authorities (relocation task force, disaster risk management office, and Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs), designed a program to support IDPs living with host families and the families hosting them, fostering family ties and cultural bondage, and aiming to decongest the collective settings such as camps and collective centers, as in those settings, protection risks were high and there were limited economic opportunities and access to services.

### PROJECT DESIGN

IDPs populations living with host families in urban areas significantly increased since the war erupted in Tigray in November 2020. The implementing organization undertook community engagement efforts at the neighborhood level across the seven sub-cities of Mekelle city, as well as needs assessments on the households hosting IDPs – which evidenced three categories of needs:

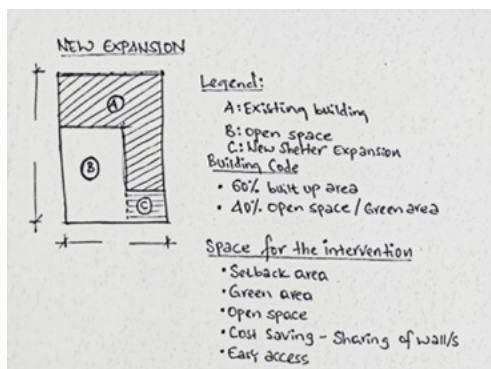
- Homes in need of an expansion;
- Homes in need of a major renovation;
- Homes in need of a minor renovation.



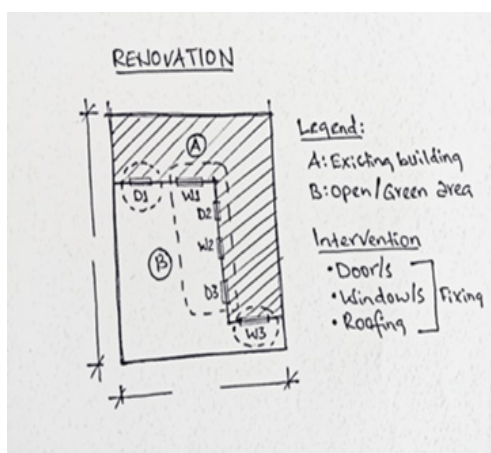
View of a traditional Hidmo house in the Tigray region characterized by masonry walls and flat mud roofs.

© Chideon Musa

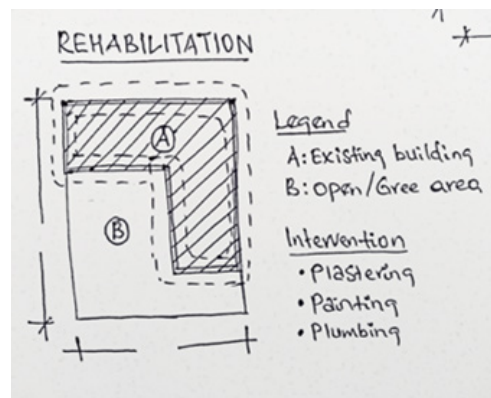
The modalities of assistance for the three scenarios consisted of the distribution of three different in kind kits of shelter items for each of the scenarios and a cash grant to implement the construction works.



Scenario 1: New expansion scenario.



Scenario 2: Renovation scenario.



Scenario 3: Rehabilitation scenario.

**PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

A hybrid response including in-kind support and CBI allowed the host community to absorb IDPs through a neighborhood approach during the project. This was implemented through the following phases and milestone activities:

- Local authority, IDPs, and host community engagement.
- Surveys for both IDPs and host families.
- The conception of three typologies (expansion, major and minor renovations).

- Participant verification and HLP assessment, followed by participant sensitization and grouping.
- Distribution of in-kind kits and cash:
  - » Two in-kind kit distributions to the three scenarios and one installment of cash for the rehabilitation scenario.
- Construction works.
- Supervision and monitoring.
- Post Distribution Monitoring.

Other implementation activities included the establishment of a project master schedule, project diary, official letters communication with different bureaus, face to face and virtual meetings (with IDPs, Mekelle city administration, sub-city leaders, different organizations, and Shelter/NFI national and subnational Cluster), format/s (in Tigrigna and English), intention survey, KOBO tool (for data collection and analysis) and scenario analysis and development.

The implementing organization engaged shelter and WASH units during field assessments of homes, as well as the protection unit, who trained the staff involved in the distributions in mitigating GBV risks and participated in awareness campaigns during the distributions.

**TARGETING**

Door-to-door exercises were conducted to identify and assess eligible households as they were spread across the city. The criteria for inclusion in the program included:

- IDPs from areas in Tigray where the conflict is active.
- IDPs living within the host community with proof of a letter from a lower local authority.
- IDPs with different vulnerable cases were prioritized such as female headed households, separated or at risk children and foster families, pregnant or lactating mothers, Persons with Disabilities, those suffering from serious medical conditions, and the elderly.

Participant verification was conducted house to house jointly by the implementing organization with representatives from the local authorities from each sub-city and kebeles (small administrative unit in Ethiopia).



New expansion of shelter in Semen sub city, Mekelle. October, 2022.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The communities and local authorities were engaged at the commencement of the project for their involvement in the design of the response, the identification of gaps, defining of target pilot phase communities, and support in the sensitization efforts. Information sessions were held for authorities, IDPs living in collective centers, host communities, and local and international NGOs. Feedback and complaint mechanisms were put in place to assist participants throughout the process of upgrading homes.

Intention surveys were conducted to identify host families with the capacity to host IDPs and IDPs in need to find a hosting family for moving out from a collective center. The assessments of host families included the verification of their property with authorities' records, and HLP verifications were conducted based on Standard Operating Procedures defined within the cluster partners to prevent any situation of eviction.

During shelter construction, households were organized in groups of ten, by sub-communities, to encourage assistance between them during construction, repairs, and maintenance works. Supervision and monitoring activities were implemented by the organization's shelter unit during the construction process phase.

## MAIN CHALLENGES

- Due to an embargo, there was a lack of fuel and cash which delayed the project. As a result, the original CBI cash amount was reduced by 60 percent to allow for the project to continue and the cash to be replaced by equivalent in-kind shelter kits.
- While each household initially preferred tailored solutions and kits on a case-by-case basis, to make the project scalable as a pilot it was determined to have three kits according to the identified category of needs.
- The three kits were limited to industrial material (nails, corrugated iron sheets, cement, etc.) as local material could not be procured due to the embargo. The material already available in the region increased in price significantly during the project, often to twice that of pre war prices.
- The budget for the three kits was created based on need, however, Kit 1 (expansion) was 18 percent more expensive than the other two kits/scenarios. This required strong sensitization at the start of the project to reduce conflict during distribution.
- Communication between dispersed locations of host family homes became a bottleneck for registration, verification, and PDM. In response, the organization clustered and grouped the households according to proximity.
- Poor quality of data from the sub-cities or local authority made verification difficult.
- The initial quota of IDPs targeted per sub city was altered, as original quotas were equal across sub-city, but the locations did not have the same levels of IDPs from western Tigray.
- Sub-city offices had limited distribution space and stores for in kind kits.

## CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

From project inception, the targeting was based on vulnerability criteria, and special attention was given to women and girls. In each distribution phase, the organization's protection unit engaged vulnerable groups in creating awareness on how to handle gender based violence (GBV) cases. The risk of GBV was minimized as new spaces were created and secured through shelter expansion, boosting security and privacy in cases of reconstruction and rehabilitation scenarios.

## MATERIALS AND SUPPLY

Due to the embargo, there was no access to industrial materials from the central market. As a result, drastic price increments and variations were inevitable, and the supply chain of the building materials market collapsed. Overhead costs such as material transportation to and from warehouses were high because crude oil was only available through illicit means.

## OUTCOMES AND WIDER IMPACTS

New shelter construction, renovation, and rehabilitation activities on existing shelters for urban IDPs living with host families provided additional safety, security, and dignity for vulnerable groups – particularly for women and girls at risk of gender-based violence (GBV) in collective centers. To increase social interaction and trust among the IDPs and the host families, partial NFIs were provided in addition to the in-kind shelter kits and CBI support. Industrial materials were purchased within the local market when financial institutions were not functioning, injecting additional cash into the market.



(above) NFI kits distribution in Adihaki, Mekelle, July 2022; (below) Cash distribution in Adihaki, Mekelle, August 2022.

**STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

**STRENGTHS**

- √ To address issues at the ground level, there was strong **involvement with affected communities and leaders** as well as coordination with local NGOs and government from the project's outset.
- √ **Intention surveys and HLP verification** supported the efficiency of the project process.
- √ **The response addressed and benefited both the IDPs and host families**, resulting in increased social cohesion between the two groups.
- √ **Targeting criteria for IDPs and host communities** were established quickly through collaboration with local authorities such as the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BoLSA).

**WEAKNESSES**

- × **The project couldn't address holistic needs** within the defined community outside of the scope of the project.
- × **The project lacked multisectoral and multidisciplinary components** that could have complemented the project's impact.
- × **Slight difference among the kit and cash distribution** according to each scenario.
- × The partial NFI was only provided to **10 percent of vulnerable host communities**.
- × **Due to the lack of cash availability**, CBI activities were conducted after two phases of in-kind kit distributions were completed.
- × **Focus group discussions (FGDs) were difficult to organize** due to the dispersed nature of the host community families.
- × **Demand and need for shelter support varied drastically among IDPs**, making it difficult to understand the needs of the entire population.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- Community and local authority engagement were crucial in fostering ownership and social cohesion.
- The hybrid response of in-kind distribution and CBI allowed for increased flexibility throughout implementation.
- Urban IDPs are often the most neglected and have the highest levels of need, especially in shelter circumstances.
- A thorough participant registration and verification process can help avoid a conflict-of-interest type situation.
- Family ties and cultural bonds between IDPs and host community families can be utilized to enhance project effectiveness.
- Industrial material procurement processes should start as early as possible.



Distribution of shelter items, July 2022.

**RECOMMENDATIONS MOVING FORWARD**

- The project observed that the provision of cash enhanced the flexibility of the user, and thus may be more impactful than in kind support.
- The three scenarios (expansion, major and minor renovation) were designed to tailor assistance to household needs. However, most of the families in the PDM surveys reported the need for more flexibility in the kit's composition.
- A multidisciplinary approach should be utilized if the project is replicated (eg. The integration of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities).



**FURTHER READING ON SHELTER PROJECTS**

- On Ethiopia:** [A.5 / ETHIOPIA 2019–2020](#); [A.26 / ETHIOPIA 2014-2016](#); [A.8 / ETHIOPIA 2011](#)
- On host family support:** [A.16 / BENIN 2010-2011](#); [A.30 / SYRIAN ARAB REP. 2015-2016](#)
- On social cohesion:** [A.32 / TURKEY 2017–2018](#)