

## Case study – BID Panel participation of local authorities in Dadaab, Kenya

In 2011, drought spread across the Horn of Africa and famine in Somalia triggered an exodus of people from Somalia into neighboring countries. By June 2012, there were more than 465,000 registered refugees living in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya. A high number of those were children (56,4%)- with more than 14,000 children registered as unaccompanied and separated children-many in need of a BID decision.

Children rights are promoted and protected in Kenyan legislation through the 2001 Children's Act of Kenya-including the use of the best interests principle in all actions for children. In 2011, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development deployed a District Children Officer (DCO) to be based in Dadaab. The DCO participated regularly in the Child Protection Working Group as well as functioned as a key BID panel member. The BID SOPs established the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Children's Services of the Government of Kenya, UNHCR and partner staff regarding the implementation of the BID Guidelines in Dadaab. For example, all children facing custody issues identified by child protection actors (or other actors) were referred to the DCO. The DCO would also appoint guardians in accordance with the provisions of the 2001 Children Act, Part VII (Custody and maintenance) and cases would be processed through the Children's department. The participation of the DCO in the BID panel facilitated access for refugee children to the national child protection system in particular on issues related to custody and guardianship.