FORCED MIGRATION review

Cities and towns

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REFUGEE STUDIES CENTRE

FORCED MIGRATION review

From the editors

Cities and towns are on the frontline of receiving and welcoming people who have been displaced. In the 20 articles on **Cities and towns** in this issue of FMR, policymakers, practitioners, researchers, representatives of cities and international city-focused alliances, and displaced people themselves debate the challenges facing both the urban authorities and their partners, and those who have sought refuge.

A number of authors explore new ways of working in urban settings – including area-based approaches, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and city-to-city collaboration – while others offer insights and inspiration from local responses and the perspectives of displaced and host communities. Other authors examine how camp management practices can be applied in urban settings, how resilience can be bolstered by improved communication and information sharing, and how municipal capacity and community dialogue can be strengthened to improve protection in high-risk neighbourhoods. The issue also draws out practical lessons for promoting inclusive climate action, negotiating contested authority, and encouraging urban planning that takes account of both displaced and host community needs.

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Forthcoming feature themes in 2020 (see www.fmreview.org/forthcoming):
• June: Trafficking and smuggling / Climate crisis and local communities (double feature)
• October: Recognising refugees (submission deadline 15th June)

With best wishes
Marion Couldrey and Jenny Peebles
Editors, Forced Migration Review

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Front cover image:
A view over Kabul, Afghanistan.
UNHCR/Jim Huylebroek

Whose voices are heard through FMR?

We strive to include a wide variety of voices in FMR to help ensure that policymaking and programming reflect the experiences and insights of **displaced people**. We also encourage **practitioners** to write about what they have learned in their work, so that others can learn from them. These voices must be heard in order to influence the global agendas that affect the lives of displaced people. Perhaps you could:

• Think about what you have learned or experienced that would be of most use to other FMR readers.

• Consider co-authoring… 'buddying' with other local actors and/or practitioners can broaden your reach and build writing confidence.

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FMR has a huge and diverse readership. If you write, they will read.

Foreword: Time for cities to take centre stage on forced migration

Marvin Rees

As Mayor of Bristol (a City of Sanctuary in the UK), I am glad to see this issue of FMR exploring the pivotal role of cities and towns in welcoming and protecting displaced people.

The turn of a decade is always a good opportunity to take a step back and assess some of the deeper trends driving our ever-shortening news cycles. As we look back over the last ten years, surely one of the most noticeable features is the growing inability of national governments to deal with the most pressing issues of our time. From climate change to the regulation of social media and new technologies, solutions at the national level seem less likely than ever to meet the challenges we are facing. Nowhere is this more obvious than on the issue of forced migration, where national governments are failing at every stage of the process – in dealing with the push factors that cause people to have to flee, in supporting those people en route and in providing safe destinations that offer welcome and dignity. Yet as we look ahead to a new decade, I believe that hope can be found in the growing power and influence of cities to shape a more just and humanely ordered world.

Cities are already on the frontline of receiving and integrating those forced to flee their homes. Although there is an unhelpful lack of reliable statistics in this area, it is generally acknowledged that the majority of the world's refugee population are now in urban areas, and cities are also playing an increasing role in accommodating people displaced within their own countries. This mirrors the wider trend of growth in worldwide urban populations, which is predicted to reach 6.3 billion by 2050. In Bristol, in the UK, we are proud to be a City of Sanctuary, and the inclusion of all newcomers is a key principle of our policymaking. We see refugees as assets to our city, and seek to support them not just for their benefit but also so they can contribute to the flourishing of all Bristolians. This

outlook is shaped by the reality of our global population. Bristolians – new and old – have family members in cities across the world, and that gives us a stake in the situations facing those cities and their nations.

We know that we are far from the only city seeking to take this approach. From Amman to Kampala and São Paulo to Jakarta, cities and city leaders are finding new ways to make the inclusion of refugees a reality. Their efforts deserve praise but also close examination, so that we can learn from what works and seek ways to replicate good practice.

But if progress in the next decade is limited to city-level innovation and sharing, then I believe we will have missed a huge opportunity. Alongside this work, we also need concerted efforts to increase the profile and influence of cities in the global mechanisms that govern and enable human mobility.

Cities as equal partners

The good news is that such efforts have already begun. During the negotiations on the Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees, I had the privilege of working with a number of cities to collectively seek to influence these critical agreements. This resulted in the Marrakech Mayors Declaration, 'Cities working together for migrants and refugees',[1] which was presented at the Intergovernmental Conference to adopt the Global Compact for Migration, as well as at the UN General Assembly meeting which adopted the Global Compact on Refugees. It sets out the commitments of cities and also calls for them to play a meaningful role in the implementation and evaluation of the Compacts.

The work of following up these efforts is now being driven by the Mayors Migration

Council, a new initiative to support cities to become more influential at the global level. I am proud to sit on the Leadership Board of the Council alongside mayors from across the globe, and together we are determined to make progress on expanding the role for cities.[2] The recent appointment of the Mayors Migration Council to the Steering Committee of the UN Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund is a sign that these efforts are beginning to bear fruit. But of course there is so much further to go, and many hurdles to overcome if we are to see global governance move into a new iteration with cities and networks of cities sitting alongside national governments as equal partners.

That's why I believe this edition of Forced Migration Review is so timely. It reveals the breadth of urban contexts, showcasing the ways that cities in every part of the world are seeking to play their part in the inclusion of newcomers. It also highlights the complexity of these contexts, revealing both the opportunities and the challenges of working at the city level. But above all it powerfully makes the case for cities as indispensable stakeholders in the governance of human mobility. As we enter this new decade full of possibilities and challenges, there is a role for us all in ensuring that cities live up to their potential and help make the world a safer, fairer and kinder place for those forced to move.

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1. bit.ly/Marrakech-Mayors-Declaration
2. Other Leadership Board members are from Montréal, Los Angeles, São Paolo, Zürich, Milan, Freetown, Kampala, Amman and Athens.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol (second from right), at the first Leadership Board meeting of the Mayors Migration Council, New York, July 2019.

The **Mayors Migration Council** (MMC) is a global initiative led by the mayors of Amman, Bristol, Freetown, Kampala, Los Angeles, Milan, Montréal, São Paulo and Zürich, and the former mayor of Athens. Its mission is to ensure that global responses to migration and refugee issues are relevant to the realities experienced in cities and enable local-level policy solutions.

MMC's team provides strategic advice and support to mayors and local government officials looking to a) institutionalise city-level participation in national and international policy making processes, b) build their diplomatic and advocacy capacity and c) unlock and direct humanitarian and development resources towards cities. An important principle throughout MMC's work is to amplify the voices of Global South and secondary cities, which are often under-represented despite having the most relevant experiences to share.

www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org

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Urban internal displacement: data and evidence

Vicente Anzellini and Clémence Leduc

Securing accurate, useful data on urban displacement is a difficult yet essential task.

There is a persistent gap in the availability of accurate estimates of the scale of urban displacement. Even when such information is locally available, it is generally insufficient to inform prevention, response and durable solutions. Other types of data on characteristics (including gender, age and disability status), living conditions (including income and access to services) and capacities are also required if we are to build a more solid evidence base from which to make informed decisions to address urban displacement.

Obtaining data

There are many challenges involved in obtaining data on urban displacement. The first one is the lack of general consensus around what constitutes an urban area. Thresholds and criteria vary across countries, which causes a major methodological barrier to presenting a global picture of the urban or rural nature of displacement. This challenge may take a long time to be resolved but adapting a country's own criteria would at least help to standardise data collection at the national level.

A second challenge is obtaining geo-located data on internally displaced people (IDPs) in urban settings. Cities are complex environments, and displacement to, from and within them is highly dynamic, making it difficult to know the precise location of displaced populations at any point in time. In cities, IDPs tend be dispersed and many seek anonymity because of potential threats to their security. This is a particular challenge for humanitarian first responders trying to provide adequate protection and assistance.

There are, however, good examples of geo-located data on displacement. In Iraq, the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix[1] has coordinates on IDP sites for the entire country. An analysis undertaken by IDMC using this data[2] showed that in 2018 around 70% of people who had been internally displaced by conflict and violence in Iraq were living in urban areas, while 96% of the IDP sites recorded in rural areas of the country were actually located within 10 kilometres of an urban area. This data (anonymised to protect individual identities) offers a useful picture of the relationship of internal displacement to cities and urbanisation processes. Even though obtaining comprehensive location-related data like this is rare, the example shows that it is indeed possible to assess the scale of displacement in cities.

A third challenge is the lack of longitudinal data. Investments in data collection all too often decrease after the emergency phase of a crisis. This is a major hindrance to assessing IDPs' living conditions over time, and limits a full understanding of the causes and characteristics of protracted displacement in cities. Such information would be valuable for development actors, as they could adapt their urban development and planning interventions to take into consideration urban IDPs and host communities.

Tackling data challenges

The use of alternative data sources and technologies, including mobile phone data, satellite imagery analysis and community mapping, could help to overcome these challenges. For example, in Papua New Guinea, the UN collaborated with private phone companies to use anonymised mobile phone data to measure the patterns and duration of displacement following the February 2018 earthquake. This enabled them to obtain detailed information about when people moved, from where and to where, and for how long they remained displaced.[3] Complementing these assessments with qualitative information from affected communities would help shed light on the

reasons behind people's movements and their decisions to return.

The ability to measure the scale, patterns, location and duration of urban displacement, while useful, is not sufficient, however, to fully capture the phenomenon. The gap in understanding that then ensues can limit the capacity to develop solutions adapted to each context. Profiling exercises can help shed light on both the impacts that displacement can have on urban IDPs and their hosts, and the capacity of local authorities and other stakeholders to address displacement-affected communities' needs and to support self-reliance.[4]

A key part of building the evidence base on urban displacement lies in understanding how cities have the capacity to absorb large populations, and how markets, housing and service provision are affected – both positively and negatively – by displacement. Sustaining such data collection and analysis efforts over time can be challenging. For this reason, capacity development of local authorities and the participation of urban IDPs and host communities in data collection around their vulnerabilities and needs are essential.

An exercise conducted in Mogadishu in 2014 and 2015 (in collaboration with the local authorities) mapped and enumerated informal settlements, which helped to identify IDPs and differentiate them from their hosts.[5] The analysis highlighted the specific challenges IDPs faced in different areas of the city where little or no information on their conditions previously existed. The exercise only covered displaced populations in specific settlements and not in the entire city, but its results have been useful to the local authorities in Mogadishu in supporting durable solutions. Such data collection exercises are usually rare, however, despite being key to assessing and understanding scale, characteristics and conditions.

NRC/Becky Bakr Abdulla

Al Habbari informal camp for displaced people in Sana'a, Yemen, August 2018.

In order to achieve better outcomes and reduce the likelihood of protracted urban displacement, it is important to be aware of existing resources, skills and community services. In this respect, involving urban IDPs and host communities in broader urban planning and development processes will help identify those priorities – in service delivery, infrastructure and housing development – that will contribute most to achieving durable solutions to urban displacement.

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1. www.globaldtm.info

2. Using the framework of the EU Global Human Settlement Layer: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/global-human-settlement-layer

3. Prahara P et al (2019) *Comparing population displacement estimates from mobile network data and other sources. Working paper: evidence from the Highlands earthquake in Papua New Guinea* bit.ly/IDMC-PNG-GRID2019

4. Joint IDP Profiling Service (2019) *Displacement profiling in urban areas: Methodological approaches for collecting and analysing data on internal displacement in cities* bit.ly/JIPS-UrbanProfiling-GRID2019

5. See pp90–1 of IDMC (2019) *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2019* www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2019/

To access all FMR articles on the topic of data, see our January 2020 thematic listing: www.fmreview.org/thematic-listings

Urban response: three principles for good practice

David Sanderson

A recent review identified three key principles for good practice in urban humanitarian response; taking these on board may help all actors to avoid wasting effort and missing opportunities.

A review was recently conducted of good practice by humanitarian aid agencies (local and international non-governmental organisations, UN agencies, and members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement) in contexts of conflict, violence, displacement and natural disasters, including those exacerbated by climate change.[1] This Good Practice Review (GPR), undertaken for ODI and ALNAP, identified three main principles for good practice in urban humanitarian response.

Take the long-term view

The first principle for engaging in urban areas is to 'take the long-term view'. This requires paying heed to the long-term impact of any humanitarian response on a city. Many quick decisions and short-term measures – such as where to site a 'temporary' camp that in time becomes permanent – can have a lasting impact. Humanitarian response should, wherever possible, see aid as an investment, wherein limited aid budgets are not used up on short-term measures designed to meet immediate needs only.

An example of this concerns shelter. In Jordan and Lebanon, a number of aid organisations – such as the Norwegian Refugee Council – are addressing the shelter needs of Syrian refugees by working with landlords to upgrade their properties in return for allowing refugees to live in them. This has the advantage of investing aid funds in existing infrastructure (thereby contributing to a city's improvement, even if only on a modest scale) and engaging positively with host populations. The drawbacks include uncertainty around the length of time that this support will be provided (two years has been the timeframe for some projects) and what happens afterwards.

Within shelter programming, an approach that has a long-term perspective and which has garnered widespread support in recent years is the 'settlements approach', also known as an area-based approach (ABA). This approach focuses on neighbourhoods as the starting point for engagement and is also heavily oriented towards supporting local actors (displaced people and host populations) to engage in recovery, upgrading or improving environments, depending on the crisis in question. As such, the growing popularity of ABAs stems from their greater engagement with local actors, and the shift that they represent away from sector-based delivery towards coordinated, cross-sectoral responses.

Implementing ABAs, however, is far from easy. An initiative in the Central African Republic, for example, helped some 20,000 people returning from conflict to resettle in Bangui in 2016–17; it engaged a wide group of stakeholders working in four neighbourhoods and, among other activities, undertook capacity building of local authorities, multi-sectoral settlements-based assessments, and extensive negotiation and discussion with stakeholders. The GPR noted that the initiative faced challenges around coordination (which delayed project implementation), limited local capacities, and limited resources (which prevented project replication in other neighbourhoods). Other examples of ABAs also point to implementation challenges. This reflects the complicated nature of the city and the difficulties inherent in meaningful engagement in such locations.

Engage with complexity

The traditional aid architecture, which evolved from working mostly in rural areas and from providing aid in camps, is

ill-suited to urban complexity. The cluster approach, which embodies sector-based delivery, has been sharply criticised in terms of its effectiveness in urban response where a more holistic, multi-sectoral response may be needed, with stronger inter-cluster linkages and city-level coordination.[2] The GPR, however, refers to two approaches that are useful in urban responses: people-centred and systems-oriented.

A people-centred approach focuses on aspects such as the use of 'assets' (skills, abilities, friendships and so on) that people build, use and sometimes lose at times of crisis. This reinforces the need for humanitarian action to focus foremost on people – something that risks getting lost in the mire of urban action.

A systems-oriented approach helps to describe the interconnected nature of the elements of city life, such as markets, economies and infrastructure. Having a systems perspective on urban interventions is critical. For example, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) considerations in

urban areas are vast and complicated. A systems-oriented approach helps to map some of these complexities and to determine where to make best efforts to what ends. This may vary according to different crises. As the GPR notes, "During an acute emergency, humanitarian organisations may substitute for a service provider by installing tanks or bladders and initiating water trucking. In protracted settings, considerations include encouraging municipal authorities to cover the financing for the salaries of their staff, as well as funding for operations and maintenance, and mobilising the central government and possibly development actors (once the situation allows for their return) to actively commit to restoring services and helping the utility move towards financial stability."

Project management tools that might have suited camps and the delivery of goods to remote areas may be much less suitable for urban areas. The GPR reviewed a number of tools and approaches that agencies employ at the outset of operations

UNHCR/Djerassem Mbaiorem

Building houses to support returning communities in Bangui, Central African Republic, in 2017.

to better understand what is needed. One of these is **context analysis** – in order to better grasp the dynamics of a city (in its pre-crisis context). One of the best-known forms of context analysis is perhaps the Emergency Market Mapping Analysis (EMMA) toolkit, which has particular resonance for urban areas where markets thrive.[3]

Another approach involves **assessments and targeting**, geared towards identifying those who are most vulnerable. This can be especially complex in a city, where people may be hidden or dispersed, or may not want to be found. Partly for these reasons, and also because it is obviously not good practice to ignore host communities, ICRC advocates for 'whole-of-neighbourhood' assistance in protracted urban emergency settings.[4] Reinforcing the earlier points on the deficiencies of a single-sector approach, a systematic review of urban assessment approaches found that multi-sectoral assessments work best: "A population's needs for shelter, WASH, health, food security and livelihoods do not exist in isolation from one another. Rather, needs interact to shape vulnerability, and must thus be met with a multi-sectoral approach to guide targeting."[5]

The third approach is **profiling** – the collaborative process of identifying internally displaced people or groups through data collection and analysis in order to provide assistance and protection.[6]

Collaborate

The third principle for good practice in urban humanitarian response as identified by the Good Practice Review concerns meaningful collaborations – with local actors and between humanitarian organisations. Taking local actors first: simply put, external humanitarian organisations who work in isolation are most likely doomed to fail, and may well cause harm in doing so. Chief among local actors are city authorities, who are all too often overlooked in humanitarian operations. A 2016 study of a number of cities in crisis found that city authorities, who themselves were often overwhelmed, were ignored by international agencies who failed to understand local dynamics

and to engage with local stakeholders.[7] The report also found a lack of city-level multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms and that this contributed to a "divergence between international and local actors".

Urban humanitarian action must be undertaken in close collaboration with authorities if it is to be effective. This means, for instance, adhering to the structures and regulations of a city's municipal planning; where authorities may not be functioning, agencies are recommended to adhere to the policies that do exist, in order to reduce the risk of creating parallel structures. Other actors include gangs, which present a strong form of governance within the (usually poor) neighbourhoods they control. Research from ALNAP observes that any work carried out by humanitarian players in a city neighbourhood controlled by a gang "will be subject to discussion or authorisation by the gang, whether one is aware of it or not". The GPR reports on how agencies such as ICRC are "quietly testing" approaches for engaging with gangs.

The need for collaboration between humanitarian actors is hardly new but failure to collaborate in urban response – where sectors are closely linked in the dense, interwoven nature of city life – leads to wasted efforts and missed opportunities.

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Urban planning for refugee housing: responding to urgent needs

Jessica Sadye Wolff

Hamburg's urban planning model, developed in response to the arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers in 2015, offers a number of lessons for refugee housing policy.

Between January 2015 and December 2019 more than 82,000 refugees arrived in Hamburg in northern Germany, a city of 1.77 million people. Refugees in Germany are assigned to the country's 16 federal states according to a distribution system based on population and tax revenue, so densely populated cities receive a high number of refugees relative to the developable land area. Under the distribution system, approximately 46,000 refugees have been assigned to stay in Hamburg. The rapid population increase in Hamburg exacerbated an already limited social housing stock (which in December 2014 stood at just 79 housing facilities with a capacity of approximately 11,000 places[1]) and the city had insufficient locations for new development to accommodate arriving refugees.

To enable accelerated housing development, the Mayor of Hamburg proposed an amendment to the Federal Building Code in order to allow the construction of temporary refugee accommodation in non-residential areas, including industrial areas, car parks and commercial sites, for a period of three to five years.[2] This policy was intended both to enable the construction of temporary accommodation and to offset the existing social housing shortage. The policy was approved by the federal government in 2014 for use by city governments nationally and expanded in 2015. The government in Hamburg made full use of the new policy; more than 50 new sites have opened since the end of 2014.

Urban planning approaches in Hamburg offer an alternative to mainstream refugee housing policies by: 1) developing short-term temporary accommodation and 2) facilitating a transition between the historically divided phases of emergency housing and long-term development by increasing social housing stock, benefiting both refugees and host country citizens. However, even given the city's noteworthy approach, it is not without challenges.

Location and integration

Given the urgency for additional construction, and facilitated by the new National Building Code section which permitted the construction of refugee housing in non-residential areas, Hamburg's city government increasingly established housing sites in more remote locations across the city. For example, one container housing site for 712 people, Kirchenpauerstrasse, was built in the HafenCity neighbourhood, situated twenty minutes away from a transit stop and in the middle of an urban construction site with no other residential neighbours. Another site for 700 people, Am Ashenland II, was built in an agricultural area, physically divided from the nearby residential neighbourhood by impassable railroad tracks.

From conversations with refugees it was clear that they would prefer to live in larger urban areas due to a greater availability of housing and jobs, proximity to a greater diversity of people, and existing social connections with friends or family. Opportunities for integration are limited by locating new housing sites quite far from other residential neighbourhoods and by site design. Many sites are not connected to existing streets and are intentionally designed to appear temporary. Proximity facilitates interactions, both among refugees and between refugees and local residents and when housing is located further away from local residential areas and amenities, the integration experience for refugees

is more difficult. Furthermore, the time limit on these sites means that they will eventually be returned to their original use and residents will have to find alternative housing.

Resident discontent

There has been widespread pushback in Hamburg regarding the development of the housing sites for two main reasons: firstly, local residents do not want a large development for refugees constructed in their neighbourhoods ('large' defined by residents' organisations as more than 300 people per site) and, secondly, the selection of these sites did not include customary public engagement processes. Many neighbourhoods created new residents' organisations or mobilised existing groups to mount legal challenges against the city. In many cases, local antipathy to plans was disguised as legal cases defending obscure nature reserve policies and endangered tree species. While the city won nearly all of the 40 cases, legal proceedings delayed construction at many sites for between six and 18 months. Given that new refugees were arriving on a daily basis, the local government could not afford further delays. Interviews with city planners suggested that, as a result, they intentionally started to locate more refugee housing sites in poorer neighbourhoods, with the expectation that local residents either could not or would not be willing to pursue a legal objection. Other local city planners felt that, as a result, the location of new refugee housing sites in poorer neighbourhoods was disproportionate.

In October 2015, as pressures on refugee housing grew, the local government announced its intention to construct a large permanent housing unit in each of Hamburg's seven districts, each of which would house approximately 3,000 people. These sites were to be built to federal social housing standards and be reserved exclusively for refugees for 15 years, after which time they would become part of the city's social housing pool; after 30 years the developer would be allowed to sell the apartments. In response, a collection of 13 residents' neighbourhood organisations mobilised to create a group called 'Hamburg für gute Integration' (Hamburg for Better Integration) that petitioned the government to limit the number of refugees living in any one location. Leaders of the group assert that their pushback against the housing plan was not an objection to welcoming refugees; rather, it was a community initiative in support of integration. In July 2016, the local government entered into agreements with 13 residents' groups that no more than 300 refugees would be housed on any given site.

Lessons for urban housing policy

In comparison with other urban refugee housing programmes that offer rental subsidies or incentives for incremental development, Hamburg's use of urban planning regulations to provide temporary and long-term housing is noteworthy. Lessons from the city's unprecedented approach to embedding refugee housing into national and neighbourhood planning

Temporary container housing for asylum seekers, located in an urban construction site (see aerial view opposite) in HafenCity, Hamburg, with no urban amenities or services, or residential neighbours, nearby.

For integration and self-sufficiency, place matters. An individual's experience and exposure to a new culture, and their ability to access existing support systems and educational or economic opportunities, are closely linked to their location. Urban planners' point of influence lies at the site selection phase. It is critical to include additional spatial indicators that relate to the integration experience – such as proximity to residential areas and neighbourhood demographics – which could further improve the site selection process as well as local community engagement, and enable city planners to prioritise sites that will allow refugees to integrate more easily.

processes demonstrate new, transferable methods of bridging the divide between historically segregated phases of relief and reconstruction. The progressive nature and innovation of Hamburg's recent refugee housing policies can serve as examples of best practice both for humanitarian organisations providing shelter and for municipal governments seeking to expand housing provision for marginalised communities.

Housing nearly 38,000 refugees in less than two years is a substantial achievement, although conversations with refugees, local residents and city planners alike suggest that improvements can be made. The application of this kind of new land use planning needs forethought, buy-in at local and federal levels, and continued monitoring. Bypassing customary community engagement processes to facilitate rapid development may cause delays later on. Segregating refugee housing from residential areas and neighbourhood amenities raises additional challenges for refugees seeking to establish their lives in a new city.

In a system where a majority of refugees rely on government-provided housing, as in Hamburg, urban planners can have a positive impact on the integration experience by influencing the spatial distribution of housing.

It is important to note that Hamburg is a particularly wealthy city that was able to fund new development through a budget surplus, with support from the federal government. While many other municipalities welcoming refugees may not have the same financial resources, the outcomes of Hamburg's policy offers lessons for countries that are seeking creative ways to initiate construction of new affordable housing units for marginalised populations in land-constrained urban areas.

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1. Data on monthly arrivals and new housing construction in Hamburg available at: www.hamburg.de/sfa-lagebild/

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https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/118228

Active citizenship in Athens

Kareem Alkabbani, Wael Habbal and Tom Western

Members of the Athens-based Syrian and Greek Youth Forum explain how it provides a platform for active citizenship in the city.

We founded the Syrian and Greek Youth Forum (SGYF) in 2018 to support community-building activities among refugees, asylum seekers, second-generation Syrians and Greek nationals. Our long-term goal is to help these and other communities become fully active citizens. Athens is where we live, work, sleep, love and play – we actively resist the idea that refugees are vulnerable victims or tragic figures. We are citizens. We came together as a team of activists through a shared understanding of the importance and value of acting as a community, particularly through building projects by the community for the community. We research and implement best practices of inclusion, and work in solidarity and collaboration with other migrant and minority organisations and communities.

Urban struggles

The Forum's work is set against an urban backdrop in which various narratives of 'crisis' gather and overlap. In the midst of a difficult economic situation, and the absence of the State in service provisioning, other actors and organisations have to step in. There is a lack of State support for solidarity and activism, but we work with others to build solidarity networks, bringing together multiple perspectives and different areas of activism.

Athens has long been an arrival city, both for those who have recently crossed borders and, historically, for people moving within Greece's borders and migrating from elsewhere. It is common to hear people say that "there is no such thing as a native Athenian" – while an Arabic proverb states that if you stay among people for forty days you become one of them. Meanwhile, border closures and restricted freedom of movement keep people in the city, which in turn demands efforts to build community and belonging.

Of course, these politics and poetics of belonging are met with hostility by some. Xenophobia and racist attacks have been on the rise in a country beset by financial crisis, where there has also been broader criminalisation of immigration, and institutionalisation of racial profiling and detention.[1] Since their election in mid-2019, the New Democracy government has pursued the eviction of refugee squats and has passed asylum laws that violate human rights.

Yet this gives us motivation. Where there is no international non-governmental organisation (INGO) in the middle, new possibilities emerge for direct communication and collaboration between the municipality and local communities.

Activist projects

SGYF is involved in city-level projects such as Curing the Limbo which contributes to efforts to empower communities and help them move beyond the limbo state of uncertainty and inaction that most asylum seekers experience.[2] We are a named solidarity community in the Curing the Limbo project and we are referred to as Athenians by its organisers in recognition of the value of the community work we do. We have worked hard both to connect and empower the Syrian community in Athens, and then to represent this community at various levels: within local politics, at meetings with representatives from the European Union and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), at numerous cultural events, as part of everyday life in Athens, and within the municipality. We have developed a high level of trust within and beyond the Syrian community and have established ourselves as a key resource for Syrians in Athens and elsewhere in Greece.

Individually, we are learning languages and both pursuing and providing education: all tools for active citizenship. We have been

preparing skills development programmes for over a year, of which several are up and running. We are also involved in various other initiatives in Athens, including: participating in business courses supported by Solidarity Now and Odyssea, two Athens-based organisations focused on social action and solidarity; being part of the Greek Forum of Refugees' political inclusion campaign, receiving facilitation guidance and advocacy training, and information on international and domestic law; running sound recording workshops and producing a radio series;[3] offering motivation and awareness courses; giving talks and concerts at schools and festivals on themes of democracy, culture and political inclusion; conducting regular beach and street cleaning; participating in agricultural projects; raising community awareness of environmental matters and solutions; running a culture department, including a Syrian dance programme; and developing and sharing music skills.

We are working on many more projects, which include: producing a template business plan to support people looking to start their own businesses; developing a plot of land outside Athens into a site of sustainable food production; opening a cultural café where language exchanges, creative performances and cultural discussions will take place; finding a shared house for long-term members of SGYF, and for emergency accommodation; working with children to expand the scope of our work for the community; offering further media production and film classes; and providing a sewing and craft programme, and training to repair musical instruments.

We are leading a plan to use existing construction skills within the community to renovate ruined buildings, thereby expanding accommodation options for refugees and reducing the problem of homelessness in the city. And we are in communication with the Ministry of Education to obtain permission to enter the city's refugee camps, in order to help the communities there to find alternative solutions to encampment, and working together in the meantime to improve the situation in the camps. We have built SGYF to this level with no budget – just goodwill,

organisation, hard work and solidarity. We are now in the process of registering as an NGO, to ensure the sustainability of our work in an ever-changing political situation.

Opening up the city

Through our experience in Greece we have gained a deep understanding of the effects and impacts of refugees on the hosting community and vice versa, and are turning this knowledge into action. Our work emanates from the Syrian community, but it is not only for them. Rather, we aim to work and share our resources with other communities, empowering all of us in the process. And this in turn is animated by efforts to be included in the political and cultural life of Athens – demanding greater rights but also embracing our responsibilities and contributing to the well-being of the city.

We watch the city and ask what we can do as citizens. This is what we understand as active citizenship, and this is why we consider SGYF as a platform for citizenship. We aim to motivate and inspire other groups to become an active part of the city, to champion diversity and to empower all of us together. We work to expand solidarities and to open up the city – unmaking borders between citizens and non-citizens, between refugees and hosts.

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1. In 2012 Operation Xenios Zeus expanded 'stop and search' powers for Athens police and led to an increase in the detention of people who had crossed borders to get to Greece. See Rozakou K (2018) 'Solidarians in the Land of Xenios Zeus: Migrant Deportability and the Radicalisation of Solidarity', in Dalaklglou D and Agelopoulos G (Eds) *Critical Times in Greece: Anthropological Engagements with the Crisis* London: Routledge. pp 188–201.

2. https://curingthelimbo.gr/en/home

3. https://citizensoundarchive.com

Area-based approaches: an alternative in contexts of urban displacement

James Schell, Mohamed Hilmi and Seki Hirano

A geographically focused, multi-sectoral, integrated approach is increasingly recognised as more appropriate when responding to the needs of both displaced and host populations, especially in urban contexts.

The last two decades have been characterised by a significant increase in humanitarian emergencies due to the frequency and scale of conflicts, natural hazards, displacement and rapid urbanisation. To strengthen the collective response to these emergencies, the Humanitarian Reform process was launched in 2005. One of the outcomes of this was the establishment of the cluster approach to improve partnerships among humanitarian actors and enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response. Since then, the sector-focused cluster system has become the default coordination mechanism in most major emergencies.

The cluster system's coordination structure improved response strategies and information management and resulted in relatively consistent allocation of resources to affected populations within specific sectors. However, it also encouraged stakeholders to act in isolation – specialising, collaborating and developing tools only within their own sectors. These silos have been accompanied by: a lack of collaboration across sectors; a tendency to develop responses that operate in parallel with, or are completely disconnected from, host government efforts; and a lack of flexibility in diverse and complex contexts.

A growing consensus has emerged that humanitarian response requires a paradigm shift. Too often, humanitarian actors have been slow to adapt to the changing needs of affected communities in diverse contexts, and have been unable to effectively and consistently adopt the integrated multi-sectoral approaches that are considered essential in complex urban contexts. The value, therefore, of a multi-sectoral integrated approach in urban contexts has been particularly recognised.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Urban Coordination Guidance note, for example, recommends that humanitarian stakeholders "support the operationalization of area-based coordination mechanisms operating at city and/or municipal levels, approaching coordination within a defined geographic area and adopting a multi-sectoral and participatory perspective".[1]

Area-based approaches[2] are not new. This type of approach builds on the experiences of urban and regional planners working on community renewal in poor and vulnerable locations since the 1960s and 1970s.[3] The Urban Settlements Working Group (USWG),[4] while acknowledging small differences in agencies' respective definitions, defines area-/settlements-based approaches as commonly comprising the following four characteristics:

- **Geographic:** targeting geographic areas with high levels of need, delineated by physical, social or administrative boundaries (or a combination of these factors), which can vary in scale from neighbourhoods, through wards and districts, to the whole town or city.

- **Multi-sectoral:** considering needs, capacities and access to services across all sectors (shelter, WASH,[5] health, livelihoods and so on).

- **Inclusive:** considering all population groups in that location – for example, host, displaced, returnees, (urban) poor and those with specific vulnerabilities.

- **Participatory:** involving all those actors present or operating in that location – notably, local authorities, local civil society and service providers, international organisations and so on.

In response to increased interest in the approach, and to support humanitarian actors in applying the approach in complex urban contexts, the USWG has compiled and analysed over 30 case-studies. More than a third of these explicitly address the impacts of displacement in cities and towns, outlining how various organisations have adapted their response, both in humanitarian and development contexts, often starting from addressing needs in a single sector and then expanding to an area-based approach in areas that have been identified as vulnerable.[6]

Through analysing these case-studies, a number of key observations and potential benefits of applying the approach in urban displacement contexts have emerged.

Creating platforms for a common approach
Commonplace in the application of an area-based approach is the creation of a 'platform' which brings together a range of actors to agree and implement a collective response. These platforms convene actors operating in different sectors (shelter, WASH, protection, health, livelihoods and so on) from national and international humanitarian and development actors and, increasingly, from local authorities. These platforms help foster a common approach by creating firstly a shared understanding (to inform planning) and secondly a shared vision, resulting in a set of common priorities targeting populations in those locations in need.

A notable example is an area-based approach applied in Ar-Raqqa, in the North and East Syria region (NES). To support affected populations, REACH[7] undertook a series of area-based assessments in partnership with the NES NGO forum. The assessments provided a comprehensive overview across the city, complemented by granular assessments at the neighbourhood level, including mapping returns, population, needs and access, plus service and infrastructure (and any damage to these). Findings from the multi-sectoral assessments subsequently informed response priorities, coordinated by the NES NGO forum in partnership with cluster system sector

leads. This process has since expanded to several other towns and cities across Syria.

In Iraq, where displaced populations are living in dispersed settings and within host communities, a series of Community Resource Centres (CRCs) have been created as outreach hubs in key governorates of return including Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa and Salah al-Din. These CRCs facilitate service delivery through information provision, referral to service providers and community engagement, targeting the needs of the community holistically rather than based on displacement status or developed by sectors working in isolation.[8] The priorities of CRCs are established through a comprehensive area-based assessment process, requiring operational actors to collaboratively prioritise short- to medium-term interventions across multiple sectors. This coordination framework is undertaken in partnership with the Iraqi government's Joint Coordination and Monitoring Center.

The neighbourhood approach was also applied to inform the post-earthquake response in 2010 by a number of partners in Ravine Pintade in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince. The Katye platform for response was designed to meet the basic humanitarian needs of earthquake-affected displaced households by providing safe, habitable neighbourhoods and creating the conditions needed to upgrade essential services. Earthquake recovery activities included community mobilisation, protection, health, settlement planning and shelter, and WASH.

These examples highlight the potential added value of this approach in humanitarian crises in complex urban contexts. The fact that the approach does not – at first glance – sit neatly within standard humanitarian coordination structures and ways of working brings both benefits and challenges. For example, as area-based or multi-sectoral urban working groups are not necessarily bound by any decision to activate or deactivate individual clusters or sectors, they can play an important contributory role in the longer-term transition to recovery and stabilisation. Furthermore, a multi-sectoral, geographically defined coordination platform can effectively

support existing city governance structures. On the other hand, there are often limitations relating to resourcing and sustainability. As these area-based structures are not yet commonplace, nor part of the established humanitarian coordination architecture, it is difficult to secure the financial and human resources needed to support them, and as such they are often time-bound and linked to a specific (often short-term) project.

Despite this, these platforms do not necessarily operate in isolation from the current humanitarian coordination architecture, and there are examples of the sector-/cluster-led mechanism being adapted to reflect this approach. This occurred in Mogadishu, Somalia, with the establishment of a tri-cluster system. In this case, a group of 14 partners across shelter, WASH and health sectors implemented 16 projects in a location which had been identified as having the densest concentration of internally displaced persons (IDPs). This coordinated initiative aimed to improve the protection of residents in the target locations through improved settlement planning and the provision of integrated services from multiple sectors. Once a common understanding and a framework for coordination had been established, the tri-cluster initiative was expanded to include the education and protection concerns of many of the partners.

While different agencies apply the approach in different ways, these case-studies highlight the importance of establishing forums to bring together actors in creating a common understanding and common vision.

Improving social cohesion
A number of case-studies further identified how area-based approaches have been used to try to reduce tensions and inequalities and to improve social cohesion.

Tripoli, a highly vulnerable city in Lebanon, hosts an estimated 72,000 refugees in its densely populated urban centre. With insufficient public services and inadequate sanitation and housing in its poorer neighbourhoods, Tripoli's living conditions pose significant problems for Syrian refugees and host communities alike. Acknowledging

the interdependent needs and also the need to strengthen social cohesion, CARE International Lebanon applied an area-based approach to improve the living conditions of refugees and host communities, with a focus on shelter, WASH and strengthened community governance. CARE concentrated on specific vulnerable neighbourhoods in inner Tripoli, including by repairing or upgrading communal infrastructure and access to services in whole streets and specific buildings, alongside providing individual household support. The establishment of neighbourhood committees to raise awareness of protection issues and to understand the sources of community tension and possible ways to resolution served as key initiatives.

Another area-based approach was implemented across a number of cities in Afghanistan by UN-Habitat in order to address the needs of certain urban communities comprising large numbers of IDPs and vulnerable host-community populations. This programme, which came to be known locally as the 'people's process', identified common priorities across all population groups: returnees, demobilised combatants, IDPs and low-income households across 145 communities.

Where to from here?
The above examples reflect just some of the potential benefits of applying an area-based approach in contexts of urban displacement. As we enter 2020, however, despite growing interest and evidence of their effectiveness, the application of area-based approaches in these contexts remains piecemeal, with examples often the result of an individual or agency/inter-agency champion and often remaining within short time-bound project-based parameters.

Area-based approaches are not a global panacea, and may not be applicable in certain circumstances (such as fast-changing contexts or when local and international expertise is lacking). However, there is much merit in this approach becoming another available tool in the toolkit for humanitarian and development actors, enabling them to work increasingly in partnership with city authorities to

support both displaced and vulnerable host communities in cities and towns.

In summary

The approach can complement and co-exist within the current humanitarian architecture, used where the cluster system is not activated, and would be of use both in contexts of long-term recovery and/or protracted crises or in a developing emergency (by providing a platform to conduct a multi-sector assessment in any context).

The approach does not advocate for addressing or meeting all the needs of the affected communities. Rather, it can provide an overall strategy where certain priority needs can be addressed and others met at later stages.

The approach may not be applicable in certain contexts. Key enabling factors include: the presence of local and international expertise; local authority buy-in and engagement; and a relatively stable, non-transient population.

A challenge for many organisations applying area-based approaches is to contribute towards developing and implementing a collectively owned, long-term strategy that may not neatly fit within their own mandate, expertise or available resources. Further, a collectively owned response strategy must monitor and evaluate multi-agency contributions to change rather than purely having individual agencies attributing response outcomes to their own, single-agency contributions.

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Multi-stakeholder approach to urban displacement in Somalia

Mohamed Taruri, Laura Bennison, Shezane Kirubi and Aude Galli

Somalia's cities are struggling to cope with the immediate and longer-term demands posed by their fast-growing populations and the arrival of people fleeing crises in rural areas. A multi-stakeholder, locally led response can help to sustainably address the challenges that arise.

Displacement is shaping Somalia's urban landscape and contributing to the country's rapid urbanisation. Many internally displaced people (IDPs) have moved from rural areas to the main cities in search of shelter, protection and humanitarian assistance. For instance, in Baidoa – the capital of the southwestern Bay region of Somalia – the number of IDP sites has increased from 70 prior to the 2017 drought to 435 in 2019.[1] The city's estimated overall population has doubled in two years. Weak urban systems, however, are unable to cope with the demands of the ever-growing population, and both host and displaced populations risk being excluded from access to basic infrastructure and services.

The government in Somalia has faced a major transition over the recent past, with the formation of Federal Member States and the associated increase in coordination

requirements. Prior to this, those coordination mechanisms that existed were mainly related to the humanitarian architecture. Multiple studies and evaluations have demonstrated the need to invest and support locally led coordination and planning processes in order to address the impacts of displacement and to help Somali cities cope with these impacts.

The success of joint planning and coordination, however, depends on the capacity of municipalities to lead and to coordinate multiple stakeholders, as opposed to being solely led by the international aid system. In order to build capacity, and to support local authorities in developing their urban strategies and plans, the UN and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have worked together to help government establish technical durable solutions working groups in Baidoa and Kismayo and a durable solutions unit in Mogadishu. Most recently the Federal Government of Somalia established a Durable Solutions Secretariat in October 2019. This is the first time in Somalia that sustainable coordination forums have been established at district/municipal levels; in addition, with these forums supported by multi-year consortia funded by DFID, EU and Danida, it is encouraging that different donors and actors have agreed on the same coordination needs and structures (rather than each actor/donor creating their own coordination structure).

These local coordination mechanisms aim to play a significant role in shifting urban responses – complementing humanitarian clusters with a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach which brings together urban planners, humanitarian agencies, and other actors working on building durable solutions, resilience and State capacity, under the leadership of local authorities. This approach requires investment not only in local authorities' capacities but also in the capacities of humanitarian actors to navigate a development and political environment while at the same time maintaining a principled humanitarian response.

The durable solutions working groups provide a space for discussion and debate, essential for identifying synergies and

supporting government leadership. The different actors have different interests and objectives but the aim is that, through undertaking joint analysis exercises[2], they are able to reach a common understanding and an agreement on where and how to invest. Such collaboration on the production and use of evidence is a critical success factor in developing a common narrative and subsequently a coherent planning approach with authorities, while building accountability.

Despite progress made, numerous challenges remain. Achieving durable solutions is dependent on different levels of government having adequate capacity, willingness and resources – difficult in a context where the State is still developing. Actors need to develop capacity development plans that: are realistic, localised and collectively endorsed; span several years at the very least; include specific indicators and milestones for monitoring purposes; and engage with local authorities from the design stage of any new programming.

Integrated responses through area-based planning

With the majority of people who are displaced into urban contexts facing similar challenges to those confronting the urban poor, traditional sector-based programmes targeting individuals based on their displacement 'status' are no longer appropriate. At the end of 2017, the UN and NGOs in Somalia developed a set of programing principles in order to make the transition to integrated area-based programming to address the needs of both host and displaced communities. The Federal Government of Somalia endorsed these principles as good practices for use throughout the country.[3]

These principles aim to ensure an approach to addressing displacement that is coordinated across humanitarian, development and peace actors (the 'triple nexus'). A number of multi-year, multi-sector consortia were created (such as the EU RE–INTEG projects, the DFID Danwadaag Solutions Consortium and the Danida

Durable Solutions Programme[4]), putting the programing principles into practice and fostering increased collaboration.

An interesting case is that of a coordinated approach established by the World Bank, RE–INTEG and Danwadaag to support the Banadir Regional Administration where communities face land-related challenges such as forced evictions, increases in the price of land (as a result of improved infrastructure and services), and municipal-level gaps in capacity to address such issues. The World Bank, for example, intends to map all IDP settlements in the project's target areas, identify any available public land for resettlement, and look into rental subsidy options. This is the start of an area-based plan looking at five core dimensions involved in helping cities to function better: spatial (urban planning), physical (infrastructure and services), economic (job creation and access to employment), social (social cohesion and inclusion) and institutional (capacity and accountability) dimensions.

An effective area-based approach depends on complementarity and coordination with other actors and programmes operating within the defined geographical area. Any single programme does not have to address all the needs and vulnerabilities within its area of implementation but it is important to be aware of the planning and interventions that already exist within the same area in order to identify gaps. Therefore it is essential to link programming with district development plans.

Participatory and inclusive processes
The growing number of IDPs in cities also raises urgent questions of inclusion and citizenship rights. Most of the IDPs are from poor, low-status, southern Somali agricultural communities, such as the Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu. Their arrival in considerable numbers in the already crowded IDP settlements in urban areas is changing the demographics of these cities in ways that challenge exclusivist clan claims. The IDPs' presence is generally tolerated

by host communities, in part because they serve as a useful pool of cheap labour, but they are treated as guests with limited rights. This exclusionary discourse is one of the most sensitive issues in Somalia today, especially as these IDPs are likely to become permanent residents in cities dominated by certain clans. A key challenge is how to foster social cohesion between urban displaced and host communities in a politically and ethnically divided context.

Participatory, inclusive and transparent processes are therefore essential. The following two examples of such processes have been piloted in specific locations and then expanded to others, adapted as necessary depending on the displaced communities' differing experiences, vulnerabilities and capacities.

Community Action Plans were developed for Kismayo and Baidoa using the IOM/UN-Habitat Midnimo (meaning 'unity') model, reflecting needs identified by displaced and host communities. Building on these and other such plans, the Danwadaag Solutions Consortium supported Kismayo and Baidoa municipalities in consolidating these community-level plans into integrated district-level plans.

The Common Social Accountability Platform, developed by Africa's Voices Foundation and launched in partnership with ReDSS and the Banadir Regional Administration,[5] used radio to build dialogue and gather public opinion on issues related to durable solutions; they did this by presenting radio debates driven by citizen input via SMS. Although the first example of this radio platform was confined to Mogadishu, it represents a promising approach to increasing accountability to displacement-affected communities. Across the four weeks of the pilot, 3,267 people sent a total of 14,391 SMS contributions, with many participating on multiple occasions. Among those who participated, 51.2% are displaced, indicating that the channel is as accessible for displaced groups as it is for the host population. The project is currently being replicated in Baidoa and Bossaso by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

Analysis of examples of emerging good practice to support inclusive, community-led processes at municipal level suggests that:

- A comprehensive mapping of community structures should be conducted at the outset of interventions. Interventions should build on existing groups and plans, linking community groups and plans with other planning processes, including at district and municipal levels (although it should be recognised that engaging district- and municipal-level officials can be challenging). Any lack of representation should be addressed, but new groups should not be formed unless they bring significant added value.

- Opportunities to engage displacement-affected communities in project monitoring should be explored.

- Consideration should also be given to the provision of block grants to displacement-affected community forums and groups to implement their own priorities – allowing them to invest in projects which they themselves have identified. This would promote civic engagement and foster increased accountability of local government to its constituency.

- Social cohesion and inclusion should be key strategic objectives of urban programing.

Dual focus: early solutions and long-term planning

There is a constant struggle to work on long-term goals and urban planning to address displacement as a development challenge, while at the same time answering massive humanitarian needs. Investing in early solutions and urban preparedness response is key to supporting municipalities in tackling both at the same time. For instance, while humanitarian actors focus on rapid response to support a city's capacity to absorb new residents, development actors complement this by bringing in urban planners. The deployment of urban planners and social, economic and governance experts from the onset is a critical but often overlooked resource.

Durable solutions programming in urban contexts should also work in complementarity with resilience programming in rural areas in order to support both local integration in urban areas and – where the security situation allows – voluntary, safe and dignified return and reintegration in rural areas. Reflecting this need to improve rural–urban linkages has led the Danwadaag Solutions Consortium to include a much stronger component on early solutions planning. Its approach focuses on areas already affected by high levels of displacement (that will inevitably receive more displaced households) while continuing to address longer-term durable solutions needs.

The outcomes from these collaborative, multi-stakeholder responses in Somalia's cities show how different actors can work together to provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to the challenges of urban displacement through inclusive, community-led processes. The next step is to develop multi-stakeholder approaches to measuring durable solutions processes and to promoting greater accountability, in order that all stakeholders contribute to collective outcomes.

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Urban planning in times of displacement: secondary cities in Ukraine and Niger

Jeremy Wetterwald and Louise Thaller

Urban displacement can have a major impact on the local ecosystems of secondary towns and cities. In Niger and Ukraine, an area-based approach has proved effective in identifying priority needs and enabling a multi-stakeholder approach.

Urban displacement can have a significant impact on secondary towns and cities. This is especially true in southeastern Niger and eastern Ukraine, where some small urban areas are coping with considerable levels of conflict-induced displacement yet are particularly ill-prepared to meet the needs of local and displaced communities.

The fundamental contextual differences between Niger and Ukraine should not overshadow their interesting commonalities in terms of urban displacement. In both cases, local authorities struggle to respond to the increased demand for public services, in large part because of a lack of resources allocated by central or regional authorities and because of disruptions to the rule of law. External resources in the form of humanitarian and development aid programmes aim to fill this resource gap but this too raises significant challenges in both cases.

Different contexts, similar challenges

In the predominantly rural Diffa region in Niger, an estimated 250,000 displaced persons[1] have fled villages in the Niger–Nigeria border zone in search of safety. Many have made their way to secondary towns such as Diffa, N'Guigmi, Chétimari and Maïné Soroa. These towns, usually home to fewer than 50,000 inhabitants each, have a very limited absorptive capacity and yet are hosting an additional 10–20,000 displaced persons. This inflow is putting considerable strain on already limited basic services. With the Boko Haram insurgency in the region showing no signs of abating, returns cannot be safely facilitated. Hence, local governments and aid agencies are promoting resettlement solutions for displaced communities and opportunities for local integration by building new neighbourhoods near existing urban centres. While this initiative provides much-needed housing, it remains insufficiently supported by investments in essential services such as clean water, sanitation, education, health and access to livelihoods. Furthermore, it remains unclear where to allocate investments in a way that will not discriminate against either host or displaced communities.

In Ukraine, government-controlled areas (GCA) of the disputed provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk host more than 750,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have fled large urban centres in non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) of these provinces. Larger cities in the government-controlled area can support this rapid population increase but smaller cities like Severodonetsk (100,000 residents), Bakhmut (90,000) and Kurakhove (21,000) cannot. In some instances, regional and local authorities themselves have had to relocate their administrative centres. For example, the administrations of Donetsk and Luhansk had to relocate to the cities of Kramatorsk and Severodonetsk respectively, leaving behind documents and valuable assets in addition to losing staff to displacement, which had a significant impact on their ability to provide administrative and social services. While population growth may generate long-term benefits, the sudden arrival of displaced persons has created short- and medium-term challenges for small and medium-sized towns, including spikes in rent costs and increased demand for education, health and administrative services. In parallel, between 400,000 and 640,000 residents from non-government-controlled areas continue to commute across the Line of Contact (LoC), a physical 427-km-long

barrier that separates the warring parties, in order to access Ukrainian administrative, social and banking services (including provision of pensions and social benefits). Finally, these important changes in service delivery dynamics in Ukraine are happening in parallel to a significant decentralisation reform led by the Ukrainian government that is proving difficult to implement in areas where key cities are no longer under the control of the central authorities.

With each town facing its own challenges, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to responding to urban displacement. What is needed in each secondary town is reliable information to inform strategies at the local level.

Robust analysis and joint planning

Without significant investment in public services in these fast-growing towns, there is a risk that displaced communities will be left stranded if humanitarian assistance ends without development projects having been implemented. Conversely, existing local development plans, such as Niger's Plans de Développement Communaux, do not fully account for the urban displaced; the voices of thousands of de facto residents risk being ignored in these development schemes. Local and municipal governments in Niger and Ukraine are well aware of the benefits of fast-tracking urban development and service enhancement in areas that are increasingly becoming new hotspots of economic and social activity as a result of displacement inflows. Such fast-tracking requires both a better understanding of how to direct assistance where it is most relevant and the mainstreaming of urban migration and displacement response in local development strategies.

Support to municipalities in Diffa was initiated by launching an area-based approach (ABA) in four urban centres where resettlement neighbourhoods were being built. The ABA assessment identified which basic services would be accessible to current and future residents, explored how access to basic amenities could be enhanced based on projections of future needs and current

absorptive capacities, and clarified the challenges relating to supply and demand for basic services. The assessment revealed that most of the basic services were available to the residents of the newly developed neighbourhoods – but not at a sufficient level to meet their needs. It detailed the scale at which these services require support, either in terms of infrastructure, rehabilitation, human resources or equipment, if they are to operate effectively. In the city of Chétimari, for example, five education facilities, ranging from pre-school to secondary school, are within reach of residents of the new neighbourhoods but they do not have the capacity to welcome additional students. Service providers called for greater investments in existing structures, including training for teaching staff, instead of constructing new facilities that would risk segregating displaced children and unnecessarily duplicating efforts. The ABA also measured each service's geographical coverage, and in doing so demonstrated that residents of the new neighbourhoods need to cover, on average, a much greater distance than other residents to access higher-standard services or those public amenities with greater capacity to meet demand.

In eastern Ukraine, undertaking an ABA assessment in the government-controlled peripheries of large non-government-controlled urban centres helped facilitate a shared understanding between key stakeholders of how communities have organically reorganised after the physical separation created by the conflict. The study focused on mapping basic service networks in order to understand the new socio-economic geography of a region divided by a 427-km barrier. This analysis provided the information needed to identify new urban 'service provision hubs' that have organically formed in the region as a result of the disruption in urban systems created by the LoC. Large numbers of people had to change jobs and lost access to their usual health-care providers due to the restrictions on population movement caused by the LoC. On the other hand, use of other neighbourhood networks such as primary schools and shops

showed less disruption with most respondents sending their children to school and purchasing food in the same location as prior to the conflict.

If displacement in the Diffa region continues at the current pace, and if the number of residents crossing the LoC to access services in government-controlled cities keeps adding to the pressure on administrative, social and banking services in the key destination cities, it is likely that, in both contexts, any lack of investment in expanding existing services will severely limit access and reduce quality in the future.

Two women approach a checkpoint and a sign warning of landmines in war-torn Donetsk, east Ukraine. The de facto border has disrupted the lives of people simply going to work, buying food, visiting relatives, checking on homes in the conflict zone and accessing medical services.

Evidence and data are strong catalysts for integrated aid programming. Findings from ABA assessments not only enable a shared understanding of priorities but also provide an analytical framework for all relevant community representatives to look beyond mandate-specific interventions and develop multi-sectoral plans. The benefits of this process are readily apparent in the case of Niger, where the ABA approach enabled a range of actors to explore and unite the visions of populations from a variety of backgrounds in order to prioritise needs. Most importantly, participatory planning workshops helped identify how to foster the integration of the urban resettlement neighbourhoods into a larger urban development vision. This process relied on building partnerships with municipalities, who led the planning process and were encouraged, based on data-driven evidence, to appoint technical experts and civil servants to implement these plans and determine detailed investment strategies.[2] Local coordination committees have been formed to monitor the implementation of the plans twice a year, and to mobilise external and public funds.

Similarly, in Ukraine, by studying conflict-related disruptions to basic services in the peripheries of large cities, the ABA proved a powerful tool for local authorities to advocate for their priority needs. The benefits of this approach will be particularly relevant in terms of supporting good local governance practices and accountability, especially in contexts where weakness of multi-stakeholder relationships might generate continued distrust in local authorities.

Conclusion

These case-studies from both low-income and lower middle-income urban economies highlight that urban displacement can have major repercussions on local ecosystems within secondary towns and cities. In such instances, local governments need to rely on sound knowledge and practical collaborations with aid actors to find immediate sustainable solutions to displacement, which support longer-term urban recovery planning. The data and evidence resulting from robust

joint analysis provide a strong basis for local authorities to advocate for what citizens (both displaced persons and long-term residents) and service providers have identified as priorities within their communities. Such an approach allows different stakeholders with often differing priorities to reconcile their perspectives in order to make effective interventions in cities, addressing the lack of accountability and community participation in decision making which are even more pronounced in times of crisis.

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1. Comprising IDPS, refugees from Nigeria and Chad, and returnees.

2. AGORA (2019) *Plans de priorisation des interventions dans 4 sites urbanisés de la région de Diffa, au Niger* bit.ly/AGORA-Niger

Applying camp management methods to urban displacement in Afghanistan

Anna Hirsch-Holland

Applying key elements of the traditional camp management approach can enhance communication, community participation and coordination in out-of-camp urban contexts.

Camp management, as a standalone sector, was born out of the need to assign responsibility for ensuring a coordinated, cross-sectoral, community-based approach at the level of a single camp. However, it is estimated that a majority of displaced people now live outside formal camps, with many residing in urban areas – either among the host community or in self-settled collective sites within or on the outskirts of cities and towns.[1] Humanitarian and development actors are grappling with how to adapt to the urbanisation challenge in general but the shift to out-of-camp urban displacement presents a particular challenge to agencies working within the camp management sector.

The experience and methods of camp management, however, have the potential to help address some of the core challenges of responding to urban out-of-camp displacement. This was a key finding of a desk review conducted by the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster in 2014, which found that CCCM's community-centred methodologies and tools – particularly those pertaining to communication, community engagement and coordination – were of considerable use in responding to the needs of displaced people living outside camps.[2]

Some agencies have begun to pilot approaches that draw on the skill set of camp management to respond to the challenges of urban displacement. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) was one of the first agencies to develop such approaches, including in Afghanistan where it targeted urban neighbourhoods in and around the eastern cities of Jalalabad, Asadabad and Mihtarlam.

The intervention was prompted primarily by the return in 2016–17 of more than one million Afghan refugees from Pakistan. Many of these returnees had spent their entire lives in Pakistan and as such had little or no knowledge of their native lands, and most could not return to their areas of origin due to insecurity or a dearth of livelihoods opportunities and services. In the absence of reception camps, large numbers of families settled in or on the outskirts of towns and cities in the hope of accessing assistance, jobs and services. Returnees rented rooms or stayed with extended family in over-crowded shelters or installed makeshift shelters on private land. The displacement landscape was further complicated by new

and protracted internal displacement, as well as by profound under-development among host communities which added to rural-to-urban migration movements.

Similar needs, different context

NRC in Afghanistan decided to apply its camp management methods to an urban out-of-camp setting using an area-based approach – that is, focusing on a defined geographical urban area in lieu of a camp. The camp management approach addresses needs that are just as pertinent in out-of-camp settings: access to information and feedback mechanisms; structures for community participation and self-management; and coordination between multiple stakeholders to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. In fact, these needs are often even more pertinent in the urban environment, as illustrated by the Afghanistan example.

NRC found that access to **information** about humanitarian services was significantly lacking: 79% of displaced women and 52% of displaced men could not name any humanitarian service provider. This was the result of a limited presence of humanitarian field staff (especially female), with offices located far from the areas in which vulnerable people were living, and with little visibility or community sensitisation about the agencies working in the area. Moreover, displaced persons faced complex and opaque procedures for accessing humanitarian assistance: 68% were unaware of how organisations chose whom to help and 90% did not know how to make a complaint, raise a question or give feedback about services. By comparison, in most formal camp environments, humanitarian agencies have a daily or permanent presence in the camps with clearly identifiable staff, and their offices or community spaces are located within or close to the camp. Moreover, assistance packages are generally distributed to the entire camp population, and thus the inhabitants need not take proactive steps to register for assistance.

Second, in terms of **community engagement** in out-of-camp contexts, humanitarian responders typically

relied on the community's existing but unrepresentative male community leaders to obtain information about needs and to identify and select recipients of assistance; displaced people, particularly women and the most vulnerable, are often excluded from any representation. By contrast, in the formal camp environment the camp management agency is mandated to ensure the establishment of and support to mechanisms for representative community governance. Since no single agency formally has this mandate in an out-of-camp context, it can lead to a lack of, or incoherent, approach to community engagement. This risks reinforcing harmful power structures and can undermine attempts to deliver an accountable and principled humanitarian response.

Finally, in terms of **coordination**, lack of information about the location and needs of the displaced population, particularly the most vulnerable, was a significant challenge in the context of responses to Afghan returnees. Displacement tracking was limited, since it was based on the intended final destinations of returnees which were recorded at their point of entry but not consistently followed up. This led to most humanitarian agencies relying on local host community elders to locate returnee and internally displaced households – a process that was undermined by exploitation and corruption. Coordination efforts were further hampered by a lack of service mapping and inadequate local-level coordination among a plethora of stakeholders with varying mandates and interests.

Although operating in urban neighbourhoods rather than formal camps, the out-of-camp approach retained its focus on developing structures and mechanisms to ensure communication with communities, community participation and engagement, and support to coordination. There were three inter-linking components: community outreach teams, community centres and neighbourhood committees. The community outreach teams collected information on needs, disseminated information on services, undertook referrals and facilitated localised coordination; they also established, trained

NRC/Jim Huylebroek

Neighbourhood committee members participate in a meeting to identify community challenges, organised by NRC in Jalalabad. *Why are their faces pixellated? See www.fmreview.org/photo-policy.*

and supported neighbourhood committees to do the same. The community centres, meanwhile, provided an accessible location where community members (displaced and non-displaced) could access information and referrals, and where coordination and community meetings could take place.

Outcomes: what worked?

Some encouraging results emerged. First, the approach provided an accessible platform for information provision. More than 57% of neighbourhood residents had come into contact with at least one of the components of the project – whether community outreach teams, community centres and/or neighbourhood committees – and 82% of these said their access to information had improved.

Most people (88%) coming to the community centres came for information – indicating how significant this need was – and visitors particularly appreciated the centres as a source of information that did not rely on local community leaders (whom they often did not trust) and which allowed them face-to-face access to agencies. The neighbourhood committees were also of value in reaching out to displaced community members, with more people (and particularly more women) aware of them than of the community centres. Moreover, neighbourhood committees – which comprised both displaced and host community members – also provided a way for communities to participate in identifying needs and implementing solutions; more than 50% of them solved one or more of the problems they had identified, including those pertaining to water supply, education, infrastructure and health facilities.

In terms of coordination, the approach was able to match eligible vulnerable beneficiaries with available services and protection, and to leverage additional service provision for individuals and communities that might otherwise have been left behind. This was done through local-level coordination meetings involving neighbourhood committees and a range of local organisations, authorities, informal community leaders and non-governmental organisations. The regular presence of community outreach teams in targeted neighbourhoods as well as at community centres also provided an entry point for community members to access service providers and vice versa. Eighty per cent of service providers engaged through the project reported that it gave them improved knowledge of humanitarian needs, and 62% felt it improved their access to populations in need, while 40% specifically mentioned that the engagement helped them to target assistance more appropriately and to avoid duplication. Moreover, the approach was able to link neighbourhood committees with proposed development initiatives to ensure displaced community members were included in the planning and implementation of these projects.

Challenges to be addressed, lessons to be learned

Many of the key challenges and lessons learned from implementation of the approach in Afghanistan are applicable to other urban out-of-camp contexts. Three of these are highlighted here.

First, there was a lack of clarity in the humanitarian architecture with regard to coordination of the out-of-camp displacement response; this led to multiple agencies operating with overlapping responsibilities and unclear mandates, and to disjointed humanitarian assistance procedures. This made it extremely challenging for NRC to provide clear and helpful information to community members, to ensure the recognition and legitimacy of the neighbourhood committees, and to hold duty bearers to account. Such responsibilities are much more straightforward to implement in a formal camp, where the mandate of a camp management agency is clearer and more widely recognised.

Second, implementation of the approach in Afghanistan demonstrated that for area-based approaches to be successful, they require a narrow geographical remit, which poses a challenge for scalability. Initially, the community centres had catchment populations of tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of people. As this proved too large for a community-focused area-based approach, the mobile outreach and community engagement elements of the approach had to be concentrated on smaller neighbourhoods within the wider catchment areas. Each community centre could then function as a central hub for coordination within and between multiple neighbourhoods in the vicinity. However, the community outreach teams were stretched across a large number of neighbourhoods and could not ensure a consistent quality of response. Moreover, some vulnerable neighbourhoods remained unassisted, thereby contributing to inequalities between neighbourhoods.

Third, the Afghanistan experience illustrated the challenge of engaging with local and national authorities.

The complex power dynamics between and within the different authorities, as well as their occasional interference in humanitarian response efforts, made it difficult to collaborate meaningfully with them, and all but impossible to establish a structured approach in which their role in (or even ownership of) local coordination mechanisms would be institutionalised and sustainable. Engaging with authorities requires humanitarian staff to have specific expertise and a certain degree of status or seniority.[3] It also requires a wider consensus among humanitarian and development actors over how to coordinate and collaborate with local and national authorities in urban environments.

The adaptation of the camp management approach to urban out-of-camp contexts is a work in progress, but experience from Afghanistan shows that its practical methods for enhancing two-way communication, structured community participation and localised multi-sectoral coordination could provide the key to addressing some of the most pressing challenges of displacement in towns and cities.

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1. Reliable data on the proportion of out-of-camp or urban displaced are not currently available. Sources tend to cite a figure of between 60% and 80%. For example, in its 2018 *Global Trends* report, UNHCR cites a figure of 60% but this only represents those whose location is known: bit.ly/UNHCR-Global-Trends-2018 Meanwhile, IDMC in its 2019 *Global Report on Internal Displacement* cites 60% to 80% but notes the lack of strong evidence to support this figure: bit.ly/IDMC-GRID-2019-urban For more information, please contact the author.

2. Global CCCM Cluster (2014) *Desk Review: Urban Displacement & Outside of Camp* bit.ly/CCCM-DeskReview-2014

3. For more on the competencies of staff working in urban environments see Ely A et al (2019) *Urban Competency Framework*, Global Alliance for Urban Crises bit.ly/Urban-Competency-2019

4. NRC's out-of-camp project in Afghanistan was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IOM and the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

A citywide approach in urban Bangladesh

Bipasha Dutta

World Vision applied a citywide approach to reducing the prevalence of child labour and to protecting working children's rights in four cities in Bangladesh. This approach offers lessons for others involved in urban programming.

It is estimated that some 3.2 million internally displaced children are involved in child labour in Bangladesh. In most cases, internally displaced families are forced to take their children out of school and put them to work because they cannot afford their children's education or because they need the money to enable the family to survive. Children in Bangladesh can be legally employed from the age of 14; the 2010 National Child Labour Elimination Policy prohibits both under-age employment and the employment of children in hazardous work but implementation of this policy remains limited. Consequently, children are frequently engaged in hazardous work including in the clothing industry, transport, shipbreaking, fishing, domestic work, construction, street vending and garbage scavenging

Against this backdrop, World Vision Bangladesh targeted 88,853 internally displaced children (57% girls, 43% boys) in four cities (Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Khulna) from 2016 to 2018. The aim was to take children away from hazardous work and to try to ensure that they can enjoy their basic rights by applying World Vision's standard approach for all urban programming: a 'citywide' approach which is rolled out at different levels of city administration to ensure a sustainable impact. Based on partnerships and collaboration, this approach promotes local community support mechanisms and then draws on the knowledge and feedback gained from these neighbourhood activities in order to undertake advocacy at district and national policy levels.

Neighbourhood level

At this level, children, parents and employers were targeted. Children aged 5–14 were given access to free non-formal education and competency-based basic education,

and to sports and other forms of recreation. Children with disabilities were included in the non-formal education programme with care provided according to their needs. Meanwhile, young people aged between 15 and 18 received vocational skills trainings to enable them to find decent – non-hazardous – employment. To help children connect with job providers, potential employers were involved, who were at the same time sensitised on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and on laws pertaining to child labour. A database was created to help ensure delivery of appropriate services to children according to their specific needs.

Furthermore, capacity building – relating to income generation, savings and entrepreneurship – was provided for 12,000 families (whose children were engaged in hazardous labour and whose household income was below US$35 per month). Cash support provided to some particularly vulnerable families was reduced gradually when families became engaged in income-generating activities. Meanwhile, awareness-raising programmes aimed to build parents' awareness of the harmful effects of child labour. To ensure community engagement, World Vision Bangladesh supported the formation of community-based organisations (CBOs) that ran savings schemes and provided loans to their members. Working with the CBOs also helped ensure community participation in monitoring and reporting of child labour abuses.

District level

At this level, World Vision Bangladesh developed partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders including the private sector, civil society organisations and other district-level institutions in order to discuss issues relating to displaced

children and to undertake advocacy with authorities such as the city's education department. Thanks to a collaborative effort, child labour protection committees (CLPCs) were formed in the four cities. In Bangladesh, most of the local ward-level committees (the lowest tier of local government) are not functional as they lack resources and autonomy for decision making but the CLPCs strengthened their capacity by providing secretarial support and help with facilitating meetings. Child-friendly enquiry/reporting desks and a helpline were established at local police stations to ensure children's rights are not violated and to enable reporting of abuses.

National level
World Vision Bangladesh and other non-governmental organisations formed an alliance to conduct policy advocacy at the national level, holding a number of discussions with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. The purpose of these discussions was to ensure more effective implementation of the National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010 and the National Education Policy 2010, and to encourage policymakers to introduce policy changes in order to address the needs of displaced children. From these discussions emerged an action plan relating to these points, plus agreement on the potential roles of the different stakeholders.

Challenges and mitigation
As a result of this citywide approach, approximately 70,000 children either returned to school (if aged below 14) or continued to work but in better jobs (those aged 14 or above). Meanwhile, their families benefited from vocational training and income-generating activities. On average, their household income increased by 15%. However, although these initiatives showed significant results, several challenges were faced throughout implementation; some of these challenges, and how they were addressed, might be relevant to those working in other urban programming cases.

One prominent challenge was the mobile and dynamic nature of urban life. The provision of services to those in need depends largely on the ability to reach them but displaced people may not remain for long in one place. Connecting displaced families with the CBOs and encouraging them to join saving schemes provided a certain level of security so they did not need to move on as much.

Another notable challenge was the preference among the most vulnerable internally displaced persons (IDPs) for direct cash support rather than capacity building and skills training. Local government representatives and local religious leaders and influential people were consequently engaged to motivate IDPs on the long-term benefits of capacity building and skills training.

Efforts by the CLPCs to address abuse (both of child employment law, and physical and sexual abuse of children) were not very effective in cases where the abuser was an influential person. The committees were consequently re-formed to include members of law-enforcing agencies, the media and prominent persons of local society to bring more pressure to bear.

We recommend the following to improve application of this approach:

Allocating time at the neighbourhood level: According to the citywide approach, the assistance agency (in this case, World Vision Bangladesh) should first focus on gathering grassroots insights at the neighbourhood level, and then provide technical expertise. Insights from the neighbourhood level should be cascaded at district and national levels through partnerships and advocacy initiatives in order to generate broader impact. However, initiating interventions at three levels (neighbourhood, district and national) simultaneously was somewhat problematic and limited our effectiveness. We conclude that more time should be allocated at the neighbourhood level before carrying forward activities at district and national levels.

Sensitisation around social and institutional development: Collaboration with city authorities and/or government

representatives is one of the key aspects of the citywide approach. However, the government representatives of Bangladesh are, in general, more willing to collaborate on direct development (cash support/ infrastructure development and so on) than to collaborate on social development (for example, capacity building and awareness raising in the community) or institutional development (such as building local government capacity). There is thus an urgent need to build awareness among government representatives and service-providing agencies of the importance of social and institutional development.

Advocacy and follow up: Some local government representatives felt that

addressing the needs of slum-dwellers would discourage them from returning to their villages; as a consequence, they had limited interest in addressing slum-dwellers' needs. Hence, an advocacy framework and plan should have been developed to generate the interest of the more influential and less interested stakeholders – and government representatives should have been engaged from the very beginning of the project design process. Furthermore, to ensure sustainability of the approach, a framework for joint monitoring by the assistance agency and government bodies should be established.

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Transformative climate action in cities

François Gemenne, Caroline Zickgraf, Anneliese Depoux, Laetitia Pettinotti, Agathe Cavicchioli and Sarah Rosengaertner

A critical, but understudied, issue of concern is how climate change will affect migrant populations living in cities (including refugees and internally displaced people), and how local governance and actions to combat the effects of climate change will address migrants' vulnerability and support their inclusion in cities.

Cities today are at the forefront of climate change. Although they occupy only 2% of the earth's land surface, they are home to more than half the world's population and represent about 80% of the world's energy consumption and more than 60% of greenhouse gas emissions.[1] Due to expanding populations and growing needs, cities' residents, infrastructure and services are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Indeed, many cities are already suffering from climate-related hazards including flooding, coastal erosion, heatwaves and landslides, and many more will have to face these risks in the future. The recent decision by the Government of Indonesia to relocate the country's capital from low-lying Jakarta to the island of Borneo is telling in that regard.

In recent years, cities have affirmed their positions as driving forces in the fight against climate change and have

demonstrated leadership and concerted action. In particular, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), the network of 96 cities committed to climate action, is fostering cooperation and ensuring that cities' voices are represented in international climate diplomacy and policy-making fora.

We argue that migration, including forced migration, have implications for cities' responses to climate change – in terms both of emissions reduction efforts and resilience building in cities, and specifically within urban migrant communities.[2] When considering inclusive climate action in cities, distinguishing between forced migrants and migrants matters little. What matters are, first, marginalisation (which prevents people's access to basic services) and, second, climate action (which has the potential to increase people's capacity to adapt and to contribute to reducing climate change impacts).

Dasht-e Tarakhil is an informal settlement on the eastern outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan, mostly populated by Afghans who have returned from Pakistan. UNHCR and its partners are helping returnees gain access to basic services, land and jobs.

Vulnerability of forced migrants to urban climate change

People often move to urban areas that provide improved income-generating opportunities, infrastructure and social services but which may be exposed to other kinds of risks. South and East Asia are particularly vulnerable to large-scale displacement because sea-level rise will have a disproportionate effect on their large populations living in low-lying urban areas. Six of Asia's ten mega-cities, for example, are located on the coast (Jakarta, Shanghai, Tokyo, Manila, Bangkok and Mumbai).

In cities and metropolitan areas, the economic, social, political and geographical marginalisation of migrants affects their abilities to cope with slow-onset (for example, temperature rise and recurrent heatwaves) and sudden shocks (such as flooding and storm surges) resulting from climate change. Urban migrant residents from lower-income groups bear, and will continue to bear, the greatest risks from the impacts of climate change, as they are less able than those with greater resources to put in place short-term coping measures, such as evacuating family members or protecting assets from associated loss and damage. They are also less likely to be able to recover from detrimental impacts on their physical, economic and psychosocial wellbeing.

Sudden and slow-onset disasters may disproportionately affect marginalised migrant communities, particularly when they are already living in precarious conditions. Limited employment opportunities and livelihood insecurity, weakened or reduced access to social services, poor housing conditions, and exposure to crime and other social conditions contribute to migrants' increased vulnerability to environmental stresses and shocks. When housing choices and labour opportunities are limited, newcomers often settle in the most dangerous areas in terms of climate-related disaster risk – where housing is cheaper and more readily available but where living conditions are also comparatively worse. They end up occupying spaces with weak and inadequate infrastructure and limited social services, which are exposed to hazards such as flooding and landslides. Moreover, migrants often live in unsafe buildings that do not adhere to building codes or regulations (where such codes exist).

Migrants in these areas then end up suffering disproportionately when disasters occur – and their risk of displacement increases.[3]

Adding to the challenges above, language barriers, limited assets, a lack of knowledge of local contexts and previous environmental shocks, discrimination, insufficient community participation and representation, and weak social networks can all alter migrants' perception of environmental risks and hinder their access to timely, good-quality and complete information before, during and after disasters occur.[4] These factors can push migrants to make hazardous choices. For example, a lack of personal experience of mudslides may be a contributing factor to why migrants from the northeast of Brazil erect precarious constructions on mudslide-prone slopes above favelas in Rio de Janeiro.[5] Their vulnerability to disaster can also manifest itself in their evacuation responses. For migrants with few assets and/or living in informal settlements with precarious land rights, the need to stay behind to guard houses and belongings can also reduce their willingness to evacuate or can cause them to return home prematurely in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

These constraints can also reduce people's abilities and willingness to seek and receive relief in the wake of sudden-onset events. A lack of roads and infrastructure can hinder emergency services from reaching informal settlements with critical supplies and services. When documentation is a prerequisite for receiving assistance, irregular and forced migrants who have lost their documents in the course of a disaster or previous displacement face difficulties in accessing relief. Even when this is not the case, for those undocumented the fear of deportation may outweigh their need for formal support, and be exacerbated when there is a lack of trust in local officials. When migrants are not taken into account in disaster risk reduction and preparedness and climate action plans, they may be forced to rely on informal aid and social networks for support.

The inclusion of urban migrants in climate change adaptation planning, disaster risk reduction and preparedness and in relief programmes is therefore critical.

With well-managed urban migration and settlement and good integration policies (economically, socially and civically), cities can enhance the capacity of incoming populations to cope with and adapt to the impacts of climate change. This requires improved governance, coordination and communication across all levels and sectors of government, engagement with civil society, and the active participation of all cross-sections of the urban migrant community.

The links between forced migration and climate action: a research agenda

In cities, forced migrants may have considerable transformative potential for climate action. We have identified a number of sectors where further research in this area is needed. Without such research, we argue, there is a high risk that climate action cannot be fully inclusive and climate action in cities cannot unleash its full potential in terms of reducing emissions, building resilience and ensuring that our cities lead the just transition of our societies to a low-carbon and inclusive future. It will be important to ensure specific consideration of gender, youth and the elderly in relation to the sectors identified below.

Transport is a key source of greenhouse gas emissions, and a key sector where transformations are possible. In the Global South, forced migrants often settle in informal settlements that are isolated from major services and/or relatively inaccessible. In emerging economies and industrialised countries, they often live in neighbourhoods that are insufficiently served by public transport, which affects their ability to access labour markets, job opportunities, social and health services, and so on. The city of Paris, for example, is currently redesigning its public transportation system so that it includes the greater suburbs where most immigrant populations live.

Housing is another key source of greenhouse gas emissions in cities but is also often a source of vulnerability, as migrants' homes are often more exposed to natural disasters. Therefore, improving migrants' housing can be both a mitigation and an adaptation policy.

Increasingly, cities will seek to achieve local **food security** in order to reduce dependence on imported food. It is essential that migrants – who often rely on their own food systems – are integrated into any resilient food systems that cities seek to develop.

In both industrialised and developing countries, access to **health service**s is often problematic for migrants, especially undocumented migrants. This means they are likely to suffer more as a result of the health impacts of climate change, in addition to the health issues associated with migration. There needs to be more collaboration between researchers in the areas of climate change, migration and health.

Finally, **political participation and mobilisation** lie at the heart of realising the transformational potential of forced migration/migrants. Migrants are often unable to fully exert their political rights, even in countries where non-nationals have the right to vote in local elections. Sometimes they lack the documentation that would enable them to vote and participate in collective decisions, or they do not feel legitimate or safe enough to do so, yet it is essential that climate action is participatory and designed to include migrants.

We know the sectors mentioned above are critical to meeting cities' greenhouse gas emission targets and for building urban resilience. We suggest that in-depth research is needed to better understand how forced migration interacts with cities' action in those sectors. We propose a threefold research agenda on:

- **the impact of forced migration on critical climate action sectors:** how can researchers best support city planning and preparedness, including with data on what to expect in terms of forced migration in an era of accelerating climate crisis?

- **the specific vulnerabilities of forced migrant populations:** how can we support city climate actions to ensure that they neither leave migrants behind nor have unintended consequences in terms of exacerbating vulnerabilities – such as congestion pricing in city centres that makes it difficult for migrant workers to get to work?

- **the shared vulnerabilities and opportunities for making common cause** among forced migrants and other vulnerable populations in urban areas: how can we empower and support coalition-building and joint advocacy by those people who are most affected, coming together around shared concerns?

Addressing such issues together will be essential not only for effective climate action at the local level but also for migrants' successful inclusion in cities.

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Women refugees, leisure space and the city

Sarah Linn

Research with refugee women in Amman and Beirut shows the importance of access to safe urban leisure space for well-being and integration.

For self-settled refugees who lack access to resources and are often suffering the effects of traumatic experiences, affordable and accessible green spaces can be instrumental to their well-being. The use of such spaces for relaxation and reflection or for exercise, socialising and play can also assist refugees to build stronger links with their host community and lead to a deeper spatial understanding of the cities in which they live.

However, typical refugee-receiving neighbourhoods in cities of the Majority World suffer from informal development and planning, poor housing stock and high population densities. As a result, accessible public leisure spaces are rare and often neglected. Such spaces may also be appropriated by particular groups or individuals, which can isolate or intimidate others, or may be closely monitored by the State.

My research in 2016–17 focused on Syrian refugees' gendered experiences of mobility, security and public space in neighbourhoods in the cities of Amman and Beirut.[1] These neighbourhoods had been chosen by refugees for their perceived affordability and proximity to (informal) work opportunities and, often, because of kinship links. However, women living in these areas typically did not have access to public green leisure spaces. This was not only because these cities lacked such spaces but was also the result of a number of intersecting structural and identity issues which combined to create a multitude of obstacles to women's access to public spaces and enjoyment of leisure opportunities.

Obstacles to access

Women highlighted societal and cultural norms governing their presence and mobility in public spaces. Vulnerability to verbal, sexual and physical harassment because of both their gender and their refugee status also shaped their experiences. Women also highlighted their precarity and lack of money, and the impact this has on their mobility. Spaces of leisure such as the Corniche in Beirut or King Hussein Sport City in Amman were too far away – and too expensive – to access.

Women from lower socio-economic backgrounds often had little knowledge of their host city beyond their immediate neighbourhoods, citing fear and confusion. In particular, those who were illiterate felt unable to move beyond the confines of their neighbourhoods as they felt 'blind' – unable to read signs and road names and often frightened of approaching others for assistance.

Leisure spaces within refugees' immediate neighbourhoods were seen as neglected and unsafe. For example, refugee women in East Amman described their aversion to using a park in close proximity to their community as it was 'ugly', had a poor reputation with regard to personal safety and was often characterised as frequented by groups of 'loitering' men. Similarly, women in Beirut felt that some local spaces, including a playground and a park, were breeding grounds for conflict and tension between refugees and the local community. Many recounted playground tensions escalating into verbal altercations and threats between parents.

While women emphasised that in Syria they had a varied social life, enjoying the sociability of the streets at different times of day, most stated that in their host cities they felt compelled to stay indoors after sunset, often expressing frustration at being prevented from enjoying the sociability of their neighbourhoods in the evening because their family's anxieties had led to restrictions on their mobility. Refugee women living in Beirut expressed greater concern than

women in Amman about being outside their homes at night. This was directly linked to their lack of refugee status and legitimacy in Lebanon and the complex security framework operating in Beirut. These women feared having their papers checked (most were residing in Beirut with an expired legal permit or had been smuggled into Lebanon) and wished to remain unnoticed. In contrast, although Syrian women living in Amman did express some discomfort and fear while in public spaces, their greater sense of legitimacy and protection led them to experience significantly less restriction on their personal mobility in their host city.

Impact on women's well-being

As a consequence of these challenges, many women spent their leisure time in seclusion. If women had extended family ties in their neighbourhoods, or had built relationships with neighbours, they tended to spend their leisure time paying social visits. These relationships were vital to women's well-being. Those who did not enjoy these relationships described highly immobile, disconnected and isolated lives; they also expressed feeling like 'strangers' in their host city, which exacerbated their sense of fear when in public.

Classes run by religious institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also provided women with opportunities to socialise, relax, learn new skills and do activities such as sewing and cookery and offered escape from the confines of the house. However, skill-building classes run by NGOs could be dominated by certain groups, particularly those from more middle-class backgrounds. Representatives from NGOs explained that often women who were educated and bored would dominate cookery or sewing classes and

Playground in Beirut, 2016.

Sarah Linn

manage to get themselves repeatedly readmitted as they understood how the system worked. Thus, NGO offices emerged as spaces of leisure for some refugee women, to the exclusion of others.

Many long-term residents of both cities also lament the lack of safe and welcoming public spaces for leisure. Planners should prioritise those areas of the city that are under intense social change, highly resource-compromised and suffering environmental pollution. People need spaces that are green and accessible, in close proximity to their neighbourhoods, well lit and, if required, monitored to ensure petty vandalism and sexual harassment are discouraged. Women emphasised that they do not mind the presence of security or authority figures if it means that neighbourhood frictions are kept in check and general order is maintained.

Spatial mapping – to discover the way in which refugees access various spaces in the city – can help planners and NGOs consider the ways and means by which women use space, how they feel when navigating public spaces and why they avoid certain spaces. Mapping has its own social and cultural challenges, and indeed raises wider ethical issues with regard to sharing information about refugees' movements. However, some NGOs in Lebanon have used it effectively. An NGO in Beirut successfully mapped the routes that women took when visiting their drop-in centres, which facilitated open discussion of places/people/checkpoints to avoid and so on. The mapping was carried out in order to actively share information and ensure women felt safe and would continue to use the centres. Mapping methods like this could be further utilised to improve understanding of neighbourhoods and the use of leisure facilities and spaces.

Planners can work alongside NGOs and communities to prioritise the development of green public spaces which allow for wider community interaction. Spaces can be conceptualised and developed in partnership with various stakeholders, including host communities and refugees, to enhance a sense of shared ownership and responsibility to ensure the upkeep of spaces despite limited resources.

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The path of least resistance? EU cities and locally organised resettlement

Tihomir Sabchev and Moritz Baumgärtel

The scaling up of locally organised, city-led routes to resettlement could form part of a larger solution to Europe's current political crisis and deadlock around migration.

Over recent years, local governments have gradually earned a prominent place in Europe's system of migration governance. This increased influence can be attributed to decades-long processes of decentralisation and the devolution of competencies across European countries.[1] From providing housing to ensuring access to education and labour market integration, many aspects of migrants' everyday lives are today directly dependent on the capacity of municipal authorities and their public and private sector partners to effectively fulfil these tasks.

Particularly since the summer of 2015, when local governments had to fill many gaps in the national provision of refugee reception services, there have been clear attempts on the part of local government to influence migration policy making beyond their local mandate. For this purpose, local governments are increasingly teaming up with like-minded partners in transnational partnerships, the most prominent examples being transnational city networks such as Eurocities and Solidarity Cities. These provide not only new opportunities for policy exchange but also for the political promotion of local government objectives, which are sometimes diametrically opposed to the priorities of their respective central governments. Barcelona and Athens, for instance, proposed a direct relocation of refugees between the two cities in March 2016, a plan that was vetoed by the Spanish government.[2] In Germany, the Seebrücke movement comprises more than 100 cities and towns and has been pressuring the federal government to allow local authorities to take in refugees directly from the Italian ports.

Locally organised resettlement

Small-scale resettlement schemes based on Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program have been part of the international migration governance system for some time now. While many EU countries have pursued ever more restrictive approaches with respect to international protection, others (most notably Ireland, the UK and Germany) have demonstrated an unusual affinity towards this kind of bottom-up resettlement. The most prominent example, however, can be found in Italy, where for four years a project led by the church organisation Community of Sant'Egidio has been offering safe passage for displaced people from camps in the Middle East and Africa through its Humanitarian Corridors initiative. The project officially started at the end of 2015 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Sant'Egidio and a number of other faith-based organisations and Italy's Interior, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation ministries.

With the support of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Sant'Egidio and its partners identify potential candidates for

resettlement from refugee camps mainly in Lebanon, Jordan and Ethiopia. After the Ministry of Interior screens and approves the list of candidates, the Italian consulate in each location issues each person with a humanitarian visa. The refugees are then flown to Italy where they lodge their application for international protection. Once there, they are dispersed across cities (currently more than 90 cities in 18 different regions) where they receive reception and integration assistance from a large network of local church associations, civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and families. The services offered include accommodation, language classes, job orientation, cultural mediation and legal assistance.

The host organisations are responsible for the refugees' integration for at least a year, although in many cases they continue providing partial support (mainly accommodation) for a longer period, often until people become self-sufficient. All the costs associated with the project are covered by Sant'Egidio and the other host organisations.[3] The project currently resettles about 750 refugees per year which, although a modest number, is still more than the number accepted by most individual Member States.[4] In recognition of its contribution to protecting refugees the project was selected as regional winner for Europe in UNHCR's prestigious Nansen Award for Refugees in September 2019.[5]

Smaller but similar initiatives have recently been established in Belgium and France and – in addition to those bottom-up initiatives that already exist – progressive and resourceful cities like Barcelona, Vienna and Hamburg have openly and repeatedly declared their willingness to host and support refugees. In our view, the expansion of these initiatives by local governments could represent the path of least resistance to more far-reaching reforms of the EU migration governance system. Even though previous attempts for establishing city-to-city refugee relocation mechanisms have been met with resistance by EU Member States, the locally organised resettlement

initiatives and other community-based sponsorship projects have so far not been challenged politically or legally.

Two aspects of locally organised resettlement seem to contribute decisively to lessening the resistance of States. First, the project design satisfies the security concerns of central governments, as national authorities can screen individuals before authorising their resettlement. Second, central governments do not cover the costs of the initial reception and the short- to medium-term integration into local communities. While they still need to provide access to national social security and health-care systems, they receive all the long-term benefits that derive from refugees' permanent settlement and their integration in demographically ageing countries.

Cities and the future of refugee resettlement

There are other reasons to believe that cities are the logical sites for the development of sustainable refugee resettlement schemes. Firstly, local authorities are in a position to assess, easily and accurately, local capacity to host and integrate refugees. They have up-to-date knowledge on housing availability, health-care services and school places, ethnic and religious communities, and local labour market conditions. Secondly, many local authorities have gained significant experience in managing refugee reception and integration and are willing to continue investing in this field. For instance, many municipalities in Germany and the Netherlands now have local offices that work exclusively on immigration and integration governance issues. The knowledge accumulated by these offices and the links they have established with NGOs and private actors can be mobilised for the locally organised resettlement initiatives. Thirdly, local governments have begun to collaborate directly with international organisations like UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF. In Greece, for example, these organisations have been assigning members of their staff to work within certain municipalities, which has

contributed enormously to the development of local migration governance capacity. Local governments can capitalise on these transnational partnerships to give substance to the recent calls for a wider collaboration in the field of refugee resettlement.[6]

From the perspective of local governments, there are also good reasons to promote localised refugee resettlement initiatives. European cities have demonstrated their ambition to enhance their role in migration governance. They experience directly the consequences of immigration and the related policy challenges but are not given a seat at the table when important decisions are being taken. In addition, many local governments openly oppose the deterrence-based approaches promoted by the EU and its Member States. Locally managed routes to resettlement could place cities at the centre of migration governance, at least from an organisational point of view, thus avoiding locally problematic outcomes while at the same time offering better protection to displaced people.

In practical terms, we suggest a two-step approach to expanding locally organised resettlement. Initially, self-financed small-scale resettlement projects led by local authorities could be implemented simultaneously in several countries with the authorisation of the respective national governments. The process could be facilitated by existing transnational migration city networks. While one can be sceptical about the potential of local governments to finance such initiatives, one should remember that – in the absence of financial support from central governments – many municipalities have invested significantly in the reception and integration of refugees over recent years. Moreover, local governments that have openly expressed their willingness to accept more refugees should be able to justify modest additional spending on resettlement projects; the cost of the UK community sponsorship scheme, for instance, is estimated at £9,000 per resettled family.[7] At the same time, municipalities should call for additional EU funding to support their initiatives. Given that a significant amount of

EU funds for the resettlement and relocation of displaced people have over the years been allocated to EU governments which have then failed to meet their commitments, it is not difficult to see the merit of channelling some of the funds directly to cities. Ultimately, city-led resettlement projects could gradually be expanded both within and across countries, while processes can be improved over time in line with accumulated evidence and experience.

Enlarging the scope, size and quality of resettlement programmes is one of the key objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. At the same time, the gap between resettlement needs and the places made available by States is widening. We believe that local governments could be the driving force behind addressing this mismatch. Given the rapid urbanisation and the expected increase in climate change-related displacement, it seems wise to invest in the development of these sorts of sustainable solutions to migration-related challenges. If successful, the gradual expansion of city-led resettlement practices could turn into a type of 'controlled' policy reform that, without reinforcing political divides, could bring about a paradigm shift in migration governance.

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Cities as partners: the case of Kampala

Samer Saliba and Innocent Silver

The arrival of large numbers of refugees in western European cities since 2015 has spurred widespread endorsement of the role of these city governments in addressing displacement. Displacement to cities in other countries worldwide, however, also demands attention.

Displacement to cities is not a new phenomenon. Though the international community is now working with a number of European cities as partners in supporting refugees, other cities like Kampala, Amman or Jalalabad have been hosting far more refugees for far longer – with fewer resources and without the same international backing. To support cities in creating inclusive communities for the urban displaced, the international community (including humanitarian and development actors, multinational corporations and UN agencies) must approach the 'Mogadishus' of the world in the same way that it approaches the 'Berlins': as partners whose voices matter and whose efforts it should help to strengthen through investment, technical support and collaboration.

In 2018 the International Rescue Committee (IRC) undertook research in 23 host cities around the world. Covering cities as diverse as Agadez, New York, Mogadishu, Montréal and Jalalabad, the findings indicate that 19 of the cities have prioritised partnerships with the international community in order to address their migration challenges. More needs to be done within such cities to ensure that city governments are supported by partnerships and resources from the humanitarian community. Practically speaking, this means moving beyond simply offering cities a seat at the table in policy discussions to investing in cities as equal partners in current responses to displacement and empowering them to plan for future displacement and growth.

Consider Kampala

While Kampala, for example, is a member of international initiatives such as the Mayors Migration Council and the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, humanitarian actors have only just begun to view Kampala's governing body, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) as a viable partner.

The IRC approached KCCA to co-host a 2017 multi-stakeholder workshop focusing on long-term approaches to displacement within the city. During the workshop, a KCCA representative sarcastically presented a blank slide to reflect the absence of any mention of refugees in Kampala's strategic plan. Despite hosting an estimated 100,000 refugees, the KCCA had no plans for how better to serve them. Though the KCCA is at fault, the humanitarian community also shares the blame. While Kampala has hosted refugees for decades, to the point where longstanding Somali and Congolese neighbourhoods are now welcoming newly arrived South Sudanese refugees, humanitarian project funding has historically been concentrated on the refugee settlements just inside Uganda's borders.

According to Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister, as of September 2017 Kampala hosted 98,300 refugees from 25 countries.[1] These numbers relate to those refugees who are registered in Kampala, and do not take account of those who are registered in settlements but nonetheless spend considerable amounts of time living in Kampala. (Refugees in Uganda are eligible for land and support if they settle in rural areas but despite this the hope of work draws many to live precariously in urban areas.) The numbers also do not include persons of concern with similar characteristics to refugees, including household members of refugee families who have not gone through the official asylum process. Taking these numbers into consideration, KCCA estimates that 300,000 of Kampala's residents have a refugee background or affiliation.

At the same time, Kampala is rapidly urbanising. The city's night-time population is currently 1.6 million (swelling to 3.8 million during working hours) and is growing annually by nearly 4%. This growth is occurring predominantly within Kampala's low-income and/or informal areas, where approximately 32% of the city population lives. A recent report estimates that approximately 6% of these residents are refugees, higher than the city-wide average.[2] All residents of these low-income/informal areas experience insecurity, lack of economic opportunities, and poor sanitation. They are also more vulnerable to climate-related events, such as flooding or extreme temperatures, despite climate variability also being, for many, the initial cause of their displacement.

Since its initial engagement with IRC in 2017, KCCA has significantly increased its coordination with humanitarian, development and private sector partners to support the city's marginalised and displaced residents, regardless of their migration status. The city views itself as a 'Kampala for All', most notably through the creation of the Kampala Coordination Forum for Displacement, Migration and Urban Refugees (the #KampalaForAll forum), modelled on a similar forum created in Athens. The forum brings together all refugee-response actors in the city, including government agencies, UN agencies, multilateral development actors, national and international NGOs, and community-level actors, to harmonise responses, prioritise interventions, and share information.

KCCA has very clear ideas on what needs to be done but until those plans are funded, they do not mean much. The current focus for donors is, justifiably, where the needs are more immediate – that is, along Uganda's border. But the long-term needs are just as serious, and the city cannot operate in emergency response mode for decades. Urban response calls for a longer, developmental approach – one that considers permanent fixes, particularly in increasing access to housing, health care, education and livelihood opportunities for refugees and the urban poor living in informal settlements. And these fixes need to be developed through meaningful partnership with KCCA.

The difficulties in establishing meaningful partnerships with KCCA are many, and challenging. They include donor incentives to focus on refugee settlement services, competing mandates and territorialism among major international agencies and Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister, and the frequently encountered view among humanitarian practitioners that city government partnerships require extra work and risk diluting programme quality. But these challenges are far from insurmountable. Successful partnerships in other cities show positive results, such as that between UNHCR and the Municipality of Athens where a collaborative programme has housed over 40,000 refugees in urban housing stock.[3] Similar European and American examples abound – which we hope can be replicated not only in Kampala but in all host cities where partnership is most needed.

Guidance for international actors

Based on their experiences within KCCA and the international community, the authors propose the following recommendations for the international humanitarian community, including practitioners and donors:[4]

1. Partner with city governments in policy and in practice

- Require field staff to engage in dialogue with local municipal authorities to determine if there are any opportunities for meaningful collaboration around shared outcome areas. The dialogue should go beyond formal meetings or workshops to a level where informal visits to each other's offices are accepted as a normal way of working together, and capacities are shared on an ongoing basis.

- Earmark 25% of grant funding related to urban displacement for city government collaboration and/or local capacity strengthening, in compliance with the commitments of the Grand Bargain.[5]

- Include city governments as core constituents in the implementation of

international agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact on Refugees and its associated Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.

2. Use humanitarian interventions to support urban development outcomes
Rather than deliver programmes in sector-specific silos, the humanitarian community must reconsider humanitarian intervention as a resource for solving urban challenges exacerbated by displacement. This means taking a community- or area-based and multi-sectoral approach to programming, while also engaging in meaningful partnerships with other organisations, including non-traditional humanitarian partners and the private sector, to safeguard the specific rights of refugees and internally displaced persons. Specific actions include:

- Determine whether the relevant city or town has a pre-existing master plan or documented development goals, and work to align programmatic outcomes with these.

- Use technical expertise to help city governments improve their understanding of the needs and preferences of displaced residents in relation to the overall population, specifically through urban context analysis, technical assistance and data sharing, and use this understanding to ensure the inclusion of displaced and marginalised residents in municipal services.

- Fund area-based approaches focused on addressing the overlaps between urban displacement, geographic marginality, and urbanisation.

In order to address urban displacement, the international community must adapt its practices – and mindset – to allow for collaboration and must unify its support of city leadership, regardless of a city's location.

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Invisibility and virality in urban shelter response

Jennifer Ward George and David Hodgkin

Humanitarian shelter responses should prioritise flexibility in order to accommodate diverse needs and capacities, particularly in the urban environment.

It is clear to many, though not all, within the shelter sector that a one-size-fits-all solution to shelter needs is unlikely to be the most appropriate option for most households. In a recent review of 144 shelter case-studies, one of the strengths most frequently identified was the adaptability of solutions and response.[1] However, we suggest that this concept of 'adaptability' should be reframed as 'flexibility'. Adaptability is a concept that can be retrospectively applied to an initially inflexible programme design, whereas flexibility must be introduced from the start of a shelter project.

At a fundamental level, flexibility is needed because individual households have different demographics and different needs. They come from varied local contexts, have

experienced different specific impacts, and have diverse coping mechanisms, skills, capacities and resources. This diversity is commonly greater in urban settings, where there is an increased range of income levels, housing types and livelihood activities than in rural settings. This underlying diversity of need and capacity highlights the requirement for humanitarian agencies to develop much more flexible shelter solutions when working in an urban response. However, to measure the flexibility of design and response we identify two fundamental but hitherto neglected aspects: in the flexibility of shelter assistance programmes – invisibility; and in the flexibility of response – virality.

Invisibility

Consider first a successful suburban development in a non-emergency context. Successful housing developments blend into the community, matching the needs of the block of surrounding streets, the budget, the household, the regulations and the climate. A community that has evolved naturally generally includes a broad range of housing options. Some people may choose to live with extended family or friends; some may rent a room or apartment. Others may choose to buy, or to build, or to lease, or opt to live somewhere free of charge with or without consent. Some may work from home, and require more space; others need more ventilation, light or outdoor space to accommodate pets or children or to take account of allergies. This diversity creates a holistic community where the footprint of any one developer or designer does not dominate the overall landscape; rather, the urban landscape becomes dominated by the common cultural norms and varied solutions of individual families. The community emerges and grows over time and eventually it could be considered that these housing projects have become 'invisible' within the urban landscape, with it no longer being obvious that any one project was built separately from the rest of the community's housing. At the same time, however, the identity and needs of the individual households are more visible.

By demonstrating flexibility, a good shelter programme will achieve the same diversity as found in the metropolitan environment and, over time, it should be impossible to see that specific shelter programming has taken place.

Shelter projects that are highly visible tend to stamp a single repetitive pattern upon the community. No matter how well designed, they impose the view and vision of one designer or design. By promoting a universal design, such programmes universally fail to address the diverse needs of individual households and become, by default, universally inappropriate. Agencies often chose this high visibility for perceived ease and speed of construction, or because they falsely perceive equity to mean identical, rather than equitably addressing differing needs. While traditionally many programme managers and donors may judge the success of a programme by its visibility, we suggest that the reverse may be a better measure of success. If a shelter programme is visible, instead of adapting the shelter programme to meet the community's needs the affected community has been forced to adapt themselves to fit the shelter programme. The true visibility of a successful shelter programme should lie in the creation of healthier, safer, more rapidly recovered diverse communities, rather than in 'instagrammable' imagery of identical shelters all in a row.

Virality

In the context of large-scale disasters, a shelter project run by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) will have a very small impact relative to the scale of the disaster. The increasing scale and rate of disasters, and waning donor appetite to fund shelter, mean that NGOs are only able to provide a diminishing proportion of the affected community with shelter assistance. Thus, the majority of post-disaster shelter provision, particularly in towns and cities, is undertaken by the affected community and neighbouring communities themselves. As such, disasters can be considered a social problem rather than just a physical problem. Hazardous events, whether natural or anthropogenic,

The city of Tacloban in the Philippines, after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

only become a disaster if the community is insufficiently prepared to mitigate or overcome the hazard, or to respond to its effects. Successfully addressing the root causes of post-disaster housing damage such as inadequacy to withstand that disaster requires a social approach rather than the usual technical approach. The social approach addresses the underlying issues, such as why housing was built in a disaster-prone area, or why the quality of construction was inadequate for the risks they were likely to face. Solutions need to be culturally appropriate, affordable and environmentally sustainable and to ensure an ongoing commitment to risk reduction. Although finding such solutions may require more investment in social analysis, appropriate programmes will spread and self-propagate, while culturally inappropriate, unaffordable, unsustainable or unrealistic solutions will only occur while funding remains.

To be more effective in this landscape of diminishing aid, agencies should focus on influencing and improving the shelter outcome for all rather than provide perfect shelters for a few. Rather than focusing on engineering perfect high-level housing interventions for a limited number of families, agencies need to focus on smaller, less intrusive interventions that better address the underlying social problems that brought about the disaster. Simple solutions that resonate

and are easily replicated can empower communities to help themselves, ensuring a better overall humanitarian outcome for more of the affected population, and leading to a greater reduction in future risk. One measure of success in this landscape of diminishing aid, therefore, could be the 'virality' of the assistance provided – that is, its tendency to be reproduced. Examining to what extent the core ideas of the programme 'went viral' may provide a better measure of success than how well a particular programme housed a particular family. One might assess, for example, whether the retrofitting of a house was done in a way that was so culturally and environmentally appropriate, affordable, and convincing in its safety improvement that the neighbours copied it, thus giving the programme far greater reach.

Flexible shelter strategies in Palu and Tacloban

In recent years, flexibility has been written into the Recovery Shelter Guidelines for several projects across urban areas of Southeast Asia, including Tacloban in the Philippines and Palu on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. In the shelter standards documents for both responses, agencies were provided with diverse options for addressing shelter needs. The Recovery Shelter Guidelines for the Philippines response to Typhoon Haiyan promotes a rights-based

approach, specifying the right of households to "access housing options that best suit their needs and desires".[2] Both documents also provide guidance on minimum performance standards as well as applicability of different options to zones vulnerable to different types of hazard. One of the aims of this approach was to encourage agencies to offer a variety of solutions to address differing needs. These included: temporary shelter, sharing of accommodation, rental support, bunkhouses, repairs and retrofit, core houses (designed to be used as permanent housing in the future), and permanent housing guidelines. The guidelines also included ways of assisting decision making about shelter solutions which, crucially, took account of this need for flexibility from the start.

Unfortunately, in reality most agencies tended to revert to business as usual in these two responses, choosing the option they were most comfortable with, which was usually the pre-designed type referred to as a T-shelter. A notable exception to this case was Catholic Relief Services (CRS). In Tacloban, CRS successfully developed a 'shopping list' of shelter typologies that fitted the standards provided and, in the more recent Palu response, ensured flexibility by providing cash grants and technical assistance to address community shelter needs through a range of diverse options. However, the lack of uptake in flexibility elsewhere indicates that, beyond the development of improved guidance, there is a need for a more significant shift in mindset among the sector.

Overcoming constraints

The flexibility of shelter assistance programmes is often constrained by the ambition to engineer perfect shelter solutions and by misconceptions of equity, which can limit the number of households assisted. A shift to a minimal intervention paradigm focusing on less visible and more viral, minimalist inputs has the potential to assist more people and have longer-lasting impact. Simple interventions can make a huge difference – such as sending in teams to assess what fell down and why, clearly photographing and documenting the

difference between the two and then, using this information, advising communities on what they can do themselves. Following Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh, a small group of engineers and architects visited a village and looked at which buildings remained standing and which did not. They were unable to assist the community directly but during the visit their translator informed the community of what findings emerged from the building assessments. Six months later, another visit to the same village found that the community had been completely rebuilt and all of the problems previously discussed had been addressed. The village had achieved this without agency assistance by pooling money and resources and following the advice of the team who had visited. Meanwhile, however, there were shelter programmes nearby that had barely started.

Invisibility can also be constrained by global agendas and by the alignment of shelter programmes with donor requirements, pre-set architectural/engineering notions of what is correct, mandates of implementing organisations, and responders' other priorities. Although global reviews continue to talk about self-recovery and owner-driven approaches, the sector continues to focus on designing highly visible products rather than low-visibility processes. The way the system is currently set up means that shelter projects are often initially designed within certain boundaries established by each agency's disaster management team. Within this operating space are a shelter manager and a team of architects and engineers, who then define a further set of boundaries based on their preconceived notions of the physical problem they are facing. Commonly, it is only after all these boundaries have been established that the community is asked to participate. Instead, we suggest that these boxed-in spaces for operating should be removed, and that more detailed sociological and anthropological analysis of the underlying problems that have led to housing failure should be undertaken. Direct assistance, where provided, should be highly flexible, leveraging each household's capacities and addressing their individual needs.

Assistance budgets should be discussed directly with affected families, allowing them to define what they want or need in the context of shelter. Within urban settings this is even more important, particularly where building new shelters may not even be possible. Whether it be a house repair, house rental, living with family or a temporary shelter in the backyard, each household should determine what they want to do.

At the core of this proposition is rethinking the job description of the shelter project manager. Rather than an architect or engineer being responsible for designing a perfect physical shelter, in their place should be a team of individuals with diverse backgrounds who are focused on ensuring that the largest number of affected people can live in safety, comfort and dignity with the ability to make an individual journey to self-recovery and safer permanent housing.

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Improving information and communication to boost inclusion and self-reliance for urban refugees

Laura Buffoni and Gail Hopkins

Evidence from a refugee community-led assessment in Nairobi shows that communication and information flows must be improved to build sustainable resilience and self-reliance among urban refugees.

Access to basic services and to livelihoods, and the inclusion of refugees in the social and economic fabric of receiving countries, are key to enabling refugees to be productive, resilient members of society. In large refugee-hosting cities like Nairobi there may be innovative approaches for supporting the most marginalised urban displaced people, including for example through technical 'hubs', government investment in mobile money technology and online working. Such measures are intended to address urban poverty and youth unemployment more broadly and are open, in theory, to displaced people but in practice refugees' inclusion in urban contexts can remain limited to the informal sector. The supposition that access to services and resources is easy because everything is 'local', and that job opportunities abound in the city, is often incorrect. Facilitating refugees' access to the formal labour market presents challenges in a country such as Kenya with general high unemployment and economic challenges relating to poverty, inequality, weak infrastructure and access to services and social protection. Furthermore, refugees' access to services is particularly problematic in the urban area where public services are stretched, and because considerable investments in basic services have been focused on areas in and around camps, where the majority of refugees in Kenya live.

Urban contexts therefore present challenges that are different from those found in rural or camp contexts – and far greater attention needs to be paid to how to bridge the gap between urban refugees' expectations and reality. Effective two-way communication between urban refugees and those who support them can improve participation, give refugees agency and improve their well-being, and help them to cope with the challenges of the urban

environment. The more that is known about refugee needs, the more effective and targeted practical steps towards inclusion can be.

A major obstacle to urban refugees' self-reliance is that information and refugees do not easily 'find' each other. Refugees can become isolated and 'lost' in the urban environment, partly because they relocate frequently, making contact difficult to maintain, and partly because they join impoverished, forgotten local communities at the city's margins. This causes barriers to inclusion and creates a 'hard-to-reach' population. A community-led assessment of information and communication needs piloted by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in Eastleigh, Nairobi between January and April 2019 and co-designed with a small group of urban refugees makes clear that multiple challenges still need to be overcome to assist refugees in understanding the service environment available to them. Work also remains to be done to assist aid organisations to fill key gaps in communication and information provision.

The Eastleigh assessment
Globally, little evidence exists on the specific impact of urban refugees on the environment to which they have moved and of which they try to become a part, or on refugees' own perceptions of inclusion and social cohesion. The assessment carried out in Eastleigh, a high-density suburb in which refugees of many nationalities join Somali migrants and Kenyan Somalis, aimed to better understand challenges that had already been identified around a lack of feedback mechanisms and the inadequacy of information campaigns among refugee communities. Refugee respondents highlighted a number of points which indicate that communication is key to addressing inclusion and social cohesion:

- Respondents interviewed felt that they had few or no mechanisms through which to provide feedback to UNHCR and partners. They wanted information to flow in both directions, replicating the two-way dialogue that is more readily and routinely sustained in camps.

- Respondents indicated that they lacked information on available local services, including how to access food, medical care, training, education and employment, and where to obtain help after an attack or harassment. The reasons for this include literacy challenges, and posters being in the wrong languages or not displayed in places that they frequent.

- Respondents did not properly understand the role of the Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS), with many unaware that RAS, not UNHCR, now handles refugee assistance. Improved sensitisation using different communication channels could usefully convey how services are divided between the two and thereby increase use of the RAS office, although additional challenges linked to travel costs and uncertainty about security and gaining access would also need to be addressed.

- Respondents asked for local, centralised information points giving details of which providers offer which services, and where they do so. In the absence of other reliable information providers, community leaders are the most trusted source of information.

- NGOs train community counsellors from the local community who undertake house visits and reach the most vulnerable urban refugees because, sharing a language, they are more readily accepted by the refugees. Refugees interviewed, however, suggested case management for protection and assistance could be better facilitated by formalising refugee case workers through paid employment and certification. This counselling system could facilitate information and feedback flows between communities, RAS, NGOs and UNHCR.

- Refugees' communication preferences were for face-to-face meetings, telephone (by calling or WhatsApp) or SMS, in their languages. However, the assessment also showed the potential for exploitation in face-to-face communication, where conmen and other middle men demand payment for information, services and feedback on case files. This was frequently cited as the

only means by which vulnerable refugees could access the information they needed.

- Refugees are not often able or permitted to use social centres or local resources designed for Kenyans. Refugees felt excluded and saw this as a barrier to self-reliance.

- Specific needs highlighted by the respondents included medical services, access to UNHCR, resettlement and employment.

The assessment was valuable in identifying a local information ecosystem that gives agency to refugees and refugee community leaders. Nonetheless, refugees' role could be even greater. Opportunities exist for changes that would have a positive impact on agency and self-reliance:

- Improving access to existing social centres would reduce the need for refugee-specific centres and provide opportunities to build bridges, improve resilience through strengthening community relations, and support social cohesion.

- The trusted refugee leader network could be further developed, as it is clear that refugee engagement is facilitated by a strong framework of local information ecosystems. Refugee leader networks could be further formalised by setting up structured communication mechanisms such as regular office hours, reliable phone/internet connectivity, and training on how to make referrals (as part of the professionalisation of the refugee case-workers), so that leaders are not burdened

by community feedback and have a comprehensive understanding of where they can direct complaints and concerns. This would improve transparency, accountability and 'buy-in'.

- Information gaps could be addressed through innovative communication methods such as: soliciting community feedback on channel effectiveness; monitoring how information is being cascaded; working with mobile network operators and local media; and by promoting inclusion through radio groups, musicians and social events.

Effective communication is key to achieving the social inclusion of refugees – a critical aspiration of the Global Compact on Refugees. Discerning the difference between unevidenced impressions of what refugees need and what refugees themselves say they need is complex but necessary, especially in the urban context. Better information flow can help refugees engage in the civic life of their community, create cohesion and bring them a wider support network in order to underpin resilience and support self-reliance.

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Pakistan's urban refugees: steps towards self-reliance

Muhammad Abbas Khan

Although Afghan refugees in Pakistan enjoy considerable freedom of movement and access to livelihoods, the absence of a national legal framework for refugee management creates challenges for urban refugees and local authorities alike.

Pakistan's northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa hosts more than 50% of the country's 2.7 million Afghan refugees, 32% of whom currently reside inside refugee camps. The remaining 68% live outside the camps, mostly in and around major urban centres, primarily because of the need to access livelihood activities.[1]

Economic access and contribution

Almost all urban refugees in Pakistan are involved in some sort of livelihood activity. The majority are engaged in the transport business but cannot obtain driving licences,

Afghan refugee woman engaged in carpet weaving.

which leaves them vulnerable to extortion by city transport authorities. Gemstones trading is primarily run by Afghan traders based in the city of Peshawar, and constitutes a considerable part of Pakistan's export activity, generating US$27.5 million over the last five years. Similarly, Afghan refugees also run more than 70% of the renowned carpet weaving industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This industry has also contributed significantly to Pakistan's economy and has suffered greatly as a result of the refugee repatriation that has taken place over a period of time, which has reduced carpet production by 5%.

Despite this contribution to the urban economy, it was only recently that the Government of Pakistan allowed Afghan refugees with a valid Proof of Registration (PoR) card[2] to open a commercial bank account. Previously, Afghans used Pakistani citizens as proxies to register their businesses and conduct financial transactions. Some even used illegal banking channels for money transfers and some used local goldsmiths as banks where they would deposit their earnings. This new authorisation is a milestone in many ways: not only will it boost Afghan businesses but also, more importantly, it will put an end to their vulnerability to potential exploitation by those acting as proxies.

Urban refugees in Pakistan are wrongly perceived as criminals and as a burden on the economy. Such claims are unsubstantiated: from 2014 to September 2016, of the more than 10,000 cases that appeared in court in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, just 134 involved Afghan refugees.[3] A German-funded study[4] is currently underway to determine how much Pakistan has spent on its protracted hospitality towards Afghan refugees, which will also highlight the contributions refugees have made to Pakistan's economy.

Education challenges

Since 90% of Afghan refugee households moved to Pakistan between 1979 and 1985, the majority of the registered refugee children and youth are second- or third-generation Afghans and have been born in Pakistan. Today, nearly half the urban refugees in Pakistan are children, and early childhood development, basic education and skill

development are therefore top priorities. However, with a staggering 22 million Pakistani children out of school, it is a challenge for Pakistan to accommodate refugees.[5]

The situation is even worse in the case of higher education. While the Government of Pakistan is generously offering thousands of scholarships to Afghan nationals who are living in Afghanistan, it offers just 14 scholarships to Afghan refugees living

Jewellery produced by an Afghan refugee who established a successful mineral and gem business from his home in Peshawar.

in Pakistan. Afghan refugee applicants can otherwise only be admitted if they surrender their PoR card and replace it with an Afghan passport. The intention is to encourage Afghan refugees to give up their POR card and obtain an Afghan passport – but surrendering the refugee card means losing other rights, and as a result students abandon their dreams of higher education.

The higher education scholarship programme DAFI, run by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), plays an important role in addressing this challenge, granting fully-funded university scholarships to refugee undergraduates. With the support of different donors and in partnership with Pakistan's National Vocational and Technical Education Commission, UNHCR is also extending an existing programme of technical training in various skills to thousands of young refugees across the country. Such steps are crucial for helping refugees to become self-reliant and contribute to the economy although, given the sheer numbers of young refugees, much more is needed.

Addressing tensions

Urban refugees in Pakistan face a number of challenges, including friction between host and refugee communities (because of competition over limited resources) and 'hosting fatigue', a common phenomenon in cases of protracted displacement. Such

a situation is undesirable for both the refugees and the host communities.

In order to tackle the tensions that exist around urban refugee hosting, the Government of Pakistan, with UNHCR, has initiated a unique development programme – the Refugee-Affected and Hosting Areas programme (RAHA). RAHA was launched in 2009 to undertake interventions in refugee-hosting communities across different sectors such as health, education, skills development, water and sanitation, environment and social protection. $220 million has so far been spent, benefiting more than 12 million people, of whom 85% are Pakistani citizens and 15% are Afghan refugees.[6] It is little wonder that the RAHA programme has created a lot of good will for the refugees living in urban areas.

The Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, the agency responsible for refugee affairs in Pakistan, has, again with UNHCR, recently developed a Refugee Management Portal to help practitioners, donors and policymakers make evidence-based decisions. It will also provide a digital platform for all urban refugees, connecting them with different service providers, including those offering job placements and internships. Moreover, a Refugee Youth Policy is currently being devised jointly by the Commissionerate and UNHCR which will focus on the social, economic and political empowerment of refugee youth living in urban centres.

Afghans are hardworking and enterprising, making excellent entrepreneurs; indeed, there are many success stories among Afghan businessmen. Given the right support, most Afghans would be able to contribute positively during their stay in Pakistan. The recent decision by the Government of Pakistan to allow Afghan refugees to open bank accounts is a positive step towards their financial inclusion and protection, but more such steps are needed to ensure urban refugees have access to some of the very basic services like health, education, trade and business. The current refugee management framework needs to be reviewed, and Pakistan should consider adopting a national refugee law, which would enable the different authorities to more effectively manage urban refugees. While granting citizenship to Afghan refugees may still be a long way off, efforts should be made to enable refugees to live comfortable, dignified lives.

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Contested public authority in marginal urban areas: challenges for humanitarians

Dolf J H te Lintelo, Hart Ford, Tim Liptrot, Wissam Mansour and Aline Rahbany

In urban contexts where multiple governance actors compete for authority, a clearer approach is needed on whether and how to engage these various actors in order to reach the most vulnerable host and refugee populations.

When Syrians fleeing civil war began to seek refuge in Jordan and Lebanon in 2011, initial relief efforts by the international humanitarian community focused on supporting national governments. However, in recognition of the vital role that municipalities play in providing support and services, over the last five years there has been a strong shift in the international community towards supporting them, as part of a broader localisation agenda.

The search for low-cost multi-occupancy housing has driven large numbers of Syrians into informal urban settlements where the most vulnerable host communities, economic migrants and refugee populations live. Such neighbourhoods, which include official Palestinian camps and unofficial 'gatherings', have urbanised yet have typically been subject to historic neglect: municipal authorities have not operated here, or have had only limited presence. Globally, analyses show that in the absence of active municipal governance – and particularly in marginal conflict-affected or post-conflict urban settings – other mediators emerge in the poorest urban areas. These actors include traditional leaders, tribal networks, influential individuals, criminal gangs, labour brokers, militias, faith-based groups and local committees.

Our research,[1] which included consultations with the Global Alliance for Urban Crises and with humanitarian and development actors in Lebanon and Jordan, suggests that the localisation agenda currently fails to take proper account of such influential local governance actors. Ignoring their critical role in the de facto governance of the most marginalised urban areas impedes humanitarians' ability

to broker support for highly vulnerable populations living in these areas.

Shifting focus onto municipalities

Donors are increasingly directing support towards urban municipalities and mayors in order to strengthen local capacity. In Jordan, the 2015 Decentralisation Act has given municipal authorities new mandates and powers. This has led to competition for authority between national Members of Parliament and municipal actors and provided new ways for tribal networks to exert influence over State workings. Simultaneously, as aid resources shift towards supporting municipalities, local community-based organisations now face much tougher competition for funding and survival.

In Lebanon, the expanded mandates of municipal authorities have not been matched by adequate financial and administrative capacity, and decisions and actors at governorate or central levels can thwart municipalities' abilities to act; this can create space for non-State actors to step in.

Typically, non-citizens, including migrants, stateless people and refugees, are not politically represented in municipalities. Furthermore, urban municipalities neither politically represent nor are accountable to large proportions of Lebanese residents, who are registered to vote in their native villages. This disenfranchisement endures, given long terms in office (six years) and the fact that parties' control over municipal councils typically lasts over multiple terms. Similarly, in Jordan, some tribes (such as in the city of Ma'an) pre-select candidates for municipal elections from among their members, in turn preventing non-members from standing for office. This is detrimental to wider representation and accountability.

Whereas the Jordanian State has been supporting the upgrading of informal urban settlements for many years, many Lebanese municipalities refrain from servicing informal areas for fear of legitimising their existence and of violating the law that forbids municipalities from providing services to such neighbourhoods. Yet in some areas governing actors have found ways to improve the condition of informal settlements. After Israeli bombardments in 2006, the Hezbollah resistance movement and political party led a successful 'build back better' campaign in Ghobeiry municipality in Beirut. Elsewhere, in Sour, one of Lebanon's larger cities, the municipality has institutionalised practices that enable Lebanese residents – but not stateless Palestinian inhabitants – to circumvent the usual requirement for building licenses to improve housing infrastructure in informal areas. But as non-State actors step into the vacuum left by municipalities' lack of engagement in marginalised areas in Lebanon, it is unclear whether and through what mechanisms they can be held accountable.

Programming in low-income urban settings in Jordan and Lebanon

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in theory provide for international actors to work with all actors at the city or neighbourhood level, including State and non-State, formal and informal actors. However, humanitarian interventions can compromise the principles of neutrality and impartiality if/when they inadvertently or intentionally support or deny the legitimacy of local actors who seek to exercise authority.

Municipalities often insist that humanitarian actors seek permission to access hard-to-reach communities. Interventions, therefore, can be viewed as being approved by – or even extending – the municipality's authority. Municipal endorsement, however, is not always enough to enable humanitarian and development programming. In environments where access to health, education, water and other services is not a question of rights but often bestowed by patronage, non-State authorities also seek to broker aid for vulnerable populations to legitimate their claim to authority. In Lebanon, non-State actors (as well as central government authorities) are known to stop interventions – despite prior municipal endorsement – for security and other reasons. Populations may distrust absent municipal authorities, while non-

State actors that provide important security, welfare and conflict resolution services may be seen as having significant legitimacy.

Donors also play a significant role in shaping the ability to operate in areas controlled by urban non-State actors. They may, for example, deem tribal authorities to be insufficiently inclusive of women, refugees and other less-represented groups. Interventions often focus on separating municipal governance from tribal influence. Donors provide incentives and assistance to municipal actors to help them develop sources of legitimacy that are not linked to or depend on tribal identity, including their performance and how they conduct consultations and elections. They also support new, non-tribal organisations, whose sustainability and local legitimacy remain unproven.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah holds elected State offices (from municipal council to parliament) and governs large swathes of impoverished urban areas. Yet it is considered a terrorist organisation, and proscribed, by several Western countries including the US, UK, Canada and the Netherlands. This proscription severely constrains humanitarian programming and challenges humanitarian principles. The party itself also scrutinises and permits – or not – prospective aid programmes to take place.

Implementing partners face the dilemma of navigating diverse donor restrictions on the one hand, and respecting the democratically elected office of mayors, municipal councillors, parliamentarians and ministerial offices on the other. Ignoring some political parties who govern specific urban areas, while supporting others, may make it impossible to develop municipal capacities without also unjustifiably punishing people living in these areas, who may or may not be supportive of the party in control. Aid distribution may also disrupt a fragile balance of power between political parties and thereby undermine efforts to maintain stability.

Creating wider, more principled engagement with non-State urban actors

Humanitarian actions in urban contexts inevitably encounter local struggles for power and authority, and may be used as a means of legitimising authority. With this in mind, we identify five key recommendations for designing and implementing humanitarian and development interventions in complex, low-income urban areas:

- Establish **strong context analysis** for effective programme design. This needs to be done at local area or neighbourhood level and include stakeholder mapping, analysis and simultaneous equal engagement with State and non-State actors to build productive relationships ahead of programmatic interventions. Critically, analysis should not overstate the division between formal and informal actors.

- Communicate with communities to **build meaningful consensus** on programme objectives before a programme starts. This is time-consuming and resource-intensive yet critical. The order in which stakeholders are engaged is also important and can close doors later if one makes a misstep early on.

- Foster greater **dialogue between implementing partners and donors**. This is necessary in order to understand how to sensitively deal with multiple competing authorities, and to learn from experience. Donors could offer more practical guidance on how to operate with non-State public authorities that are deemed to exclude certain groups, and provide greater clarity on 'red lines' in the case of proscription policies. Moreover, aid agencies should be encouraged to give feedback to donors about operational realities in trying to reach complex, high-need areas.

- Place greater emphasis on the **role of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator**. Doing so could assist with negotiating access with local public authorities, in line with the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan or other response frameworks. This should aim to ensure that 'hard-to-reach areas' are still receiving a wide array of support.

- Support **primary data collection**. There is an acute need to fill gaps in existing

literature by conducting substantial primary data collection. This would help to generate deeper knowledge of the impact of humanitarian and development interventions on the legitimacy of State and non-State actors governing low-income informal urban settings.

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Places of refuge and risk: lessons from San Pedro Sula

Yolanda Zapata

The outcome of interventions in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, provides lessons for working in high-risk urban neighbourhoods and communities.

The actions of gangs and organised crime linked to international drug trafficking, in addtion to the harsh response of State security forces, have driven the surge in violence in Honduras and San Pedro Sula's identification a few years ago as the most violent city in the world (because of its high rate of homicides). Just over half of the population of Honduras is concentrated in urban areas, including San Pedro Sula whose metropolitan area has a population of approximately 2.5 million people. In 2015, it was estimated that gang members were present in more than 50 neighbourhoods in San Pedro Sula, mainly those that are poorest and most marginalised.[1] Today, in addition to the two main gangs (the Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18), the influence of other local gangs and organised criminal groups is also evident. For example, in Rivera Hernández, a marginalised area of the city with an estimated population of 120,000, invisible borders divide the territory into streets and neighbourhoods that are controlled by more than six groups.

Between 2004 and 2014, the metropolitan area of San Pedro Sula hosted more than 40% of the country's internally displaced people (IDPs), with the city itself hosting 21.5%.[2] Data reveal the intra-urban nature of forced displacement, showing that 81% of San Pedro Sula's IDPs had been displaced from elsewhere in the city. Although displacement affects many communities and neighbourhoods, most places to which people are displaced are those where gangs exercise social and territorial control and/ or have some level of influence. Although in this context displacement is not as visible because individuals or families may be forced to take precautionary measures and abandon their homes in silence, and few look to the authorities for protection, evidence shows that these neighbourhoods are generally in the most marginalised or lower-middle class areas of the city and are characterised by limited access to basic rights and public services, and by high levels of violence, including homicide.[3]

The city offers a certain anonymity and the possibility to maintain family and personal networks and access services and employment. Seeking protection in

neighbourhoods affected by many types of violence (including restrictions on mobility, extortion, forced involvement of children and youth in criminal organisations, homicides and sexual violence) may seem contradictory but it is the reality faced by families and individuals here and in other cities. These communities are at the same time places of refuge and places of risk. In them, collective action, social cohesion and community organisation are fractured by violence, mistrust and widespread fear. Although certain groups (such as business owners, transport workers, teachers, women, children and young people, and people from the LGBTI community) face higher risks,[4] most residents in these neighbourhoods risk experiencing some degree of violence and displacement.

UNHCR/Daniel Dreifuss

This young Honduran woman witnessed the homicide of one of her colleagues. As a result of the event, she was shot four times and lost her leg.

UNHCR's work in San Pedro Sula
The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) opened an office in this city at the end of 2016. Since then, as part of work to support Honduras in the commitments it has made through the MIRPS process (the regional application of the Global Compact on Refugees), UNHCR has been providing technical assistance to municipal authorities and communities for the development of displacement prevention and protection mechanisms. This assistance includes working with municipal authorities to design methodologies and strategies that promote rapprochement and dialogue with high-risk communities and neighbourhoods. This has included jointly developing protocols

and mechanisms for carrying out risk analysis and ensuring safe access; designing and using participatory methodologies for consultation processes; and implementing community programmes and initiatives that are grounded in protection principles. The field office has also supported the municipal authorities in the design of a mechanism to identify, assist and refer IDPs and/ or those at risk of displacement within the framework of existing municipal programmes and services. A number of lessons have been learned from these activities:

Time is a necessary investment: It takes time to study the context of a community, develop relationships of trust and understanding, identify risks and develop protection plans. In contexts of urban violence, the time required can be doubled or even tripled by the security risks associated with the presence of organised criminal groups, the invisible nature of displacement and the normalisation of violence. Having knowledge of the context makes it possible to understand both how the forms of violence that can cause displacement intersect, and the visible and invisible impacts they have on neighbourhood and community life.

Access is best achieved through investments that benefit the entire community: Strategies of access and the preservation of humanitarian space in these neighbourhoods are context-dependent. However, actions aimed at strengthening the provision of basic

services for all members of the neighbourhood or area, and that privilege community development, facilitate access to these spaces because they are usually perceived as interventions that do not challenge the control of gangs. These actions include the improvement of or provision of increased access to: health and education, community infrastructure, recreation and sports, and vocational and technical training. For example, an intervention jointly implemented by UNHCR and the municipal authorities to promote the inclusion and protection of youth in a high-risk area through cultural and artistic workshops has both strengthened access to this area and improved the authorities' understanding of the challenges and risks faced by the young people.

Alliances with neutral actors need strengthening: Mapping and working with community actors who are not perceived as actively contesting the criminal structures and gangs – such as religious leaders, leaders of community development structures and social programme volunteers – is key to establishing and preserving access. In some communities these privileged actors enter into dialogue with members of gangs and reach agreements to facilitate access and the implementation of programmes that benefit the entire community. (However, routine risk analysis is essential to promptly identify any changes in the dynamics of violence and social and territorial control in these areas.)

Local networks and existing community capacities must be supported: Because of limited institutional presence, insufficient equipment and services (because of rapid growth and lack of planning), and distrust and difficulties around safe access, certain services in these neighbourhoods tend to be provided by community structures and civil society organisations. It is important to support these services – which include church medical clinics, support programmes for educational and youth community centres, nurseries and women's networks – and offer training to make them available to displaced persons or those at risk of

displacement. This support can strengthen the provision of basic services and contribute gradually to the protection environment by consolidating community networks through which people in high-risk situations or who have particular vulnerabilities can be identified and protected.

Links with municipal authorities around social development should be strengthened: Ensuring community interventions are integrated into local institutional processes and structures can help ensure greater sustainability. UNHCR and its implementing partner began working with communities to design community protection plans. As these progressed, the benefits of linking some of the specific actions and strategies (such as livelihoods promotion, youth training, childcare spaces, community awareness campaigns, community leadership and women's empowerment) with work being carried out by the municipal authorities became clear. Aligning the activities both promoted institutional presence and community accompaniment in these high-risk areas and emphasised the responsibility of municipal authorities for tackling key problems. Ultimately, some of these initiatives were formally integrated into the municipality's annual operational plan.

Dialogue between the humanitarian and development worlds is indispensable: Where the displaced and host communities share both protection risks and limited access to services, it is critical to use area-based approaches that allow the design of responses that consider the specific spatial context, the needs of the population, and coordination with other local actors, including private sector actors. A balance needs to be found between: a) supporting local actors involved in the provision of services, b) implementing responses that are focused on protecting the most vulnerable, and c) addressing structural problems associated with the challenges of urbanisation – including inequality and socioeconomic inclusion, and stigmatisation or discrimination on grounds of place of origin, age or gender.

In 2018, San Pedro Sula launched an ambitious 25-year Municipal Development Master Plan. By improving urban planning, infrastructure, public transportation and mobility systems, use of technology and so on, the ultimate goal is for San Pedro Sula to become a 'smart city'. This planned development offers an opportunity for humanitarian actors to work towards and advocate for greater inclusion of typically excluded geographical areas and sectors of the population. Investing in social, spatial and economic inclusion will help develop the city and strengthen the community

protection environment in these areas – and may well also help to prevent displacement.

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A call to action: mobilising local resources in Ethiopia for urban IDPs

Evan Easton-Calabria, Delina Abadi and Gezahegn Gebremedhin

Several lessons can be drawn from the successful multi-level response – by both local government and the local community – to the arrival of large numbers of IDPs in Adama, Ethiopia.

In 2018, about 1,340 registered households as well as many unregistered internally displaced persons (IDPs) fled ethnic conflict in the Somali region of Ethiopia to seek safety in Adama, the capital of the Oromia region, approximately 100km southeast of Addis Ababa. The IDPs, who were mainly ethnic Oromo, arrived in Adama over the course of several months. The sudden and huge influx of IDPs put immense pressure on the city's capacity to provide the necessary support.

While most of the focus on internal displacement in Ethiopia remains on the Somali region (which hosts the majority of the country's approximately three million IDPs), significant lessons can be learned from Adama's response. In the absence of large-scale international assistance, a little-known campaign to address the needs of IDPs led to a multi-level response from federal, regional and – in particular – local urban actors. Ultimately, under the auspices of the city administration, all 28 sectoral government bureaus, hundreds of private sector actors, 18 *kebeles* (neighbourhood districts), 243 *Idirs* (community-based associations) and

many local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals participated in supporting and settling the IDPs. This may be a unique instance of an entirely Ethiopian, collective and largely local effort to operate successfully at this scale and within such a short period of time.

A call to action

Many IDPs initially settled in *kebele* compounds and a privately-owned school compound, as they had nowhere else to go. They were first aided by local passers-by who gave them in-kind support such as food, blankets, mattresses and clothes, as well as cash. Although the *kebele* officials allowed them to stay in the compounds, the IDPs lacked shelter and had limited access to toilets and kitchens.

Quickly, the city administration and regional government called society to action through social media and TV outlets, emphasising the need to build housing and advertising an emergency fund that had been established. Different strategies for spreading the call for support, such

as through providing a daily report about the IDPs and publicising private investors' support, were used. Media footage was also shared, ranging from showing how people were living in *kebeles* to showing IDPs and local community members celebrating Muslim holidays together. One Ethiopian journalist described how the regional TV station OBN was "the voice of these people".

Local private sector response

The local private sector, from hotels to manufacturing companies, played a significant role in the response and, in particular, contributed significantly to the construction of houses for each of the registered IDP households. Most private sector actors responded to the call for assistance that had been issued through the media, although some were personally approached by the Mayor of Adama. According to interview respondents from different government sectoral bureaus and IDP representatives,[1] these private sector actors needed little convincing to help as they themselves had witnessed the displacement crisis first-hand. These private companies donated cash, basic necessities such as food and blankets, and steel roofs, cement, iron bars and sand for the construction of houses. Some even sponsored the building of multiple houses.

One private car assembly firm, for example, built 64 houses worth about 3.5 million birr (about US$109,000), and another built 100 houses. Some of these companies complained that their donation was not tax deductible and wanted more transparency from the government about the money collected for the support of IDPs; however, it seems that they benefited from the resulting media coverage, and thus used their donations as a marketing strategy. Ultimately, resulting competition for free media coverage in exchange for donations played a huge role in successfully mobilising funds.

Most private companies did not offer employment opportunities to the IDPs; those we interviewed cited skills and cultural gaps as reasons for not doing so. In one case, a manufacturing company hired 125 IDPs; however, their employment lasted only one month of their training period because the IDPs mounted illegal strike action in the manufacturing compound twice within a week, leading to considerable financial loss for the company.

Local NGO response

NGOs offered IDPs basic necessities and especially targeted women, mothers and children. Donations included mattresses, nappies, clothing, baby milk and kitchen supplies. Some of these items were purchased based on a list provided by the local government while others were donated as needed to individuals.

Over six months, one local NGO helped 200 households and a further 100 women through a contribution worth about 251,000 birr (about $7,800). A health-focused NGO provided free health care to IDPs for three to four months during the crisis period, and another took in 12 abandoned children, of whom eight are currently in the adoption process and four in foster care. However, some NGOs we interviewed mentioned the lack of registration and identity documents of some of the IDPs as a challenge, as they did not know who had received access to free health care and if the abandoned children had actually been displaced. As the number of those in need rose, many NGOs decided to help anyone claiming to be an IDP. One NGO, Noble Action, explained their rationale: "The aim of this organisation is to help people. We could not just ignore the crisis. This is what we stand for."

Community response

Local individuals played a huge role in supporting IDPs when they first arrived in the city. Besides donating cash, clothing and other material support, individuals gathered in different *kebele* compounds for several days to cook hot meals for the IDPs. Some existing *Idirs* also stepped in to offer support. These informal institutions are widespread in Ethiopia and offer important social protection, but are generally only established between trusted neighbours, families or friends. One conducted a range of community organising and fundraising and collected clothing

donations from their community and schools. *Idirs* and *Equb* (informal rotating savings and credit associations) formed by IDPs themselves continue to meet regularly and support each other when there are marriages and deaths. One *Idir,* for example, holds a coffee ceremony every Sunday which has created a support system for IDP women to talk about their challenges and meet other IDPs.

Lessons and insights

Successful communication about the appeal for support came from 'cascading' a single message through federal, regional and local government. Social media was an important tool in spreading the message to different actors and communicating with potential donors, including in the Ethiopian diaspora. As well as television coverage, posts on Facebook, YouTube and Telegram groups popularised the call for support. This widespread targeting gave many of our informants a feeling of positive obligation; once a critical mass was reached, offering support became a kind of actionable norm, even for those not directly called upon. The focus on both in-kind and cash donations meant that actors could contribute in various ways, involving contributors with and without funds, both groups and individuals, and those motivated by both altruism and self-interest.

Over $1 million was raised in the span of just a few months, without international assistance. Many IDPs ultimately voluntarily returned with the help of the local government, but the multi-level response led to the construction of 2,000 houses in which 1,340 registered IDP households and about 500 IDP minors have settled. Although the call to action was promoted regionally,

it is clear that it was at the local level in Adama – through action taken by city and neighbourhood government, the private sector, community associations, local NGOs, and individuals – that the response was strongest.

The response also offers some lessons. Firstly, while quick mobilisation can be successful for addressing some long-term needs such as housing, as well as emergency needs like the immediate availability of food, it appears to be more difficult to facilitate other needs such as employment, which require ongoing relationships and the availability of certain skills. It is possible, however, that a communication approach like that used in the Adama response could be used to spread the word about particular skill sets in a displaced population to a local or regional audience. Secondly, formalising individual and business donations, particularly those above a certain amount, by making them tax-deductible may increase some actors' willingness to donate. Finally, registering all IDPs upon arrival in cities can facilitate the assistance that is offered to them by providing better knowledge of how many IDPs have returned and the demographics and needs of those who remain.

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Effective civil society engagement with governments on issues around detention

Grant Mitchell

With immigration detention expanding globally, civil society has responded with a range of advocacy strategies to address rights and protection concerns.

The surge in the use of immigration detention following the 9/11 attacks in the US has failed to dissipate, and it is increasingly the norm for States to detain people on security grounds. With detention conditions often failing to meet international human rights standards, concerns over the rights and protection of people in detention have prompted a diverse range of responses from civil society, including political protests, public campaigning and strategic litigation.

In a number of contexts, creative advocacy approaches have led to policy reform, including through engaging governments on new community-based governance models. Drawing on fieldwork in 16 countries between 2016 and 2018, this article explores the modalities and tactics employed by civil society to constructively engage with governments to prohibit, prevent or limit the use of immigration detention.[1]

Direct engagement with the State on policy alternatives raises a range of ethical, logistical and ideological dilemmas for civil society.[2] Lack of transparency in engagement processes and concern over the need to maintain independence, for example, create a reluctance among some civil society groups to engage with the State. More broadly, reputational risks – including perceptions of collusion or compromise – were noted as concerns that required continual navigation. Civil society representatives in the US, for example, raised concerns that they may inadvertently be co-opted to help the government "achieve nefarious intent as opposed to a common shared objective". This highlighted the need for continual assessment of the risks of engagement against likely impact.

Benefits of engagement

Notwithstanding the challenges involved, all participants agreed there were benefits to engagement.[3] The importance of creating a space to draw attention to issues arising and to explore new ideas was highlighted. For civil society, this included the imperative of keeping governments accountable while working to address systemic issues of concern.

Government officials listed a range of benefits to them from such engagement, including hearing about emerging issues and policy options of which the government was not aware. While motivations for engagement differed (such as responding to public criticism, tackling operational challenges and following legislative requirements), some officials had experienced improvements in services and policy responses as a result of engagement. They cited in particular the growing public pressure to avoid detaining vulnerable people and their previous lack of knowledge of community-based alternatives.

Government officials in Malaysia, Mexico and Zambia cited the need for good practice guidance (as they have a wide range of responsibilities and may lack the in-depth knowledge needed), while the Taiwanese government stated the need for NGOs to share their expertise. Lack of knowledge of the complexities of specific groups affected by immigration detention led a number of States to seek NGO guidance, including the UK on understanding the barriers and difficulties affecting people's ability to comply with removal requirements.

A number of States had created regular forums involving civil society. While some groups – such as in South Africa – viewed these meetings as tokenistic, others (including both the government and NGOs in Taiwan)

Asylum seekers in detention, 2013.

described constructive mutual engagement which assisted policy development. Meanwhile, the Swedish government acknowledged the expertise of and need for partnership with civil society in its work on asylum policy, and both the Swedish and Japanese governments developed memorandums of understanding with civil society as part of their reform efforts.

Barriers to engagement

Civil society and government identified barriers that both hinder engagement and affect the outcomes of such engagement. These included fundamentally differing positions, approaches and language used, such as the ideological and rights-based discourse used by some in civil society in contrast to the instrumentalist and symbolic rhetoric of government.

Both government and civil society indicated that their assumptions affected their engagement, including each party's perception of the other as monolithic rather than comprising diverse individuals and opinions. A general mistrust on both sides was a barrier to engagement, with some governments viewing civil society as presenting a potential risk of divulging sensitive information. As noted by a US NGO, "The government needs to feel a certain level of either comfort or pressure in order to sit down at the table with civil society because

they are often very nervous about sharing information with non-government identities."

Civil society noted the lack of political will to engage as being a persistent obstacle, with some States refusing to engage or undertaking only 'selective' engagement with a limited number of known civil society actors. Some considered engagement to have been perfunctory, with governments dismissing their advice without consideration or explanation. More broadly, civil society cited the difficulty of having rational discussions on policy issues given the defensive position adopted by some governments.

Governments in turn commented that some advocates used obstructive, adversarial approaches which were counterproductive. Officials noted unrealistic expectations of engagement, with 'shopping lists' of concerns tabled with no solutions suggested, and individual cases raised rather than systemic issues addressed. Some officials criticised civil society for refusing to explore incremental change and for their lack of sophistication in developing engagement strategies that distinguished between targeting legislative reform through the judiciary and parliament, and improving implementation within current legislation and policy.

Models of effective engagement

Despite these disparities, 80% of respondents stated that engagement had been either

'effective' or 'very effective' in contributing to policy change. These outcomes included legislative amendments, policy reform and the introduction of new programmatic models. This included legislative reform to limit the use of immigration detention in Malta, Taiwan and Turkey, the prohibition of the detention of minors in Ecuador, and the exploration and implementation of alternatives to immigration detention in Thailand, Zambia, Mexico and the UK. As a result, creative, effective engagement models were identified across all regions, a summary of which is below.

In developing engagement strategies, civil society indicated three detention-related problems to address:

- **The political problem:** navigating the political dynamics at play, including government motivations in detaining people and in engaging with civil society, and mapping levels of authority related to the power to detain, release or undertake reform.

- **The public problem:** assessing public discourse and sentiment related to the use of detention, and developing coordinated advocacy strategies with key civil society actors. Collaborative, two-track approaches were effective in certain contexts, with some groups focused on raising public awareness and increasing political pressure, and others directly engaging the State on solutions.

- **The technical problem:** considering a range of policy options to present to the State and determining which proposals are applicable within current law and policy, and which require legislative change and differing strategies.

Engagement strategies were further strengthened by using a range of tactics. Developing civil society's expertise in policy areas proved effective in increasing their access to decision-makers and in strengthening the impact of engagement on policy development. Indeed, all government participants indicated that they solicited input from civil society representatives deemed to be experts in the relevant areas of concern.

Meanwhile, all civil society interviewees had usefully focused on the effectiveness of community-based alternatives in terms of cost saving, compliance and upholding rights when engaging with government.

Highlighting the benefits of engagement and establishing shared goals and working relationships were core components of effective engagement. This was noted in the development of regular forums with clear terms of reference, such as the inter-agency working group on child detention in Malaysia. An NGO working in Asia stressed, "You've got to establish a relationship first … before you can move to harder or more complex issues or even put direct proposals on the table."

Pragmatic approaches to engagement were also effective, including presenting practical implementation options and modulating human rights language to ensure understanding. Balancing critique with constructive options for improvement, such as sharing good practices and solutions, contributed to policy change as, for example, in the move by Belgium and Japan to end child detention. A further tactic utilised was to propose the testing of new community-based alternatives, such as case management.[4] A number of States agreed to pilot these initiatives, including in Israel for torture survivors and in Mexico for asylum-seeker children. A Mexican NGO stated, "The first thing is to define the problem in a way that allows you to find a solution. That helps gains legitimacy and trust from the government because they see you are trying to help them find a solution, as opposed to trying to expose them."

Lastly, communication strategies for how to frame issues played a key role. Many civil society groups highlighted the importance of using language which both reduced defensiveness and also sought to achieve a convergence of interest. An NGO in Asia stated the importance of "using the kind of language which puts them at ease and makes them feel that they can engage with you in this conversation … without their every word being judged or scrutinised or that they are going to be put on the spot."

Engagement challenges and opportunities

While engagement strategies have worked in certain contexts, not all tactics employed were effective, and some were counterproductive. Highly critical or adversarial approaches often led to a stalemate or termination of engagement. In Israel and Malaysia, for example, officials were unresponsive to international examples that they deemed incompatible with their own national context. In North Macedonia, attempts to diffuse defensiveness backfired when officials stated that reform was not necessary since its national detention practices had been compared favourably with those in neighbouring countries. It was also noted that while engagement led to a range of commitments to reform, not all were implemented.

Further, engagement appeared less effective and sustainable in periods of political change characterised by an increase in conservative policies or during periods of increasing arrivals of irregular migrants. In these contexts, engagement appeared to be more effective when connected to social movements, as in the reversal in 2019 – following national and international outcry – of the policy separating families at the US border.

Ultimately, greater focus on and support for government engagement by civil society are critical if damaging detention legislation, policy and practice are to be reformed. These initiatives should be coordinated as part of collaborative long-term advocacy strategies that target both public and political spheres, utilising creative, pragmatic and solutions-based approaches to uphold the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons and undocumented migrants. As noted by a Mexican NGO, "Government engagement is one strategy for change. Ultimately, advocacy is to change people's minds in society, not just government."

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1. Data was collected in: Australia, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Macedonia, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK, US and Zambia.

2. Civil society in this research refers to non-state actors who work to influence policy, processes and practice, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), human rights organisations, faith-based groups, think-tanks, academics, advocacy groups and welfare providers.

3. 22 participants were interviewed, including 12 civil society representatives, seven government officials and three Human Rights Commission and UN representatives. Participant observation occurred in tripartite and government meetings in 10 countries.

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The spirit of Cartagena? Applying the extended refugee definition to Venezuelans in Latin America

Cécile Blouin, Isabel Berganza and Luisa Feline Freier

Despite the widespread incorporation of the expanded 'Cartagena definition' of refugee into their national asylum frameworks, States in Latin America must do more to apply this definition – and resulting protection – to displaced Venezuelans.

Venezuela's political, economic and humanitarian crisis has led to one of the largest contemporary situations of displacement. Latin America and the Caribbean hosts around 3.7 million of the more than 4.5 million people who have left the country since 2015, and it is estimated that the number of displaced Venezuelans globally may reach over 8 million in 2020.[1]

In early 2020, Colombia officially hosted 1.63 million, Peru 864,000, Ecuador 385,000 and Chile 372,000 Venezuelans. Globally, just under 770,000 had applied for asylum.[2] The highest numbers of applications have

been received by Peru (with 395,000 pending applications in early January 2020) and Brazil (130,000 pending applications at the end of November 2019), with other countries in the region receiving far fewer requests.[3] In comparison with the scale of the Venezuelan displacement, the overall number of asylum applications is relatively low. This can be partly explained by the special residence programmes offered to Venezuelans by several countries, principally by Colombia, where 640,000 Venezuelans had regularised their presence by the end of October 2019. Other factors contributing to the relatively low numbers of asylum applications are that many Venezuelans are not familiar with the regional definition of refugee or do not want to limit their freedom of movement – a potential consequence of obtaining asylum seeker status – in order to be able to visit relatives in Venezuela. Nevertheless, asylum applications by Venezuelans have steadily increased, almost tripling globally each year since 2015. Refugee recognition rates, on the other hand, remain extremely low: between 2014 and 2018, Peru granted only 629 applications and rejected 739, leaving 227,325 requests pending at the end of 2018.[4] Over the same period Mexico accepted 4,415 of 10,845 applications, Colombia just 79 and Brazil only 22. One sign of hope, however, is that Brazil accepted over 37,000 Venezuelan applications between December 2019 and January 2020, applying the Cartagena definition.

In light of the steady increase in Venezuelan asylum applications in Latin America – which have reached significant numbers in some countries such as Peru and Brazil – but the generally low recognition rates by States in the region, it is important to analyse whether the extended definition of the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (the Cartagena Declaration) applies to the displacement of Venezuelans. The Venezuelan crisis thus represents one of the first crucial tests of the application of the expanded refugee definition in the region.

Cartagena and national regulations
The Cartagena Declaration was adopted in 1984 and States noted that: "the definition or concept of a refugee to be recommended for use in the region is one which, in addition to containing the elements of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, includes among refugees persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order".[5]

The Cartagena Declaration is a non-binding regional instrument that does not eliminate or replace the traditional definition of refugee status; rather, it complements it by extending protection to persons based on additional grounds linked to their country or region of origin. This definition starts from a collective vision that analyses the situation of the country of origin, unlike the traditional definition, which is focused on the case-by-case analysis of individual persecution.

Although the Declaration is not binding, most countries in Latin America (with the exceptions of Cuba, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela) have incorporated both the traditional definition of the 1951 Convention as well as the extended Cartagena Declaration definition (either in its entirety or with some modifications) into their asylum frameworks. Such incorporation implies that States have turned this 'soft law' definition into a binding concept. This led UNHCR to describe Latin America as the new world leader in refugee protection, even surpassing Europe as a model of human rights-based refugee legislation (albeit before the onset of the Venezuelan displacement crisis).[6]

In a May 2019 guidance note, UNHCR emphasised that the extended definition should be applied to the majority of Venezuelan asylum seekers.[7] It could be argued that interpretations of "generalised violence", "massive violation of human rights" and "disturbance to public order" vary and thus hinder the recognition of applications within the framework of Cartagena. At the same time, the UN and other organisations have explicitly denounced situations of threats to public order, general violence and violations of human rights in Venezuela.

For example, a July 2018 report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights argued that in Venezuela there have been violations of the right to health and access to justice, food, freedom of opinion and expression, as well as arbitrary detention, torture, disappearances and violation of the freedom of peaceful assembly.[8] Between 2013 and 2019, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued more than 60 communications on the political, social and humanitarian situation of Venezuela, several of which point to serious human rights violations. In the same vein, the States in the region have themselves denounced the situation in Venezuela, for example through the declarations of the Lima Group. Despite these political pronouncements, with the exception of Mexico and Brazil, none have chosen to apply the extended definition to applicants of Venezuelan nationality. In November 2019 Colombia announced that such an application was being considered, but in January 2020 implemented new migratory regularisation measures instead.

Factors at play

We suggest three reasons are at play in this contradiction between denouncement of human rights violations in Venezuela and the lack of refugee recognition according to Cartagena. First, there is widespread lack of experience and technical capacity. The main host countries of Venezuelan migrants and asylum seekers have little or no experience in receiving migrants and refugees. Although they have benevolent laws on asylum and migration, they had never had to apply them to a large number of people.

Secondly, applying the Cartagena Declaration definition of refugee would mean recognising a large number of people as refugees, especially in the Peruvian case, and giving them unlimited access to social protection including health care. The potential fiscal cost of this application in countries with largely informal labour markets and already precarious welfare systems is high.

Thirdly, and relating to the previous point, is the fear that 'pull factors' will attract many more Venezuelans, putting more pressure on public services, which are already overburdened, further propelling xenophobia[9] and potentially empowering extremist political forces.

Given these domestic concerns, a joint decision by Latin American States to apply the Cartagena definition to Venezuelans on a *prima facie* basis would significantly strengthen refugee protection in the region. If countries continue to resist applying the definition, they risk undermining not only their domestic legislation but also the spirit of Cartagena and decades of progress in terms of protection.

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www.rethinkingrefuge.org

The RSC launched its Rethinking Refuge platform in 2019 to provide a space for research-based discussion on a number of themes relevant to refugee policy, practice and studies. While many of the short articles published to date contribute to debates on necessary reforms of the international refugee regime, others shed light on understudied theories and topics, and offer a rethinking of how the discipline of refugee studies can contribute to issues of contemporary displacement. Although we generally only solicit articles, if you feel your research would be a good fit please familiarise yourself with the platform and the style of articles published, and then contact Evan Easton-Calabria, editor of Rethinking Refuge, at evan.easton-calabria@qeh.ox.ac.uk.

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