Responding to Urban Displacement:
What needs to be done

Ditchley Park Conference 2014

Discussion Summary and Outcomes Report

INTRODUCTION

More than 50% of the world's population now lives in urban areas, which is estimated to rise to 66% by 2050.[1] Displaced people are increasingly seeking refuge in cities, with more than half of the world's refugees now in urban areas.[2] Despite the unique complexity of the urban space with its pre-existing systems and community, humanitarian assistance has been designed for responding in camps or rural areas. Moreover, camps remain the priority for most humanitarian agencies and donors, leaving the urban displaced often hidden and without the support of the international community.

The international community is increasingly aware of the urgency of adapting how we respond to crisis including displacement in urban areas, with welcome policy change at institutional level across the UN.[3] However, we continue to face significant challenges ensuring operational effectiveness, efficiency, coordination as well as having impact at scale and ensuring the sustainability of interventions.[4]

Background:
The International Rescue Committee's (IRC) annual Ditchley Park Policy Conference was held on 7th and 8th October 2014 and for the second consecutive year focused on urban displacement. Representatives from humanitarian and development organisations, UN agencies, the World Bank, the private sector, donor governments, local NGOs as well as academics and city planners attended, ensuring all key actors were part of the conversation.[5]

The conference consisted of expert panels, discussion groups and plenary sessions. Lebanon was used as a case study and point of reference for discussions, contextualising the debate. Expert panels discussed what we can learn and opportunities for new ways of working that Lebanon has highlighted. Panels also addressed where the humanitarian community still <u>needs to get to</u> in terms of adapting to urban contexts

1   See, UN DESA's 2014 revision of World Urbanisation Prospects, available at: http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/
2   See, UNHCR's estimate available at: http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4b0e4cba6.html
3   See for example the UNHCR Alternatives to Camp Policy, Urban Refugees Policy and accomplishments in implementation of the IASC's Strategy and Action Plan for Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (MHCUA). Innovative programming in urban spaces includes cash for work and partnerships with private sector, such as WFP and MasterCard.
4   See for example UNHCR evaluation Urban Policy implementation, IRC cash report – highlighting the need to scale up and sustainability of cash etc.
5   IRC recognises the importance of having representatives from host governments and so invited representatives from both the Turkish and Lebanese government, however due to a combination of reason, both government representatives were unable to attend.

while new actors and innovation were also discussed.

Discussion groups focused on three key areas, area-based programming, an enabling environment and scaling up interventions in urban areas. Participants were asked to map what a programme that delivers these three outcomes would look like, the barriers to achieving that and possible solutions to those barriers.

This paper summarises the key points coming out of the discussion and recommendations for moving forward.

SUMMARY OF PANEL PRESENTATIONS:

Panel: What does Urbanisation mean for the Future Response to Humanitarian Needs in Urban Contexts?

(David Miliband, President IRC, Mark Lowcock, Permanent Secretary DFID, Steve Corliss, Director of the Division of Programme Support and Management, UNHCR)

David Miliband set the tone for the two days with a challenge to participants to better optimise the urban context. At a time when the humanitarian community is being required to do more with less and the length of displacement is on average 17 years, the urban context could enable a more cost effective response by tapping into the skills and talents of refugees. Nonetheless, the challenges are real. Not least, how can we address livelihoods for both urban refugees, when often the host community, which may be millions, are living in poverty? What does an urban response that addresses the needs of the entire community mean for agency mandates? And how do we address the right to work for the urban displaced? Ensuring protection also requires fundamental shifts in how we operate. How can humanitarians interact with local level politics in order to ensure the displaced are included in laws and social policies?

To identify solutions, Miliband offered the following ways of working:

- Humanitarian interventions should incorporate an economic dimension to ensure they are sustainable.
- Economic evidence should be developed in order to challenge the discussion around burden.[6]

6   See for example, IRC's evaluation of cash transfer programmes in Lebanon 'Emergency Economies: The Impact of Cash Assistance in Lebanon'. The report found that for each dollar of cash assistance spent, $2.13 was created in local markets, boosting the Lebanese economy. The report is available at: http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/resource-file/Emergency%20Economies%20Evaluation%20Report%20FINAL%2009.09.14%20%282%29.pdf

Mark Lowcock reflected on the extent of our humanitarian obligations, emphasising the need to programme for the population rather than the internal structures of our respective agencies. He challenged the participants to think beyond short term refugee responses to medium and long-term plans for national economic and social renewal.

Steve Corliss discussed the recent release of UNHCR's 'Alternatives to Camps' policy[7] and noted the challenge ahead in transforming this policy into concrete change. To address the challenge, UNHCR is embedding urban practices into broader global strategies, overhauling the UNHCR handbook for emergencies, addressing the gaps in the urban displacement policy, and adapting UNHCR's training programmes. In driving implementation forward, Corliss highlighted four key points:

- Humanitarian protection agencies need to be smarter and more effective in our advocacy. Rights-based advocacy needs to be complemented by evidence about the economic contributions refugees can make.
- The humanitarian community needs a market orientated, data driven approach to sustainable livelihoods. UNHCR is currently piloting the graduation approach which has worked successfully in development/rural contexts. The next step is to pilot it in an urban context and then take it to scale.
- To ensure efficient and sustainable delivery models humanitarian agencies need to develop private sector partnerships, and avoid alternative delivery systems
- Coordination between humanitarian actors and between humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors needs to be better done and in a way that does not undermine or ignore state responsibility. We should engage with host government ministries beyond those concerned with refugees.

Discussion following the presentations focused on a range of issues:

- One participant asked whether we are encouraging people to leave camps, and by doing so, increasing protection risks?
  However participants noted that while camps are often reasonably well funded for the first 18-24 months, as the crisis protracts the money begins to wane, leaving camps with minimum programming for basic services and a dependent population.
- Participants agreed that research to compare costs between a camp and non-camp

response would be extremely valuable in this debate.
- Humanitarian agencies need to understand and engage with the vision and plans of host governments and local communities. From the outset humanitarian agencies need to partner with host governments and development actors to support where these countries want to go.
- Participants discussed the issue of timing i.e. when do you shift from an emergency response to a protracted emergency? When do you start to respond with 'development' approaches, and how do we make that change much faster?

Panel: New Ways of Working in an Urban Context

(Tara Nathan, Executive Director for Public Private Partnerships, MasterCard; Laura Phelps, Urban Policy Advisor, NRC; Lana Zananari, Gender & Communication Unit Manager, ARDD- Legal Aid; Jo De Berry, Lead Technical Specialist, World Bank)

Tara Nathan provided a private sector perspective on partnering with the humanitarian and development community, noting the need for both the humanitarian and the private sector to make adjustments and to better understand how the other operates.

Lana Zananari provided a local civil society perspective on engaging with a large humanitarian crisis, emphasising the need to invest in the capacity of refugees and local civil society from the outset.

Jo De Berry urged the humanitarian community to ensure uniform data collection (including urban needs assessments), indicators and analysis of displaced populations. De Berry argued that when data is available which clearly indicates the difference in standards of living between the host populations and the displaced it can be a game-changer in terms of advocating with the host government. Humanitarian agencies are failing to provide the necessary analysis that would allow the Bank to advocate to governments in this way. De Berry noted a recent example from Turkey where the Bank had to disaggregate data from five separate needs assessments conducted by different humanitarian organisations, using different sample methodologies which were essentially non-comparable. This is a barrier to advocacy and engagement with the host government.

Laura Phelps presented NRC's integrated shelter programme as an example of innovation in urban programming. NRC works with host landlords to extend their housing units and in return refugees are allowed to live there for 12-15 months. The cost of the programme is around the same as providing cash for rent, but this intervention, Phelps argued, creates a more lasting solution by extending housing stock and improving housing standards. Phelps raised

---

7   UNHCR Alternatives to Camp Policy, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/5422b8f09.pdf

the challenges facing the humanitarian community in moving ideas beyond piloting stages and noted the importance of working with municipal and state actors in order to support systems rather than eroding them.

<u>Discussion following the presentations focused on the role of cash assistance:</u>

- How can e-based cash assistance programmes be implemented in different contexts? In particular, up to one third of displaced populations reside in slums, how can appropriate technology be used in this environment?
- What is the long-term outlook for cash assistance? How long does the cash last, and what happens next? One delegate warned that the humanitarian sector should not move towards conditional cash transfers as there has been a move away from this in the development sector.

Panel: The Future of an Urban Response: Learning from Lebanon?

(Bryce Perry, Country Director, Lebanon IRC; Ninette Kelly, Representative Lebanon UNHCR; Fadi Abilmona, UNDP Programme Analyst; Radha Rajkotia, Senior Director for Economic Programmes, IRC)

Bryce Perry reflected on the lessons learnt from Lebanon from the perspective of a large international NGO. IRC has been operating in Lebanon since 2012, focussing on protection, education and economic recovery and development (ERD). Lebanon is a middle income country with well-functioning markets/infrastructure, a vibrant civil society and state legitimacy; requiring significant adaptation from IRC's traditional model of delivery. Perry highlighted three core lessons IRC has learnt from operating in the Lebanon response:

- Comprehensive mapping must be prioritised and conducted at the outset alongside programme delivery
- Early engagement with local authorities even in case of direct service delivery is crucial. Local authorities had a very good idea of where these refugees were even if INGOs did not.
- Parallel service delivery is not efficient and can stoke social tensions. We must address the needs of the host community from the outset.
- The humanitarian/development divide had an enormous impact on Lebanon. We must consider long term impacts from the onset of a crisis, which means planning for the long game while delivering short term programmes.

Ninette Kelly spoke about the challenges of operating in Lebanon, not least due to the sheer scale of the operation and the speed at which the crisis escalated during which Lebanon was under a caretaker government. Funding was a further challenge for UNHCR who have had to operate on a 50% funding deficit.

Recognising the generosity of the Lebanese people, Kelley highlighted that first and foremost the Lebanon response has been a local community response. However, while community based organisations have and continue to be key partners in the response, they face challenges around sustainability and capacity to move their programmes to scale. In Kelley's view, early engagement by development actors and the World Bank assessment was a turning point for the UNHCR and World Bank partnership. Private sector partnerships have also been critical to meet the scale of the response, for example partnering with the private healthcare partner Globemed.[8]

Fadi Abilmona noted that the Syrian refugee influx has been the biggest challenge to face Lebanon since the end of the civil war. Importantly, however, the crisis is no longer only a refugee crisis; rather the influx of refugees is a component of a much larger crisis. UNDP has sought to address the crisis with a 3 pillar strategy, including through strengthening the local capacity of host communities, restoring communities and ensuring social cohesion.[9] At the same time as recognising the development needs of the Lebanese poor, Abilomona noted the need to engage with the crisis and ensure the Syrians are not pulled into the same cycle as the Palestinians, living in poverty and poorly integrated.

Radha Rajkotia presented the IRC cash assistance report which evaluated the winter cash assistance programme implemented by UNHCR and partners.[10] The IRC commissioned the report in light of the absence of robust evidence on the effectiveness of cash programming, so as to understand the impact on the ground and whether any benefits were being felt more widely. The research found that only about 10% of the total budget was used for winter supplies, as other needs, in particular food, were prioritised. Local markets enjoyed a multiplier effect: with $2.13 generated for every $1 spent. The report also found the programme had positive social impacts as those who received cash assistance were half as likely to send their children out to work. 80% of beneficiaries stated that they preferred cash assistance.

While the report had a robust and rigorous methodology, Rajkotia noted the research constraints. First there was no direct comparison between cash and in kind assistance. Second, it is not possible to <u>extrapolate the</u> data, meaning it cannot inform us

8   See, http://www.globemedlebanon.com/
9   See, fact sheet of UNDP response to the Syrian refugee crisis: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/fast-facts/english/FFSyriaJune72013.pdf
10   See footnote 6.

about the effects of cash programmes in other contexts. Third, cash assistance may be limited in certain regions, as it requires ATMs and banks willing to accept large numbers of refugees as clients. There is also the question of sustainability of cash programming. Having started cash programming in Sept 2012, the humanitarian community now need to ask whether we have reached a tipping point in terms of cash assistance. Certainly, as Rajkotia concluded, we have a long way to go to understand how to deliver cash effectively and cost efficiently and there is a need for the humanitarian community to better analyse this form of assistance.

Discussion following the presentations focused on a number of issues:

- It was agreed that cash assistance can be very conducive to local engagement by working through local banks and with local partners to train beneficiaries. However, mapping stages of the response and its scale is critical to ensure the response does not overwhelm capacity of local NGOs.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION GROUPS:

Discussion Group 1: Towards an Area-based approach

Participants agreed a sector based response is not always effective in addressing the holistic needs of a community. The needs of the affected population could be better met if activities were designed and coordinated through spatial, community/city-based and inter-sectoral approaches, fully taking into account the strong links between where people live and their access to livelihoods, markets, basic services and existing infrastructures.

Participants agreed an area-based approach responds to the city itself, not just the refugee crisis within it, by incorporating existing city systems from the outset. The area should be defined by jurisdiction e.g. of the municipality, and not by the 'target' population (e.g. refugee or IDP population). While the priority of the humanitarian community can be to serve refugees, it must be through the lens of making a positive contribution to the city and aligning with existing city priorities and planning, including existing local stakeholders. Humanitarian interventions must be based on a comprehensive analysis of the context, and must avoid creating competing and overlapping service delivery and governance structures in the area of the response. An area-based response makes use of and supports local services and capacities rather than creating parallel services, that it addresses the needs of the refugee population and the host community and that it empowers local actors and municipalities with investment in a long-term sustainable approach.

Participants recognised the challenge around focusing on implementing programmes rapidly in order to save lives with the need to conduct thorough analysis and mapping. It was recognised that some of these challenges could be mitigated through operational preparedness including identifying high risk locations before a crisis (DRR), and working with other actors such as conflict researchers and urban planners, to ensure an ongoing knowledge exchange. Analysis includes context analysis, market analysis, stakeholder analysis and political analysis.

So, how do we actually operationalise area-based programming? First, it was agreed that the humanitarian response should, where possible, work through existing state systems and only establish direct service provision where essential (e.g. where there are gaps, no state system or no permitted access). Participants agreed that where possible the government should lead and coordinate the response, however, there is a need to be realistic about the government's leadership in certain contexts where it lacks capacity or will (e.g. in a situation of conflict or where the government is severely impacted as a result of a natural disaster). The extent of local engagement is likely to vary across contexts and there should be flexibility built in around leadership and coordination in an urban response. It was agreed a tangible way forward would be to facilitate a structured dialogue between humanitarian agencies, development agencies and local governments at both the local and global levels.

Other issues to emerge include:

- Area-based programming requires a thorough understanding of the city gained through comprehensive context analysis, power mapping and convening authorities at the outset of the crisis. This will take time and is costly, and may not be seen as life saving or be given priority in an emergency.
- Humanitarian agencies need to build relationships with local governments and actors. In some instances, particularly where they had no presence in the country prior to the crisis, humanitarians have no existing relationships with the national government to capitalise on, requiring time to establish relationships.
- Effective engagement with local government will depend upon both local authorities' capacity and political will. Capacity may be limited when the crisis has affected infrastructure and systems. Political will is a particular concern for refugee populations, who may be excluded or discriminated against by governments.
- How do we ensure effective leadership and

coordination, who has that role and what responsibility does it entail?

Discussion Group 2: Towards a facilitating environment

Participants agreed a facilitating environment is one where displaced people and vulnerable host community have opportunities and access to services that enable them to participate economically and socially in the community. Discussion centred on how to achieve this with agreement that it would require at least five preliminary steps:

- Build a coalition of actors e.g. Solutions alliance
- Map stakeholders and interests e.g. Participatory mapping
- Understand the political and economic environment, constraints and opportunities
- Develop a case for the change required
- Deliver a coherent message and ask, through advocacy and private sector marketing

Participants agreed that early stakeholder mapping is essential to identify what opportunities for broad partnerships are available, who are targets and allies and the interests of each stakeholder. Political and economic analysis (PEA) is also crucial at the outset (or in advance of a crisis if possible) to identify informal power structures and the perception of the refugee community among the broader population.

Success for these interventions would mean the displaced have the same access and opportunities as the host community.

Participants recognised a number of factors outside an agencies control, including the fact the host community may also suffer limited access to services.

Participants recognised that the impact of a refugee influx on the economy can be the driving force for policy decisions taken by the host government. The importance of the international community evidencing the economic benefits of refugees as well as mitigating impact through financial and programming interventions is therefore key.

In addition, the humanitarian community should improve their negotiating and lobbying skills so as to engage in policy discussions at a local level. This would include public messaging about what is being done to support the entire community which would help to mitigate social tensions between communities. All agreed that the humanitarian community needs to move beyond the goal of ensuring basic needs are met and work towards a fundamental shift in the status and perception of refugees in society, therefore challenging the narrative of refugees as 'burden'.

Other issues to emerge include:

- How do we focus on refugees but at the same time address the broader needs of the city, when those needs might cut across conflict, land tenure, human rights and poverty?
- How do we overcome silos between sectors which challenge broad partnerships and sharing of data and standards/indicators/metrics?
- How do we ensure sustainability is built in from the start of an emergency response when agencies are focusing on life saving measures?
- How can we overcome a lack of political will? How do we build incentives for host government cooperation?

Discussion Group 3: Single Scalable Interventions

Participants worked to identify a single scalable intervention that could be effective in an urban response. They developed the concept of an ICT enabled platform, called 'iThrive', that would connect crisis affected people to service providers, facilitating access and choice for users and allowing users to provide feedback. This would lead to improvements in quality of provision and allow agencies to identify duplication and gaps in provision to target capacity building/cash support. The availability of such a product would support and expand the market, avoid parallel services and market distortions, ensure sustainability of services and improve quality. The product would require an independent governance structure or semi-autonomous body to create and implement it in a crisis setting.

To support innovation in the humanitarian sector participants highlighted the importance of partnering with the private sector. There is also a need to review what has emerged so far and identify whether it can be applied across new contexts.

Issues that emerged include:

- How can we guarantee access to this service for beneficiaries, where connection to internet and availability of smart phones may be limited?
- What quality control procedures are needed? In particular how do you maintain standards of service providers, when there is limited competition?
- How can humanitarian tools address other challenges of living in an urban space, such as land rights, taxation, governance, urban poverty?

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY ACTIONS:

Ditchley Park offered an important platform to discuss and promote a more effective response by the international community to meeting humanitarian needs in urban contexts. This process brought together a variety of actors key to an effective response. IRC welcomes the commitments made by participants to drive this agenda forward.

Over the course of the conference participants identified concrete solutions to address some of the challenges faced in meeting the needs of the urban displaced. We look forward to working with participants to drive forward some of these changes, including by integrating them in our efforts in preparation for the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), Habitat III (2016) and the World Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Conference (2015). The key practical recommendations that should be taken forward from the Ditchley Park Conference are as follows:

1. Build a sustained dialogue on solutions for urban displacement crises across a broad list of key actors

- Participants and others should seek opportunities to convene further high-level events to sustain political leadership and broaden the list of actors engaged in implementing solutions for humanitarian needs in urban contexts. This should include particular efforts in the margins of the World Humanitarian Summit, UN General Assembly, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and regional inter-governmental events.

2. Understand the costs and benefits of urban refugees and improve livelihoods outcomes for impacted populations:

- Economists, academics and researchers should systematise and create comprehensive measurement and analysis of the costs, benefits and impacts from the presence of urban refugees.
- Donors should ensure more multi-year funding streams of 3-5 years in order to increase linkages between humanitarian and development outcomes.
- Development actors should advocate and support host governments to mainstream development-led strategies for urban refugees into national economic planning and data collection so that urban refugees are better integrated into more sustainable national poverty and development plans;
- Humanitarian agencies should develop programmes and policy interventions that underpin investment and financial incentives for government, promote the local economy and alleviate tensions between host and displaced communities.

3. Develop a set of shared tools for understanding impacted populations and the urban space:

- Humanitarian agencies should develop a standardised rapid mapping tool for mapping of existing services, private sector, stakeholders, and market and power holders.
- The UN Country Team should conduct ongoing mapping as part of the development of annual Standard Operational Procedures to ensure preparedness.
- Humanitarian and development agencies should develop standardised and comprehensive needs assessments, analysis tools and vulnerability indicators.

4. Build innovation into the urban humanitarian space

- The humanitarian community should partner with the private sector to provide product solutions and to support learning around scaling up and sustainability

- Donors should support innovation and new approaches from humanitarian agencies beyond the development and pilot stages.

As we draw another Ditchley Park Conference on urban refugees to a close, we are already thinking ahead to 2016 when IRC will host a further Ditchley Park Conference on this issue. In the interim two years IRC looks forward to working with all the participants who attended this year to drive forward the urban agenda. The progress and fruitful discussion have only signalled the need for more discussion towards new ideas and ways forward so that we make the fundamental changes necessary for working in urban contexts. With DFID support, IRC will advocate at the World Humanitarian Summit, in partnership with others, on humanitarian responses in urban contexts. As we look ahead to the WHS, IRC commits to driving home key messages on not only the need to adapt, but actually how we adapt our response.

International Rescue Committee
LONDON | BRUSSELS | GENEVA | NAIROBI | BANGKOK | NEW YORK | WASHINGTON, DC

From Harm to Home | **Rescue-uk.org**

INTERNATIONAL
RESCUE
COMMITTEE