

# GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO DISPLACEMENT IN URBAN AREAS



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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## **Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas**

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## PREFACE



Urbanization is a defining global phenomenon of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: more than half of the world's population (55%) live in urban<sup>i</sup> areas and this is estimated to grow to two-thirds by 2050<sup>1</sup>. In parallel, there has been an increase in the proportion of displaced people living in cities, with over 60 percent of refugees<sup>2,3</sup> and the majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) now estimated to be living in urban environments<sup>ii</sup>.

In December 2019, UN-Habitat and UNHCR signed a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to advance their shared mandate to improve assistance for UNHCR's persons of concern (PoC). This was done to maximize synergies along the humanitarian-development continuum.

Through the MoU, both agencies have committed to both support and cooperate with States and other stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), including to: (i) ease pressures on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. UNHCR and UN-Habitat have committed to continue upholding the rights of refugees, IDPs and other persons of concern to UNHCR and affected communities in pursuit of "the attainment of durable solutions with a specific focus on urban, camp, and out-of-camp approaches and activities."<sup>4</sup>

Both Parties also committed to supporting national and local governments in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in accordance with their respective mandates, including in the commitment of member states to ensure "full respect for the human rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, regardless of their migration status, and support their host cities in the spirit of international cooperation, taking into account national circumstances and recognizing that, although the movement of large populations into towns and cities poses a variety of challenges, it can also bring significant social, economic and cultural contributions to urban life."<sup>5</sup>

The partnership will be implemented to advance the triple nexus<sup>iii</sup> (humanitarian-development-peace) through preparedness, humanitarian response and transition to development, particularly in the case of protracted and recurrent crises. The partnership covers both normative and operational aspects related to humanitarian and development responses in support of both agencies' respective mandates.

To work towards the commitments set out in the MoU, *Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas* is an effort to bring together and mobilize humanitarian and development partners to ensure coordinated efforts for resilience in cities and towns. Through this lens, the document elucidates the various systems at work, the actors and stakeholders involved in the decision-making processes, and key factors in preparing for and responding to displacement in urban areas.

This *Guidance* will identify key considerations, to be contextualized and used in conjunction with existing policies and technical guidelines. It is designed to build upon organizational mandates to protect vulnerable populations through inclusive and sustainable urban planning. It aims to reaffirm and expand a multi-faceted understanding of urban contexts and their specific conditions and dynamics. This will further support UNHCR Country Operations and other humanitarian and development actors operating in cities.

i Countries often establish their own definition of 'urban' as it relates to their own needs. The threshold for defining urban may be quantitative (e.g. based on absolute population, or population density) or it may be qualitative (e.g. the primary economic activity of population). See: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/densurb/densurbmethods.htm>

ii Although the true scale of urban internal displacement is hard to assess due to lack of available data. See IDMC UnSettlement: Urban Displacement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 2018. See: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/unsettlement-urban-displacement-in-the-21st-century>

iii "The 'triple nexus' refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors. In the UN's "New Way of Working (NWoW)," these actors are expected to work towards collective outcomes over multiple years, when appropriate."



# INTRODUCTION

The escalating frequency, scale, and duration of crises has led to unprecedented and overwhelming levels of displacement. Insufficient resources, inadequate encampment policies, and burdensome periods of protraction pose additional challenges to address resettlement needs. In 2019, over 95% of global resettlement needs were unmet<sup>6</sup>. These unmet needs are both a cause and impetus for migration to cities and towns with more diverse economic opportunities.

Increased displacement to urban areas poses unique challenges which need to be met with new, innovative and sustainable responses that go beyond technical solutions. These responses must also strengthen the self-reliance of refugees in urban settings in line with the GCR, advance the triple nexus, and bring benefits to hosting populations. As the actors, policies, and dynamics involved in human settlements continue to evolve, so too must the approach for programming and coordination in urban areas.

Although multiple documents guiding humanitarian and development action in urban areas have already been set in motion (see “Global Policy Framework”), this particular *Guidance* is intended to serve two purposes. Firstly, it is meant to provide an overview of the complexity of urban systems and guide UNHCR how to proceed when developing context-appropriate programming. Secondly, it is a critical step forward by UNHCR and UN-Habitat to identify cross-sectoral opportunities for collaboration. Better coordinated and more comprehensive planning will serve to protect displaced and host populations, reduce social tensions, as well as facilitate cultural and economic integration. This underpins Member States’ commitment to “leaving no one behind” and will help advance the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in addition to strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

This *Guidance* builds on area-based approaches (ABA)<sup>iv</sup> to introduce an inclusive and cross-sectoral planning approach for working in cities. It advocates for a contextual understanding of the city as a system. Before responding effectively to the needs of displaced people, it is crucial to understand the role that local and national governments, non-state actors including development agencies, the private sector, (in)formal markets, existing and planned infrastructure and the built environment play in cities. These urban institutions and actors define the opportunities and constraints in providing services and cannot always align their work with UNHCR’s sectoral approaches. Civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and humanitarian and development organizations need to partner with local and national authorities through coordination mechanisms that integrate urban systems.

The following sections frame a joint UN-Habitat-UNHCR view on how spatial planning can address the needs of displaced populations, building on existing “Global Policy Frameworks”, supporting a sustainable way forward for *Preparing for Response* and key considerations for each *Thematic Area* in cities. “Preparing for Response in Urban Areas” provides an overview of urban dimensions that should be assessed for a deeper contextual understanding of a city in the early stages of an emergency response. “Thematic Areas of Spatial Planning” describes six thematic areas to guide UNHCR’s operational approach in urban contexts. Key considerations are listed under each Thematic Area through a spatial planning lens. These considerations support residents’ self-reliance, enabling sustainable and resilient responses to the impacts of economic, social, political, and natural shocks and stressors. Some of these factors are contextualized through case studies.

iv Area-based approaches define interventions by area rather than by sector. ABAs involve working with the population in need (i.e. displaced, refugee, and host populations) within a geographic area. They involve all sectors to provide a holistic response that reduces gaps in services. These sectors include international humanitarian sectors/clusters, national humanitarian service providers, and national and local institutions/authorities/municipalities. In an urban context, area-based approaches have three defining characteristics: they are geographically targeted, multi-sectoral and adopt a participatory approach. See: <https://www.sheltercluster.org/settlements-approaches-urban-areas-wg/documents/settlements-terminology-paper-draftapr2018> and Maynard, V. & Parker, E. 2015, “Humanitarian response to urban crises: a review of area-based approaches”. International Institute for Environment and Development <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10742IIED.pdf>.

## UNHCR's Guiding Principles<sup>7, 8</sup>

### Protection Outcomes:

Protection, safety and privacy considerations should be integrated into all responses in urban areas. This will ensure that the legal rights of displaced people and host communities are respected in practice, and their various legal and physical protection needs are addressed. Physical and psychological trauma can be the consequence, implicit side-effect or even a cause of the conflict, violence or disasters that force people to flee in the first place. In urban contexts, certain groups are at a higher risk of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). For example, child labour, human trafficking, and youth exposure to violence may occur more frequently in urban settings. In public spaces, displaced people may be subjected to sexual harassment, assault, and violence on the streets. This can occur when they access public services or while commuting. In private spaces, overcrowding can exacerbate tensions within families, increasing the risk of SGBV. Similarly, SGBV and other risks arise when refugees and IDPs must share spaces with strangers in communal settings or shared private dwellings. The implementation of programmes in cities should prioritize the most vulnerable and those at heightened risk of SGBV, in line with UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017-2021.

### Protection Mainstreaming:

Protection mainstreaming is a key principle guiding UNHCR interventions across the range of its operational engagements, including in urban areas. It involves incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety, dignity, accountability, participation, and empowerment in interventions across all aspects of programme implementation. It also specifies the requirement to do no harm, and to prevent and mitigate the risk of any unintended negative effects of interventions.<sup>v</sup>

### Age, Gender, and Diversity<sup>9</sup> Inclusion:

The UNHCR policy on Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) aims to ensure that all segments of a population have equitable and non-discriminatory access to assistance and protection. It affirms that they should have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Through this approach, responses in urban areas should suitably and sustainably address a variety of needs. All planning interventions must be appropriate to different groups within the displaced and host communities. Special measures to ensure inclusiveness and accessibility for specific groups of concern must inform and guide relevant actions. Groups of concern may include women, girls and boys, older persons and persons with disabilities.

### Equity:

Responses to displacement in urban areas must promote equity for all and support should be extended to surrounding communities wherever possible. Host communities may require particular assistance in the context of a humanitarian operation or to address their housing and service needs. The SDGs provide a basis for such an inclusive approach: the principle of leaving no one behind.

### Participation and Empowerment:

Meaningful community participation will ensure that the agency and capacities of both displaced and host communities are recognized and engaged in developing interventions that support local authorities in the design and delivery of urban responses.

### Sustainability:

UNHCR will prioritize energy solutions that meet the current energy needs of refugees and host communities without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own energy needs. This will mean understanding refugees' energy needs, prioritizing renewable energy technologies, enhancing livelihood opportunities and strengthening the technical and managerial capacities of staff and partners. Occupation of environmentally sensitive areas, degradation of land, poor waste management and imprudent use of resources can jeopardize the natural and built environment, increasing vulnerabilities and causing irrevocable harm. This is especially the case in urban areas. Ensuring sensitivity to the ecological context, as well as using traditional knowledge and sustainable practices can enhance the quality of life for all urban residents.

### Efficiency:

UNHCR is aiming to deliver high quality, efficient services in its operations. This includes giving priority to the provision of housing and delivery of services essential for the protection of displaced people in urban areas.

### Accessibility:

People have various needs and different abilities which, among other factors (including legal status), affects how they access housing, services and facilities. Without safe and equitable access, response strategies run the risk of being exclusionary in practice. When providing housing, services and facilities for health, nutrition, security and comfort, it is essential to consider their availability, sustainability and to what extent they are non-discriminatory.

<sup>v</sup> For more information see the GPC - <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/themes/protection-mainstreaming/>

## UN-Habitat's Cross-Cutting Themes<sup>10</sup>

### Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is inherent in the United-Nations-wide human rights-based approach. It emphasizes that the most vulnerable groups (including women, children, youth, older persons, and persons with disabilities) are specifically targeted in all programmes. Long-term solutions that focus on the systemic economic, social and spatial causes of inequality need to replace siloed, segregated approaches. This will better achieve the prosperity and self-determination outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### Resilience

UN-Habitat understands urban resilience as the ability of any urban system to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming towards sustainability. A resilient city is one that assesses, plans and acts to prepare for, and respond to all hazards, whether sudden or slow onset, expected or unexpected. By doing so, cities are better able to protect and enhance people's lives, secure development gains, foster a positive environment for investment and drive positive change. Transitory humanitarian and emergency interventions should be coupled with planning-based responses for inclusive and sustainable urban development that prioritizes resilience with the aim of protecting the life, assets, and dignity of all residents.

### Safety

The New Urban Agenda calls for a safe and secure environment in cities and human settlements, enabling all to live, work and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation, taking into consideration that women and girls, children and youth, and persons in vulnerable situations are often particularly affected.<sup>11</sup> UN-Habitat elevates safety as a transversal issue to be considered as a marker across all the domains of change and their respective outcomes. Particular regard must be paid to improving standards of living and the inclusion of migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons. Only if such groups are safe can they meaningfully participate in decision-making. The New Urban Agenda calls for crime prevention policies to be integrated into urban strategies and initiatives.<sup>12</sup> In this integrated perspective, safety intersects with social inclusion in relation to sustainable mobility, effective access to and use of public space and basic services, and the fostering of social cohesion and integration. It is also important for the promotion and preservation of productive and competitive cities, decent jobs, and livelihoods.



# GLOBAL POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This *Guidance* contributes to growing global discourse and action in response to increasing displacement in urban contexts. Multiple humanitarian and development agencies, as well as government institutions and the private sector, are developing strategies to address this increasingly pertinent issue. Advancing these efforts, this joint publication from UNHCR and UN-Habitat builds primarily on key policy frameworks put forth by the United Nations, which pertain to the rights, responsibilities, empowerment of displaced people, UN Member States, local authorities, and humanitarian and development agencies.

In May 2019, the UN Systems Chief Executives Board for Coordination adopted the **United Nations system-wide strategy on sustainable urban development**.<sup>13</sup> It highlights how the UN system can assist Member States overcome the challenges raised by rapid urbanization in attaining the SDGs and other global agendas. In the context of sustainable development, the **Paris Agreement (2015)**<sup>14</sup> specifically targets the global community's response to the threat of climate change. The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**<sup>15</sup> correspondingly underscores the importance of strengthening disaster risk governance, accountability, and preparedness through national platforms. It also highlights the mobilization of risk-sensitive investment and enhanced frameworks for international cooperation and partnership.

In line with urbanization being recognized as a megatrend of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, UNHCR's **Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas (2009)**<sup>16</sup> replaced its first **Policy on Refugees in Urban Areas (1997)**, which did not adequately address the scale and scope of displacement in urban areas. The 2009 Policy acknowledged that nearly half the global population of refugees at the time lived in urban areas,<sup>17</sup> and emphasized "the need to address the issue of urban refugees in a more comprehensive manner".<sup>18</sup> It also clearly set two baselines which this *Guidance* builds on. Firstly, since UNHCR primarily operates in low- and middle-income countries, the 2009 Policy established that working methodologies must be adapted to the specific conditions in those contexts. Secondly, it recognized that to effectively respond to displacement in cities, multiple actors – particularly city authorities and host governments – need to be engaged and adequate resources need to be mobilized. Although the Urban Policy applies specifically to refugees, UNHCR's recent **Guidance Package for UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement (2019)** also acknowledges the importance of tailoring responses to IDP's needs in urban areas.

**UNHCR's Policy on Alternatives to Camps (2014)** expands on its 2009 Urban Policy, reinforcing the necessity to engage with all levels of host government authorities. It also declares the agency's compulsory mandate to "pursue alternatives to camps, whenever possible, while ensuring that refugees are protected and assisted effectively and are able to achieve solutions."<sup>19</sup> Promoting out-of-camp alternatives increases displaced peoples' ability to achieve self-reliance by advocating for rights and dignities often denied to refugees long after the emergency phase.

Furthermore, **The Grand Bargain - A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need (2016)** calls for a paradigm shift towards improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. One of the objectives of The Grand Bargain is to re-envision support for local and national actors and leverage comparative advantages in the humanitarian ecosystem. This can be achieved by working efficiently and transparently across partners to increase innovation and flexibility in funding. This approach echoes the **Habitat III Issue Paper: 2 – Migration and Refugees in Urban Areas (2015)** which establishes how "inclusive planning for rapid urbanization, migration and displacement – through improved rights and protection for migrants and refugees, access to adequate services, opportunities and space, and regulations that create an enabling environment – can maximize the skills, resources and creativity of migrants and refugees that drive sustainable development."<sup>20</sup> Critically, the Issue Paper also cites the urgency to assimilate displacement issues into development planning processes and link humanitarian and development agendas. *Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas* also makes the case for finding synergies in service delivery and infrastructure projects. This is achievable through humanitarian-development partnerships with local and national authorities, the private sector, and civil society.



GEORGIA. Internally displaced persons from Abkhazia (collective centre)  
© UNHCR/ANNELIESE HOLLMANN

# PREPARING<sup>21</sup> FOR RESPONSE IN URBAN AREAS



MAURITANIA. A refugee's epic journey to become an IT trainer  
© UNHCR/AGRON DRAGAJ

Understanding the factors which lead to forced displacement is important for better identifying and meeting the needs of UNHCR's persons of concern. It also helps prepare for the strategic utilization of resources for the joint benefit of host communities in a whole-of-society<sup>22</sup> approach, in line with the Global Compact for Refugees (2018). While conflict, persecution, escalating urban violence and disasters are the main reasons for displacement, people ultimately flee due to a complex set of parameters. These include physical insecurity, fear, and undignified living conditions owing to a messy constellation of influences, such as unstable access to paid work, food, housing, education, and medical care. Displacement largely occurs from rural areas – where service delivery and security systems tend to collapse first – to more resilient urban centres. But despite the greater access to services, income-generating activities and upward socio-economic mobility that urban centres can offer, there are also many challenges that displaced rural populations face when they seek residence in cities.

Moreover, rapid influxes of newcomers to urban settings have significant spatial, social, political, and economic impacts on existing dynamics. Displaced persons often arrive in hosting environments that already face structural challenges. High levels of unemployment and underdeveloped formal economies, poorly functioning infrastructure and services, lack of adequate and affordable housing, and constraints on land and property rights are common problems faced in many cities. These pressures, often already unmanageable given the rates of urbanization, are exacerbated by displacement flows. This may in turn deepen exposure to risks and vulnerabilities for both the incoming population and the host community. Contexts where growing urbanization is not adequately managed are prone to greater urban poverty, sprawl, and informality. This can result in increased exposure to crime, inequality, exploitation, violence, competition for jobs, stresses on limited infrastructure and services, and fractured social and community networks.

Rural-to-urban displacement as well as urban-to-urban displacement can expose individuals to new and unfamiliar risks and vulnerabilities, which neither they nor the city and its service providers are equipped to deal with. Often the areas of the city people settle in, the basic and social services they have access to, and the labour markets available to them are not stable to begin with. Newcomers' limited legal rights and social capital commonly exacerbate this.

*Areas of the city and access to services.* Displaced people and the urban poor (who have often also undergone displacement themselves) tend to settle in areas with higher vulnerabilities, and usually for similar reasons. Disadvantaged parts of cities, such as slums and informal settlements that compensate for housing shortages, are more affordable and require less formal documentation and long-term commitment from tenants. These areas typically lack basic services such as running water, electricity, sewerage, roads, connection to school systems, healthcare facilities and political institutions. Informal settlements, such as those often occupied by displaced people, tend to be in vacant or underutilized pockets of land within the city, or high-risk areas that have been formally excluded from planned development.

High-risk areas are areas that are more likely to expose residents to environmental disasters (e.g. fires, floods, hurricanes, cyclones, typhoons, landslides, soil subsidence), hazardous waste (e.g. toxic effluents and discharge from polluting factories and dump sites), and conflict wreckage (e.g. landmines and unexploded ammunition, radiation). This leads to increased vulnerability, violence, and discrimination without the institutional arrangements to decrease the likelihood or mitigate the impact of those risks. As the effects of climate change worsen, the type, frequency and impact of these risks will continue to rise, as will the number of people displaced.

*Labour markets and livelihoods.* Rural residents and people fleeing from dissimilar urban contexts can have different education levels, skillsets, work experience, and cultural reference than residents in the arrival city. These differences could make finding a job difficult due to both psycho-social and job-qualifying factors. For example, people fleeing from agrarian, pastoralist or nomadic livelihoods may have different family, tribal and religious affiliations, social networks, position in society and connection to, or reliance on, the natural environment.

Growing up in another city, town, village or rural area might also mean that displaced people's skillsets need to be adapted to the labour market of the city they settle in. These challenges are by no means insurmountable, but often require support in order to assist persons of concern in finding and keeping steady work, remaining in school, attaining high levels of physical and psychological health, and sustaining healthy social relationships.

**Against this backdrop of opportunities and challenges, it is critical to recognize both the emergency perspective typical of humanitarian responses and the development-focused perspective of the city.** For example, the service delivery approaches often used in decentralized sector-based operations in the humanitarian context may risk being neither responsive nor effective in urban areas. On the other hand, development approaches may risk overlooking the social impacts of urban projects, particularly on the most vulnerable populations.

Responding to emergencies and finding long-term solutions across the humanitarian-development continuum requires a structural shift in which the link between emergency operations and longer-term solutions is fully understood. **Urban and Spatial Profiling**<sup>vi</sup> is one such tool that can help integrate UNHCR's focus on individuals with a more comprehensive framework, which considers the area and context in which rights are granted. The analysis of urban systems through a process of profiling is a first step towards improved preparedness.

The purpose of a profile is to outline the operational contexts and guide the implementation of urban programmes at local, regional, and national levels. This is achieved by undertaking an evidence-based assessment of a situation's specific needs and the relevant response mechanisms in place. This ensures that resources are managed efficiently. Urban profiling consists of

- an accelerated, action-oriented **assessment of urban environments**, focusing on current spatial conditions and existing services at local and national levels; and
- the **identification of priority needs, capacity gaps,<sup>vii</sup> and potential future scenarios** to accommodate demographic changes.

vi JIPS' Guidance for Profiling Urban Displacement Situations (2014) describes the profiling process and methodologies for data collection, analysis and engagement. See: <https://www.jips.org/uploads/2018/10/JIPS-Guidance-Urban-Displacement-Profiling-2014.pdf>

vii This may be referred to as "absorption capacity" in camp and camp-like settings; however, in urban environments, it is more likely that service and resource capacities will be planned for through growth scenarios.



## Essential elements for a spatial understanding of the city

The following sections elaborate on the contents and processes of Urban and Spatial Profiles. These explanations are intended to help drive the process, which may take the shape of a report, an online interactive platform, factsheets, policy guides, or multiple outputs. However, it must be dynamic, allowing it to be updated and amended to reflect changing populations and their spatial needs and impact. Multiple sectors and perspectives must be considered in urban settings to provide a thorough overview of how the area operates and the roles played by a diverse cross-section of actors and stakeholders. In profiling urban contexts, consider the following elements:



### Geography –

First and foremost, the geographic context needs to be understood. The geographic setting of a city often shapes its urban form, defines its regional role and creates varying conditions for its economic activities and comparative advantage. Geographic elements include topography and natural features, both above and below the earth's surface. Soil conditions, the flow of water and the location of geologically sensitive sites are useful in conducting a suitability analysis of the various city regions before planning and allocating land uses.

#### Topography

Topography is a significant structuring element of spatial settlements. It creates natural gateways or barriers, which influence water runoff and determine which land is suitable for settlement. A contour map is the best resource for topographical analysis.

#### Climate

Climatic conditions may predispose an area to weather events such as heavy rains, droughts, heatwaves, or blizzards. Climate change also poses a serious threat to urban areas, putting vulnerable populations at high risk. Thus, the location and design of solutions should respond to the climatic conditions in these areas. Mapping precipitation levels, temperature fluctuations and trends, wildfires and heat waves (including urban heat island effects) can help mitigate climate-related risks.

#### Watersheds and basins

Watersheds and basins determine natural drainage patterns. These patterns are affected by surface conditions, such as impermeable or permeable surfaces. Surface conditions influence freshwater collection and the direction and speed of surface run-off (in extreme cases causing deluge or flooding). Watersheds must be identified, preserved, and restored for the conservation of water resources and mitigation against disasters.

#### Protected / ecologically sensitive areas

Rapid and unplanned urbanization is leading to the destruction of biodiversity and the natural environment globally. Ecologically sensitive zones include forests, national parks, water bodies (including rivers, lakes, wetlands) or other sensitive landscapes. They may also include areas rich in natural resource, which have local or national importance. It is critical to identify ecologically sensitive zones and promote policies for their protection and enhancement. Such policies should also encourage the protection of biodiversity, often seen in the form of plant or animal species particular to the specific zone or climate. These measures help restore the ecological balance and seek to offset the harmful effects of urbanization and climate change.

### Hazards

Cities are highly vulnerable to disaster and climate hazards, putting large populations at risk of losing assets and livelihoods. It is necessary to map the potential hazards faced by a city, so as to effectively plan for mitigation and protection measures against damage and loss of life. Hazards such as fault lines, floodplains, steep slopes, erosion, wildfires, hurricanes etc. should be identified with respect to the distribution of the population and vulnerable groups. Assessment of other threats to the city in the form of land, water, air or noise pollution should also be included in the profiling process.



### Administration –

#### Regional and national alignment

A well-functioning city operates as a connected entity within a wider region. In some respects, it can be seen as a collection of localized planning initiatives. As a result, an urban response must align with all relevant national, regional and local plans and policies. The success of a response often depends on coordinated efforts, with a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities. Consistency in planning policies across vertical scales reduces ambiguity and conflicts. The profiling process should include an analysis of existing policies that link the city to the region.

#### Administrative boundaries (regions, districts, wards, neighborhoods)

Understanding a city's administrative structure is key to determining which governance and legal frameworks are applicable to different parts of the city. A city is often divided into districts, neighborhoods, wards or other administrative units. Local administrators, politicians and community groups will have varying levels of decision-making power according to the particular administrative unit. It is often by these boundaries that services are planned and delivered, census data is disaggregated and electoral wards are determined. An understanding of municipal service providers for hospitals, schools, police stations, waste collection facilities, etc. can help link displaced people to their appropriate jurisdictions or representatives.

#### Land use and zoning, including development plans

Around the world, city governments rely on varying types of strategic plans to guide investment and control development. These are sometimes referred to as land management plans or Master Plans. Strategic plans provide a common framework for regulating public and private actions in the process of urbanization and identify the priorities for multi-sectoral infrastructure and facilities. Plans are mostly prepared for 5-, 10-, or 20-year planning periods

depending on the type and purpose of the plan. A Master Plan includes land use and other elements that concern urban life while enabling optimal use and management of limited resources.

Whether a Master Plan is a legally binding document or a guiding policy document varies between locations.

An essential function of a city plan is to determine the kind of development permissible in different parts of the city that have been zoned for different land uses. This development control, or zoning, eliminates ambiguity and applies uniform laws for all landowners. However, there may be cases of discretionary zoning, where authorities have the power to allow conditional uses by discretion on a case by case basis. Development control or zoning policies are usually legally binding.

An urban administration may also prepare Local Development Plans, Specific Area Plans, or Neighborhood Plans. These are policy documents, which highlight the priorities and identified projects for specific parts of the city. A review of the various spatial development plans defining permissible land use and applicable zoning laws will help inform absorption capacity and facilitate smoother implementation.

In certain contexts, city planning authorities may require an Environmental Impact Assessment or a Socio-economic Impact Assessment for projects above a certain size to be approved.

#### Utilities and services

Utilities and services form the functional system of networks through which the city operates. Due to limited resources, cities often struggle with the provision and management of utility systems to respond to the changing demands of residents. Mapping the location and status of the existing utilities and services in the city is useful to identify infrastructure gaps or overlaps, as well as areas that may need improvement or necessary extensions in service provision. Utilities are managed by separate municipal boards or service providers and include the following sectors:

- Water supply and management
- Power supply and management
- Solid waste management
- Drainage provision and management
- Sewage provision and management
- ICT (Information & Communication Technology)



## Historical & Cultural Context –

### Growth patterns

Tracing how a city has grown over time can highlight the elements responsible for its current morphology and identify trends that inform areas and modalities for future growth. Sudden shifts or changes in growth patterns are reflective of a change in the needs or environment of the settlement and should be studied in detail to inform planning decisions.

### Built and cultural heritage

Heritage can be defined as the tangible and intangible assets that are of immeasurable value to cultures and must be preserved for future generations. Heritage, as a form of expression and identity, binds cultures together and enriches the social domain. Heritage is also economically valuable as it stimulates tourism and attracts global interest. It is therefore in the best interest of cities and their residents to preserve, restore and promote its people's historical and cultural resources. Planning for a city's inclusive and sustainable growth, mapping heritage and cultural assets can help protect against encroachment, vandalism or exploitation for profit.

### Neighbourhood typologies

Cities are home to communities of diverse socio-economic composition. This creates distinctive built characteristics and typologies in neighborhoods. Studying neighborhood typologies can provide insight into the cultural aspects of how people reside and ways to enhance their daily lives. These typologies can be identified, studied and applied in the profiling analysis as best practices in the field.

### Social and recreational facilities

Public facilities are the places, amenities, or equipment provided for a particular purpose by the city government to ensure a good quality of life for its citizens. Profiling social and recreational facilities can help in drafting a response that ensures public facilities are adequate, available to everyone, and well maintained. Public facilities in a city may include:

- Educational facilities: primary, secondary, and high schools, universities, research institutes
- Health facilities: clinics, hospitals, specialty labs
- Administrative (governmental) facilities: public libraries, town halls, courts, government offices and facilities
- Cultural (institutional) facilities: theatres, concert halls, convention centres, exhibition halls, museums, monuments, community centres
- Recreational (sports/parks) facilities: neighbourhood and community parks, sports complexes, public plazas
- Safety facilities: fire, police, emergency/evacuation routes, refuge areas
- Religious facilities: places of worship, places of spiritual importance



## Socio-economic Context –

### Demography (housing - number of people per household, conditions of dwelling unit, employment, education)

UNHCR will be able to successfully implement a response if the policies meet the present and future needs and aspirations of different segments of displaced people. A thorough understanding of age, occupation, level of education, household structure, income and dwelling conditions of displaced and hosting populations is required. These are often available in census data, and can help plan for future healthcare, education, housing, and economic needs and necessary spatial provisions (placement, distribution, and access). Planning that considers these key demographic characteristics promotes a more equal and inclusive society.

Profiling analysis should include an assessment of the housing stock, typologies, quality, gaps in supply, and identification of informal settlements, as well as access to jobs and marketplaces. This will help the response meet the local demands, either through the upgrading of facilities, infill of existing areas, or new formal planning schemes in extension areas.

### Displacement (registration, distribution)

Displaced people in cities require amenities to facilitate their habitation and integration with the urban populace. These amenities may include registration offices, distribution centres and assistance from local agencies and actors. A city may or may not have planned for the provision of these facilities based on its policies on displaced people. Profiling studies should identify existing and potential areas for interventions to support displaced people in urban areas.

Demographic/census data is often out of date or does not reflect population levels post-influx. Therefore, it is important to cross-reference this data with displacement tracking data from the relevant agencies/authorities to gain a more accurate picture of the changes and demographic shifts.



## Connectivity –

### International, national, and regional connectivity

Connections to and from a city and its wider hinterland at the regional, national and international scale have a significant impact on the influx and outflow of people. Mapping these connections and modes of transit are important to understand where populations (including displaced populations), goods, and services are coming from, going to, how and where they arrive, and the considerations governing their decisions on where to settle. Proximity and connectivity are directly linked to the greater opportunities, both real and perceived, which bring people from conflict zones into urban areas, either as their final destination or as a transit link to other destinations.

### Public transportation (lines, stops, pedestrian realm)

An understanding of the public transportation networks in a city is important to determine the mobility of its inhabitants. Public transportation modes may include metro, rail, bus, and ferry networks. Access to public transportation stations reduces dependence on cars and increases social and economic opportunities for all. When profiling, mapping public transportation routes and stations is an essential step in assessing access to services and livelihood opportunities. Tracing pedestrian networks and connecting missing links is also vital to create vibrant, inclusive, and safe public spaces.



## Built Environment –

### Density

To prevent urban sprawl and promote sustainable urban expansion, it is necessary to aim for compact development. This entails achieving a context-appropriate level of density which ensures maximum utilization of limited resources. Density is measured as the number of persons per unit area in a city. The UN-Habitat recommended average density is 150 p/ha.<sup>23</sup> By concentrating people and resources in a smaller area, cities can reduce their carbon footprint and lower the investment and maintenance costs of providing services and transport (as there is less area and distance to cover). Compact development also enables vibrant, inclusive and safe streets, as well as local economic development. A profile should assess the existing and optimal context-specific density and recommend policies that work progressively towards increasing density by incentivizing compact forms of development.

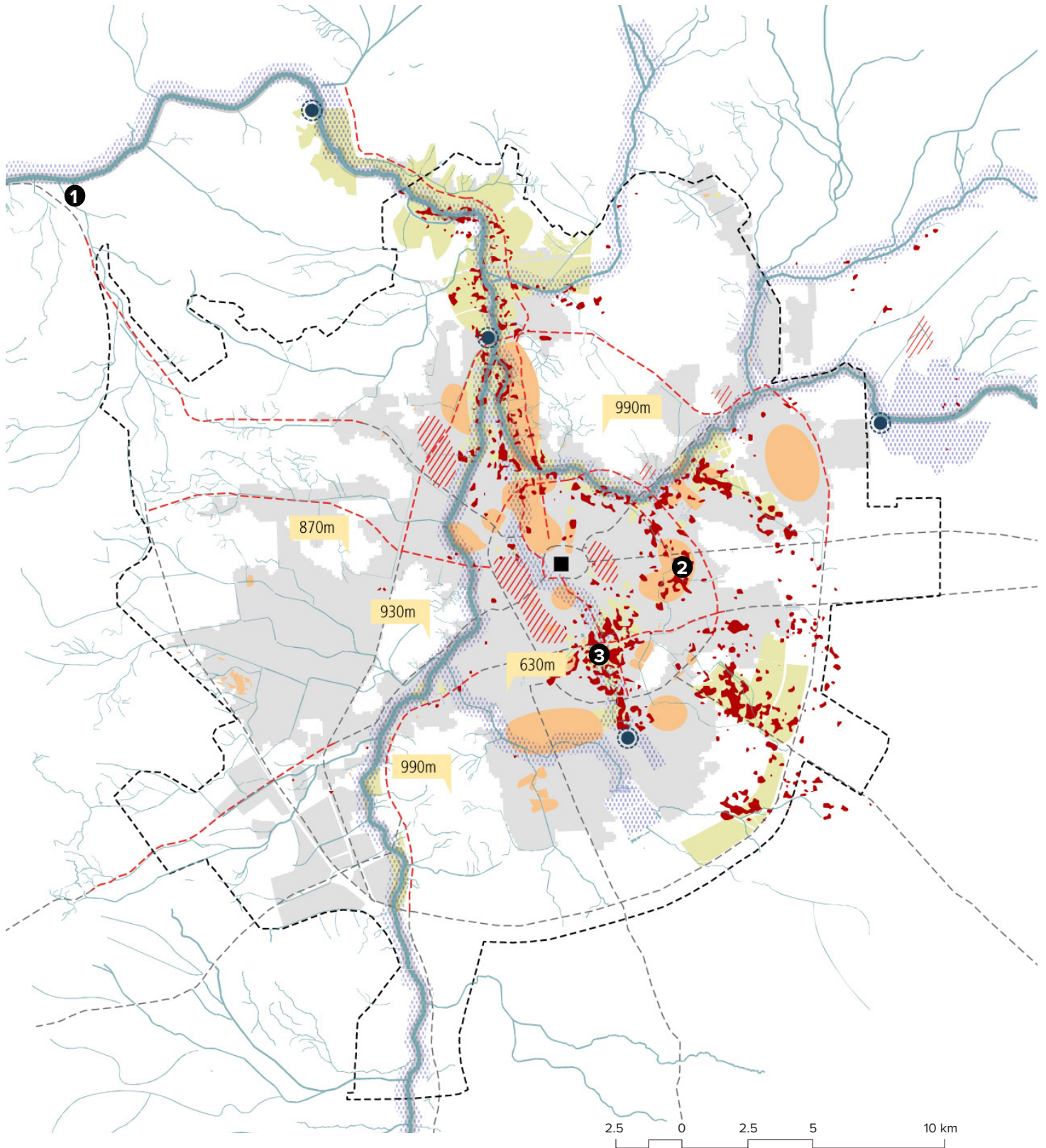
### Open and public space networks












Public spaces are places of public use that are accessible for free and able to be enjoyed by all. They operate without a profit motive and may be publicly or privately owned.<sup>24</sup> Public space plays a crucial role in the economic and social wellbeing of citizens in urban contexts. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends 9m<sup>2</sup> of public space per capita.<sup>25</sup> Access to inclusive and well-designed public spaces has a direct impact on quality of life and also increases the value of land. An assessment of the city's public space network, including the number and size of public spaces available and their capacity as major urban structuring elements, can help inform the inclusive planning and design of healthy neighbourhoods.<sup>viii</sup>

viii Public space assessment tool (step-by-step guide); Site specific assessment tool; Minecraft as a participatory engagement tool (step-by-step guide).



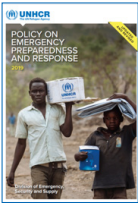


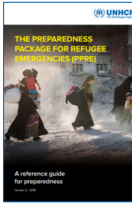


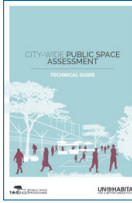
Figure 1 Example of Mapped Elements in Madinah, Saudi Arabia



- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  Wadis buffer zone / 100m      |  Built-up area at risk               |  Secondary wadis to be protected            |
|  Built-up area                 |  Unplanned settlements at flood risk |  Roads infrastructure                       |
|  Primary wadis to be protected |  Loss of agricultural land           |  Roads infrastructure at flood risk         |
|  Wadis buffer zone / 100m      |   |  Dams / traditional water management system |

## REFERENCE TOOLBOX

Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover
<b>PREPAREDNESS</b>				
31	2018	UN-Habitat; IOM	Dolow Urban Profile - Working Paper and Spatial Analysis for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displaced Crises	
	2017	UN-Habitat; IOM	Baidoa Urban Profile - Working Paper and Spatial Analysis for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displaced Crises	
	2019	UN-Habitat	Ukhiya Camps Profile Cox's Bazar (Draft)	
	2017	UN-Habitat	Garowe Urban Profile - Working Paper and Spatial Analysis for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displaced Crises	
	2017	UN-Habitat	Kismayo Urban Profile - Working Paper and Spatial Analysis for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displaced Crises	
	2018	UN-Habitat	Hudur Urban Profile - Working Paper and Spatial Analysis for Urban Planning Consultations and Durable Solutions for Displaced Crises	
	2019	UNHCR	Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response	

Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover
2018	UNHCR	The Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies (PPRE). A reference guide for preparedness.		
2015	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP)		
2016	UN-Habitat	Using Minecraft for Community Participation - Manual		
2020	UN-Habitat	The Site-Specific Assessment Guidelines		N/A
2019	UN-Habitat	City-wide Public Space Assessment		

# THEMATIC AREAS

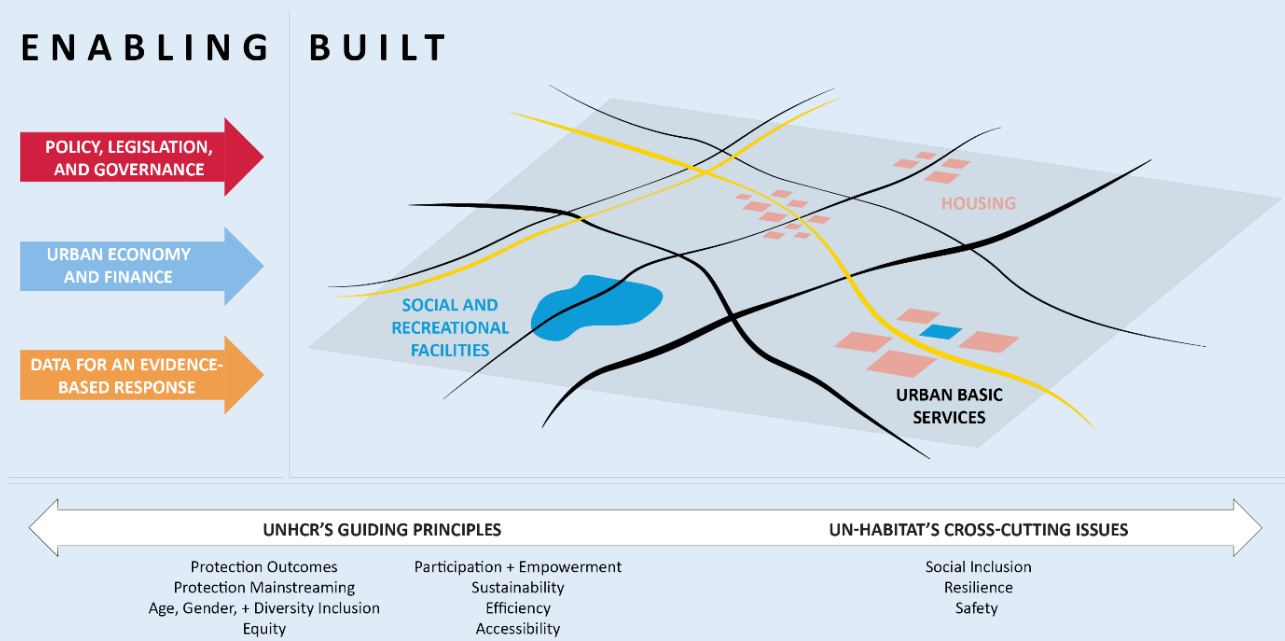
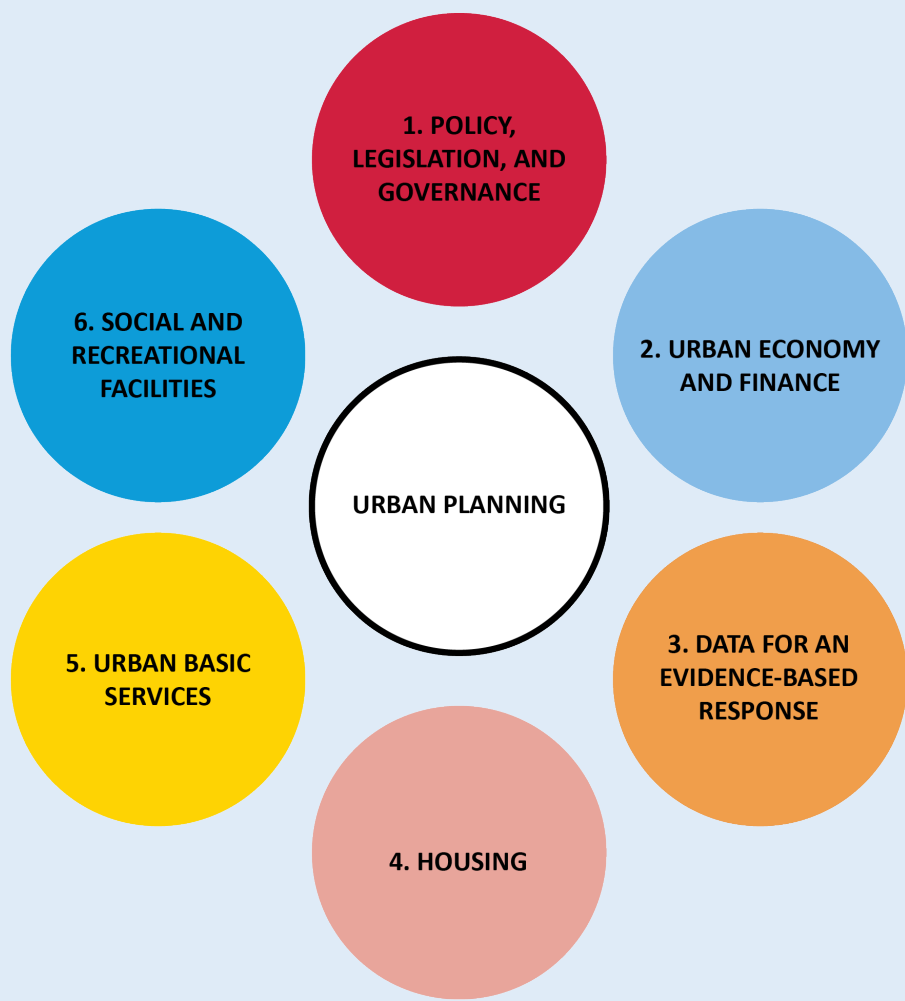


UKRAINE. *People living on frontline endure invisible wounds of war.*  
© UNHCR/OKSANA PARAFENIUK

This Guidance acknowledges that numerous factors must be considered by humanitarian, development, and governmental actors, among others when operating in urban areas. To most effectively support settlement for displaced people in cities, *Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas* lays out a cross-sectoral planning approach to understanding the city. This approach, functioning through the lens of urban planning, advocates for concentrating resources and policies towards achieving shared development objectives (Sustainable Development Goals) for displaced and host communities. An understanding of the social, economic, political, and spatial context of the city is required, and must be coordinated between urban actors, including local authorities, humanitarian and development agencies, the private sector and civil society groups. This understanding strengthens the nexus between humanitarian, development, and peace objectives.

When seeking to ensure the equitable distribution and use of resources for sustaining city functions, it is helpful to view the city through its systems in order to illustrate the connections between enabling institutions and built components. These systems may be grouped into six thematic areas, which serve as key entry points into urban contexts for UNHCR's settlement response for displaced people. The thematic areas have been categorized into elements of either the Enabling Environment or the Built Environment. The Enabling Environment includes systems in the urban context that are needed to support, manage and successfully implement a response for displaced people in cities. These include 1) Policy, Legislation and Governance, 2) Urban Economy and Finance, and 3) Data for an Evidence-Based Response. The Built Environment includes systems that are physical manifestations or structural elements of the city which are essential to formulating a response to displacement. The systems of the built environment include 4) Housing, 5) Urban Basic Services, and 6) Social and Recreational Facilities.

Figure 2 Systemic Approach to the City: 6 Thematic Areas



By addressing the Thematic Areas of the Enabling Environment, it is possible to identify gaps and streamline action to sustain and develop the Built Environment. A matrix (see below) can be used as a simple starting point when planning a comprehensive response that integrates the Enabling and Built components of the city. Information available on the ground should guide the development of this matrix. The example below identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) of each Enabling and Built Thematic Area of a city in relation to one another. For example, after an initial analysis of the city is completed, it may become evident that housing finance assistance is a major weakness in the delivery of adequate and safe housing. In this scenario, UNHCR could facilitate access to affordable rental accommodation<sup>ix</sup> by collaborating with development agencies to liaise between local authorities and land and property owners to support housing policies that cross-subsidize below-market rate rental housing in formal and informal conditions.

	Housing	Urban Basic Services	Social and Recreational Facilities
<b>Policy, Legislation, and Governance</b>	Strength: land cadastral datasets for certain neighbourhoods are available	Weakness: lack of accountability in delivery of potable water	
<b>Urban Economy and Finance</b>			
<b>Weakness: access to housing finance assistance</b>			
<b>Data for an Evidence-based Response</b>		Threat: unregistered and unmetered connections can lead to inaccurate capacity assessments	Opportunity: open-source data on worship facilities exists through NGO

Each Thematic Area's relevance for UNHCR's response is described in the sections below, followed by Key Considerations which provide broad guidance for working in urban contexts. Understanding the logic of each Thematic Area and related Key Considerations will help introduce practitioners to the intricate network of actors, services and spatial relationships involved in cities. Case studies are provided to illustrate the application of the Key Considerations in a range of geographic contexts for varying beneficiaries.

*\*\*\*The Key Considerations are not all-inclusive and cannot be used as a prescriptive or chronological checklist. However, they do provide an overview of what UNHCR should consider in responding to displacement in "emergency" and "post-emergency" phases. "Emergency" phase considerations pertain to situations where local authorities alone cannot provide resettlement services to people who have been displaced. "Post-emergency" considerations are designed to guide UNHCR and partners to support capacity-building in local governments and empower displaced people as they seek durable solutions. Although interventions will be initiated at different times of the conflict cycle, a holistic understanding of the issues is required to properly negotiate the technical complexities (and possible political sensitivities) of each Thematic Area.*

ix Forthcoming- UNHCR Rental Assistance Guidelines (Contact UNHCR Shelter and Settlement Section at Geneva Headquarters for more information).



SYRIA. UN teams reach Douma City in East Ghouta for the first time since the siege was lifted.  
© UNHCR/VIVIAN TOU'MEH

## POLICY, LEGISLATION, AND GOVERNANCE<sup>27</sup>

Effective and coherent policy, legal, institutional and governance frameworks are essential to ensure a solid context for planning. They facilitate dialogue between actors, enable a rights-based approach to development, and promote an efficient and equitable allocation and management of resources. Urban legislation defines the conditions for access to land, infrastructure, housing, and basic services. It establishes rules for planning and decision-making and guides the improvement of livelihoods and living conditions by setting requirements for urban development initiatives. It creates the context within which urban authorities, local governments and communities are expected to fulfil their mandate and react to emerging challenges. Governance in urban contexts provides the framework that defines the needs, interests, rights, and responsibilities of displaced persons, while identifying institutions responsible for the coordination and management of resources.

International normative frameworks, such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) with its Protocol (1967), imply a clear need for special efforts to be made to ensure the full participation of displaced people in the planning and management of their return, or resettlement and reintegration. Competent institutions and authorities must ensure the active participation of affected communities and take into account their views as to what they see as durable solutions. When conducting humanitarian responses, it is critical from an urban governance perspective to incorporate the relevant rights and obligations of displaced people into domestic law and create the necessary institutions and processes for implementation.

Determining the legal status of displaced individuals is imperative for their access to rights and services. International human rights guarantees are fully applicable to IDPs, who unlike refugees, are citizens. Legal frameworks need to ensure the effective protection of displaced people. It is important to assess the compatibility of domestic legal frameworks with international human rights, refugee and humanitarian laws and related standards.

This can be done through a legal analysis of the existing rights enjoyed by displaced people in the domestic legal framework. Relevant rights include enjoyment of safety, access to justice through free legal aid, security and freedom of movement, an adequate standard of living (including access to adequate food, water, housing, health care and basic education), access to employment and livelihoods, and access to effective mechanisms that guarantee their housing, land and property rights.

At the city level, these policies are often outlined in a regulatory instrument, such as a strategic plan or Master Plan. This would include a vision for the city, scenarios for potential growth, regulations guiding development, and mechanisms for implementation. Where national and local authorities face challenges in delivery and law enforcement, it is fundamental for humanitarian and development partners to support solutions that increase capacity for the provision of integrated services.

The structure of governance frameworks differs significantly between urban and rural areas. Urban areas usually have stronger local governance structures comprising multiple local authorities, sometimes called municipal or city departments, city boards or city agencies. They are responsible for different functions (e.g. education, health, planning, water, waste management, etc.) with specific elected or appointed representatives heading these departments. These local authorities are vested with different levels of power depending on the national or federal set-up to implement projects in alignment with national programmes (e.g. national urban policy, national housing policies etc.), regional programmes (e.g. regional transportation plans, regional economic development plans, climate-action plans), and local level plans (e.g. city master plans, local development plans, neighborhood plans).

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Legal framework

- identifying local authorities (through a stakeholder mapping and analysis) along with their legislative mandate and role in the management and implementation of city functions. For example, often, multiple city departments are involved in land management and administration systems to record land transactions, as well as the maintenance of the city cadastre and land and property valuation records. The strength of established institutions will be determined by their ability to smoothly coordinate with one another, horizontally and vertically which will help connect displaced people with relevant authorities or representatives.
- In case a department's capacity is inadequate to manage displaced people's concerns, UNHCR can support (in the short-term) and advocate for strengthening local capacity (in the long run) to address additional needs.
- Reviewing the city's master plan, land use plan, and zoning laws can help clarify the needed capacity and align existing uses within legally permissible frameworks e.g. occupancy of an abandoned commercial building for refugee accommodation will require either amending the land-use plan or finding alternative accommodation which conforms with local plans. This process should also involve the evaluation of the likely environmental, social, and economic impacts of such land-use changes or proposed developments through an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- Consideration must also be given to statutory frameworks such as land laws. The assessment should focus on the continuum of land rights and security of tenure, i.e. the mechanisms that exist to provide displaced people and the host community with a minimum level of confidence in their right to land and housing without the threat or experience of forced eviction. It is important to note that tenure security describes not only the situation relating to property or ownership rights, but also a range of relationships including renting, squatting or other recognized forms of land rights. Based on the land tenure status that is legitimately recognized and applicable to displaced persons, other processes such as registration, adjudication, conveyance and transfer of land rights will have to be analysed to ascertain which mechanism will guarantee long-term predictability and security from forced eviction.



## Municipal finance

Urban laws also influence equity indirectly by providing local authorities with the tools to generate public revenue from urban assets. This includes the financial management of revenues, expenditures, and debt used by local authorities to fund projects and services in a transparent and accountable manner to improve the quality of life for all residents.

While rural areas may in many cases get direct funding from central governments, urban areas often rely less on central funding or intergovernmental transfers and work within an allocated local budget. City governments generate revenue through financial mechanisms like land-based finance which includes land taxation. As a result, local development in cities is contingent upon the availability of resources and increasing local finances that can support and sustain urban development with social and economic benefits.

- Securing HLP rights (see section on Housing) and introducing taxation systems to increase potential revenues can incentivize municipalities to plan for host communities and displaced people by allocating resources that are beneficial to both in the long-term (e.g. in terms of access to affordable and appropriate space for housing and economic activity).
- Preparing or updating a land cadastre of areas with higher concentrations of displaced people is also a way of empowering municipalities to record changes in land ownership and capitalizing on changes in land value through taxation systems.
- During an emergency response, international aid directed at supporting housing, services, and infrastructure for displaced people should align with local plans, laws and regulations like land use and zoning, housing policies, and basic service networks. An incremental approach which builds on emergency funding can help cities jumpstart city extension, infill, and regeneration projects integrating the emergency response with longer-term strategic planning goals.
- As emergency funding and resources decrease over time, local authorities will increasingly shoulder the operational costs of existing assets, requiring them to refine their financial systems for service delivery and develop their own sources of revenue to maintain services. At this stage, and in increasingly earlier stages where possible, innovative financing mechanisms should be explored. One such mechanism might be through public-private partnerships where UNHCR's role should be to encourage dialogue between development actors, public entities, the private sector and civil society. Another mechanism could include designing cost recovery into programmes, for example, subsidizing base electricity consumption for refugees but charging for additional use.

## Local representation and engagement

An integral component of governance is local representation and engagement for the accurate identification and prioritization of host and displaced people's needs. This will also help maintain harmonious relations between different communities. Engaging with, supporting and building the capacity of local authorities and civil society to play the primary role in decision-making processes will not only facilitate smoother programme implementation, but will also help sustain legitimacy and stewardship over shared responsibilities in the long-term.

- In urban areas, displaced people are often more spatially scattered posing challenges for engagement. In most cases, local authorities, who are also responsible for registering refugees, IDPs, and asylum seekers, are best suited to identify and reach out to them and ensure their adequate representation.
- Identifying displaced people might be more straightforward for UNHCR in cases where the agency also carries out registration processes. In such cases, UNHCR should facilitate engagement between displaced people and local authorities. However, in the long run, local authorities should take the lead in engaging all communities in decision making processes.

## URBAN ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Cities flourish by reaping the benefits of economies of scale and the exchange of knowledge and ideas among people in proximity. However, “[p]romoting refugee livelihoods and hence creating more self-reliance is not without cost and will in first instance require more input in terms of financial and human resources. One should, however, be aware that this approach will be more cost-effective in the longer run. The return on this investment is likely to be higher than pure needs-based assistance that doesn’t promote self-reliance.”<sup>28</sup> Many factors can help improve the economic conditions for displaced people and build self-reliance, including access to labour markets, banking services (including financial credit for entrepreneurship), education, skills and language training, regularized status and documentation.

A key factor in determining the survival and wellbeing of displaced people in urban contexts is their access to viable livelihoods.<sup>29</sup> This requires policies that provide displaced people with access to the labour market (the right to work), as well as adjacent enabling rights, such as freedom of movement, property rights, recognized identification, and recognition of qualifications. It is also important to understand the supply and demand of the labour market itself, so as to identify sectors and sub-sectors in the local economy where newly arrived persons may leverage their existing skills, qualifications and interests, and integrate without displacing local workers. UNHCR can work with local governments, the private sector and civil society to ensure that displaced people have fair employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. This can be facilitated through labour protection laws, access to education and traineeships, skills development and job placement programmes that promote their self-reliance and the local economy. Thoughtful, strategic investments and coordination between spatial and economic development planning can generate positive outcomes for all.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Emergency:

- During the emergency phase, establish an enabling environment in which displaced people have safe access – in policy and practice – to labour markets and services that support entrepreneurship and employment. This will support their livelihoods and economic recovery. Such an environment requires measures to protect displaced people from SGBV, discriminatory practices, and other security threats (see “Cross-cutting Themes” in the Introduction).
- Displaced people, whether coming from dissimilar urban areas or from rural areas, possess very different skills, education levels, and work experience that need to be adapted to suit the needs of current labour markets.
  - Undertake skills profiling during emergency registration proceedings, or shortly thereafter, to determine the education, professional experience and other qualifications of displaced people. Profiling exercises may help better inform the implementation of programmes that empower communities to respond to their own needs<sup>x</sup> through settlement in proximity to jobs and other economic opportunities.
  - Where there is a lack of training or education, provide assistance to facilitate the attainment of relevant skills (e.g. language proficiency courses), educational qualifications (professional degrees, diplomas, and certified courses), and cultural integration by improving access to institutions and programmes. Vulnerable groups, such as women, children and the elderly, require special attention to overcome barriers in accessing education and employment opportunities.
- Invest early in a market systems analysis<sup>30</sup> to identify suitable education and economic opportunities for displaced people, which are tailored to their skills and interests. An analysis will also identify demand in the local market.
  - Spatialize the data as part of the market systems analysis (i.e. illustrate the locations of schools, training institutes marketplaces, employment opportunities, industrial areas, the service sector etc. on a map of the city) to identify gaps, barriers, and opportunities in access between housing and employment. These may include safe and affordable transportation options, constraints on mobility and threats to security. Ensuring safe and easy access to these facilities with improved pedestrian and transport infrastructure can encourage displaced people to enroll in these programmes and access improved livelihood opportunities.
- Lack of access or poor access to financial capital is often a barrier to economic and business development. Improve access to banking facilities, microcredit and cash-based incentives (CBIs) as a gateway to financial services. This will contribute to local economic development.
  - Governments could guarantee a portion of small business loans to refugees who are starting or expanding a business venture.
- Identify and link displaced people with established social groups within the host city, especially ones with a focus on employment. Social networks in cities can play a pivotal role in accessing economic opportunities for displaced people. Cities offer demographic and socio-economic diversity. Associating with different social networks can help displaced people access information on activities, workshops, and livelihood opportunities. UNHCR can work with partners and local agencies to facilitate this.
- Increase access to spaces for social interaction like schools, recreation facilities and common amenities to provide platforms for such exchanges.
- Engage with local decision-makers (e.g. Chamber of commerce, department of economic affairs, education board, labour unions, NGOs etc.) through processes elaborated in “Policy Legislation, and Governance.” This can empower displaced people and enhance their access to economic opportunities. Support solutions that encourage skills development, self-reliance and participation in local markets to leverage the economic potential of displaced people and help demonstrate to local decision-makers the benefits flowing from displaced peoples’ contribution to the city.

### Post-emergency:

- In the long-term, the socio-economic rights (e.g. right to work) of displaced people, combined with progressive responsibilities (e.g. contributing to the local tax system), can foster a sense of ownership and belonging, and promote self-reliance and sustainability
- Continuing to strengthen policies and regulations that reduce obstacles to education for displaced people will help improve equitable access to opportunities and promote integration in the long-term.
- Providing direct support such as subsidies to businesses to incentivize employing PoC in their first year of displacement, should be advocated for by UNHCR as a primary policy consideration which can help the transition away from aid (e.g. rental subsidies) towards self-reliance.<sup>31</sup>
- Continuing to advocate for solutions that expand displaced people’s entry into the local workforce can help alleviate the perceived burden of large influxes of displaced people on resources which could also help alleviate potential tensions between displaced people and host communities
  - This might include supporting the transition of displaced people from the informal to the formal economy, in line with national and local government regulations and priorities
  - Programmes that support displaced people in gaining the skills and accessing the resources they need to fill gaps and/or create opportunities could not only help stimulate the local economy, but also leverage displaced people as an asset

x The analysis also needs to consider unpaid responsibilities of individuals, e.g. caring for children, older people etc.



## CAIRO, EGYPT

### Improving refugees and host community livelihoods in Greater Cairo, Egypt

Host City Population	Greater Cairo: 20 million; 10 <sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, 6 <sup>th</sup> of October, Faisal & Haram: 1.4m		
Phase	Post-emergency		
Area of Intervention	Greater Cairo: 10 <sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, 6 <sup>th</sup> of October, Faisal & Haram		
Beneficiaries	2,400 refugees, 480 members of host community		
Emergency Type	Conflict-induced		
Emergency (influx) start date	2013	Emergency (influx) end date	On-going
Intervention start date	2016	Intervention end date	2020
Partners	UNHCR, Plan International Egypt, Syria Al Gad, Life Makers Foundation (local NGOs)		

#### Sources (i.e. citations):

UNHCR, 2018, *Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan: Egypt*

UNHCR, 2016, *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Egypt*

UNHCR, 2019, *Regional Strategic Overview, 2020-2021: Syrian refugees*

Plan International Egypt, 2018, *UNHCR Livelihoods 2016/17 Evaluation Report*

## Introduction

Syrian refugees have sought safety in Egypt over the past seven years, since the onset of the Syrian civil war. As of November 2019, 129,210 individuals (50% of Egypt's total refugee and asylum-seeker population) are from Syria, including 53,738 children (42% per cent of the entire Syrian refugee population). The protracted nature of the war, together with major structural changes to Egypt's economy, have led to increased pressures on households to meet basic food and non-food needs. The socioeconomic situation in the country has been compounded by ongoing inflation and steady increases in the prices of basic products and commodities over the last three years. This continues to negatively impact the possibility of self-reliance, income and employment opportunities for Syrian refugees.

## Description

Any initiatives should aim to improve the livelihoods and self-reliance of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Egyptian families. It is important to ensure that the targeting criteria for identifying Persons of Concern for training, and financial support for businesses, is balanced between meeting the protection needs of vulnerable groups and supporting sustainable initiatives that promote self-reliance. The approach used in Greater Cairo, 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan, 6<sup>th</sup> of October, Faisal, and Haram identified specific targeting criteria which was designed to support both Syrian refugees and the host community. A dedicated committee assessed livelihood and business proposals, and followed-up on case management to establish a potential basis for income opportunities and households' self-reliance.

## Actions / Approach

- *Selecting Persons of Concern (PoC) for training, based on the following criteria:* Priority was given to the youth population (between the ages of 18-24) and those with protection concerns (SGBV survivors, families at risk, female-headed

households and families who had a household member with a disability). Other criteria included the ability to make sustainable progress towards self-reliance.

- *Supporting the establishment and expansion of businesses:* Provision of entrepreneurship and core skills training to 1,287 PoC and cash grants for 1,030 business start-ups. After completion of the training, PoC developed proposals for business start-ups. Financial and non-financial support was provided to PoC to expand their existing businesses. Assessments and field interviews were conducted to check the viability of businesses and determine the financial and non-financial needs of their proposed expansions. Sixty-four percent of beneficiaries who received cash grants in 2016 and 2017 are still running their businesses, and 68% of them reported stable or increasing profits.

## Lessons learned

- When implementing self-employment programmes with the Syrian refugee community, there is a need to focus on marketing and networking activities. This is because access to the market is difficult, even though production quality is high.
- Services should be tailored to ensure they can respond to individual differences within the Syrian refugee community. For example, offering support services according to an individual's skillsets and needs would ensure a more impactful and efficient delivery of the entrepreneurship programme. Some refugees benefit from participating in the full structured programme, some require training and support for business plan development but not seed funding, and others only require seed funding.
- Developing networks of micro-business owners allow them to share their stories, challenges, ideas, and business contacts.

## DATA FOR AN EVIDENCE-BASED RESPONSE

Data is an especially empowering tool when planning for, and responding to, influxes of displaced people. Data enables the accurate assessment of current and future needs, the determination of gaps, and the effective management and evaluation of a response. Urban planning decisions based on verified evidence reduce uncertainty and lead to more rigorous, impactful and effective decisions. In the absence of data supporting the decision-making process, actions tend to be arbitrary and are more likely to be unsuccessful.

Data can be used to evaluate existing conditions and establish an understanding of dynamic systems in a city that ultimately determine their absorption capacity, e.g. markets, housing and service provisions. Urban contexts are more likely than rural settings to have some form of existing data. However, in humanitarian responses the traditional challenges of collecting, validating, and integrating sectoral data and analysis remain unchanged. Integrating qualitative and quantitative data (e.g. through surveys, participatory assessments, interviews, spatial and non-spatial data used in urban profiling practices)<sup>32</sup> leads to more effective responses. This is because modelling and critical analysis enables a more accurate targeting of multi-sectoral needs.

### Key considerations

#### Emergency:

- The process of registration of displaced people in urban areas should be used as an opportunity to collect other related socio-economic data to guide spatial analysis, provide access to formal institutions, and receive government services.
- Building on Section C- Essential elements for a spatial understanding of the city, the scale and scope of analysis necessary for operations in the emergency phase should be clarified to help focus efforts and save time and resources
  - Although the distinction might not always be clear, specify and prioritize the collection of data needed immediately for effective emergency response versus in the medium to long-term for monitoring and evaluation and impact analyses
  - Building consensus around a “good enough approach”<sup>xi</sup> to assess a city’s needs with the most relevant and reliable data available can be useful in the emergency and post-emergency phases
  - Data collection does not necessarily have to be produced from scratch, but can often be synthesized from reputable existing data sources, such as local government databases, socio-economic assessments carried out in the context of livelihoods interventions, national poverty and living standards assessments, or registration procedures for forcibly displaced persons
  - Data such as high-resolution satellite imagery can be obtained from open sources i.e. Google Earth Pro; whereas, in other cases it may need to be purchased from UNOSAT or other reputable data collection agencies. The cost of acquiring data in cases where it cannot be sourced openly or from partners should be included into program budgets
- Rapid assessments <sup>xii</sup> which can be triangulated against supporting information can be a quick way to gather enough data for an evidence-based response
- Proxy indicators, such as water consumption and information from NGOs, could help compliment data that doesn’t account for displaced people who are unable to or wish not to register
- Cross-validating data from reliable sources through geo-spatial mapping, socio-economic surveys, online surveys, workshops, etc., should help ensure a more accurate assessment of spatial, quantitative and qualitative conditions in the city.
- Translating data and information into spatial plans (i.e. maps) can serve to illustrate the overlaps and gaps between sectors and identify priority response areas. In order to adequately analyze and visualize spatial data, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist should be recruited as part of a response team.
  - Spatial data should be used in conjunction with local development plans and national legislation to complement existing and planned service provisions
  - Mapping the settlement patterns of displaced people can inform strategic planning processes that address geographic marginality and urban informality at multiple scales
  - Data on demography and built form (including density, built-unbuilt footprints, open space, location of facilities)<sup>33</sup> can inform sustainable planning solutions that take the local context, resources, and capacities into account.
  - Integrating spatial and non-spatial data, for example, through urban profiling<sup>34</sup>, interventions can help establish critical links between *need* and *access* in a strategic, multi-sectoral form rather than through siloed interventions.

<sup>xi</sup> This approach differs from the possible misconception that profiling is a large-scale, expensive, resource and time heavy undertaking, and therefore unsuitable for humanitarian response. For example, in a sudden crisis where precise statistics are neither possible nor necessary to plan a response, the profile should aim to highlighting the reality of the situation and information required for a rapid, shared understanding of the context.

<sup>xii</sup> Such as REACH. See: <https://www.reachresourcecentre.info/theme/rapid-assessments/>

- Overlaying maps of existing conditions<sup>xiii</sup> – including topography, built-unbuilt areas, density, roads, water features, zoning and land use, planned development zones, informal areas, social, educational, healthcare and recreational facilities, landmarks, etc. – with *relevant information* could help inform decisions on where to incentivize or encourage the provision of services for displaced people.
- Growth and demand projections based on historical patterns and/or satellite imagery, combined with disaggregated multi-sectoral needs assessments, are crucial for strategic long-term planning
- While data can be used to protect and enhance the lives of displaced people, it can also be a cause for harm. To protect against malicious intent, transparent and good governance should be upheld to international standards.<sup>35</sup> Identifying appropriate data custodians who decide with whom data should be shared can help protect data.<sup>36,37</sup>
  - The Signal Code<sup>38</sup> takes a rights-based approach (RBA) to humanitarian information activities (HIAs) during crises. It articulates 5 ways to protect the safety of data and information – and dignity of people – during humanitarian emergencies: 1) The Right to Information; 2) The Right to Protection from Harm; 3) The Right to Data Security and Privacy; 4) The Right to Data Agency; and 5) The Right to Redress and Rectification
- Collaborations with local authorities, institutions and other decision-makers should be formalized e.g. through a shared knowledge management platform or data custodians and strengthened, fostering effective data and resource sharing. When appropriate security measures are in place, treating data as a shared good can enable coordinated responses that increase resource efficiency, target shared priorities, and avoid duplications.
  - Managing the collection and analysis of data through a dynamic platform i.e. one that reflects changes on the ground should enable an accurate and effective response
  - As the capacity and standardization of UNHCR's Settlement Information Portal (SIP) evolves, it should become the primary organizational tool for the spatial coordination of cross-sectoral (and potentially even inter-agency) data collection and analysis. For example, see <http://unhabitatiraq.net/mosulportal/geoportal/>
- Integrating data and analysis from different sectors early on should mobilize more fluid coordination between clusters, sectors and/or programmes throughout the response and support a move to understanding the intersectoral considerations.
- Sharing data can improve local authorities' understanding of the needs of displaced people, enabling inclusion in municipal programmes through budget allocations and policy discussions.
- Providing displaced people with data and information can inform them of their position, status, and response programmes and how to access them.
- Building capacity of local authorities throughout the data collection, monitoring, and evaluation processes can establish feedback loops to help adapt systems and responses to reflect changes in baseline data strengthening urban resilience. Empowering local authorities and stakeholders as data managers and custodians can help sustain programming post emergency.

The main objective of the Settlement Information Portal (SIP) is to provide a global database mapping UNHCR active refugee and IDP settlements. SIP is a multi-sectoral platform of technical services (e.g. WashASH, Shelter, Energy and Environment) and a catalogue of settlement information and knowledge. It is designed to enhance institutional memory and technical reference, as laid out in UNHCR Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2020-2021. SIP is based on Share Point online (<https://unhcr365.sharepoint.com/sites/sip>).

UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme\* collects data and analyses over three phases and uses it to inform the implementation of capacity-building and capital investment projects. The analyses include rapid profiling, interviews and national and city reports.

- Phase one consist of the rapid profiling of urban conditions at national and local levels. The capital city, a medium-sized city and a small town are selected and studied to provide a representative sample in each country. Information is collected through standard interviews and discussions with institutions and key informants to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the national and local urban set-ups. The findings are presented and refined during city and national consultation workshops and a consensus is reached regarding priority interventions. National and city reports synthesize the information collected and outline ways forward to reduce urban poverty through holistic approaches.
- Phase two builds on the priorities identified through pre-feasibility studies and develops detailed capacity-building and capital investment projects.
- Phase three implements the projects developed during the two earlier phases, with an emphasis on skills development, institutional strengthening and replication.

\* See: <https://mirror.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=592>

## Post-emergency:

- While data analysis can highlight priorities, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) should be an integral part of the data management strategy. M&E can inform adjustments and scaling up and serve as the basis for lessons learned and guidance in future operations
- Monitoring the inclusivity of programmes can help inform planning which aims to effectively integrate displaced and host communities.

<sup>xiii</sup> Existing maps might not always accurately depict existing conditions. Rapid surveys should be conducted in priority areas in order to assess the actual conditions of the factors being assessed.

## HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY<sup>38</sup>



SYRIA. Iraqi refugees in Damascus.  
© UNHCR

Housing, land and property (HLP) rights provide protection against forced eviction and help to sustain a safe and secure home and community in which to live with dignity. They support peaceful co-existence with host populations and advance the resilience and self-reliance in displaced people. HLP rights are applicable at all times during disaster or conflict, and at all stages of the conflict cycle – from prevention to emergency, post-emergency and development. Special attention should be given to protect the HLP rights of women, children and vulnerable groups, as they are often victims of discriminatory practices.

Housing-related issues are strongly interlinked with the existing vulnerabilities of displaced people. Due to constrained local resources, they face greater obstacles in accessing public housing and housing benefits, meaning that they rely more heavily on private rental housing,<sup>39</sup> housing in informal settlements or 'vacant' land, and abandoned or unfinished buildings. Housing that is poor in quality, for temporary use or overcrowded is often the only accessible option for displaced people. The potential lack of awareness of their HLP rights, irregular employment, uncertain income and challenges in accessing justice further aggravate their vulnerability to forced evictions.

Housing challenges in urban areas are exacerbated by inadequate spatial planning. This can lead to long-term social, spatial and economic segregation in cities, especially when faced with sudden and unpredictable influxes of people. This undermines the ability of crises-affected contexts to move from the emergency phase onto the path to recovery.

UNHCR's response aims to protect **the right to adequate housing**,<sup>40</sup> which is part of the right to an adequate standard of living as recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.<sup>41</sup> In assessing the level of adequacy, seven features must be taken into account in any given context. These are legal security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy.<sup>42</sup>

While all seven criteria are equally important, there is one criterion that necessitates some explanation, namely 'legal security of tenure'. **Security of tenure is the certainty that a person's right to housing (and land) will be recognised by others and will be protected in case of specific challenges.** Everyone should possess a degree of security of tenure to protect them against forced eviction, harassment and other threats, regardless of their tenure situation (e.g. owner, tenant, camp resident, squatter). Besides being an integral component of the right to adequate housing, security of tenure also contributes to self-reliance.

Protection of the right to adequate housing is closely linked to the following rights:

- **Land rights:** Land rights refer to socially or legally recognised entitlements to use or control land and other natural resources. There is no international human right to land, although it has been widely recognised that the enjoyment of certain human rights (e.g. right to food and housing) heavily depend on access to land.
- **The Right to Property:** This right is guaranteed by the UDHR. It has two sub-components: real property (land or anything attached to it - immovable) and personal property (anything else - moveable). "Access to, use of and control over land are often strengthened by the individual or collective right to property, which may provide, for example, protection against forced evictions or arbitrary deprivation."<sup>43</sup>

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Emergency:

- Analysing the local housing stock can help identify existing capacities and gaps.
  - Supporting the creation or updating of a land bank with available private and public land that is suitable for residential purposes will help in the management and administration of all land transactions
- Developing a cohesive housing strategy will help address potential supply or logistical constraints for long-term suitability and adaptability. A cohesive housing strategy might include:
  - Mapping and prioritizing existing available housing options- rental, hosting, abandoned/ upgrading, infill, densification- for displaced communities as well as buildings and spaces currently vacant or occupied for collective shelters to meet temporary needs and mitigate associated risks;
  - Adopting area-based approaches that are comprehensive and integrated which will offer greater potential for transformative impact;
  - Considering the existing city form, density and capacity while accommodating displaced people within neighborhoods;
  - Categorizing damage levels in areas of destruction to assess safety of shelter which will help identify structures in need of necessary repairs, retrofitting or upgrading.
  - Responsible exit strategies would depend on ability to self-sustain (ability to work) and security of tenure of displaced people.
- Identifying and addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of populations that are not easily identifiable i.e. disbursed and/or isolated can be facilitated through engaging urban actors including service providers, NGOs, civil society, etc.
  - The Special Rapporteur on adequate housing has noted that displaced women, and women with intersecting identities and who face intersecting discrimination, are particularly vulnerable to tenure insecurity, homelessness and other human rights violations including SGBV and should be prioritised for emergency shelter.
  - Promote conditions for access to publicly supported and organised housing that does not indirectly discriminate against displaced people; through awareness raising, multilingual services, reporting discriminatory practices, etc.
  - Establish centres where displaced people can access information, guidance, legal assistance and support on housing options and protection of their HLP rights. This would be particularly crucial for women and vulnerable groups.
- Identify and analyse the existing tenure systems in areas where displaced people might be concentrated to facilitate safe and equitable access to housing, basic services and facilities.
  - Understand the land's development, use and occupancy history and status and achieve as much legal certainty as possible about the rights, classifications, administration that may apply to the land in question (due diligence). If applicable, ensure that national procedures for expropriation are respected (e.g. provision of just and timely compensation) and legal safeguards, such as eviction protections are in place
  - Defining and protecting the HLP rights of host communities and displaced people from the outset can help mitigate the risk of causing inadvertent disputes
  - Identifying legal provisions for adverse possession can provide one mechanism for improving security of tenure.
  - Ensuring that all rental agreements include measures for eviction protection can provide a safeguard against tenure insecurity.
  - Identifying which customary and statutory instruments (rental agreements, occupancy permits, etc.) are currently being used to establish their security of tenure is the first step to assessing which legal mechanisms can improve security of tenure. Engage customary and traditional/religious leaders as soon as possible. These authorities can have an important role to play in land administration and dispute resolution.
  - Ensuring that all dwellings have an address will authenticate housing and property owners, facilitating their access to other services and documentation.
  - Creating accountability systems and processes for HLP rights violations and sharing findings with relevant authorities will strengthen the protection from forced eviction and other violations of HLP rights
- Identifying and mapping relevant international, national and local laws, regulations and policies will help identify context-relevant opportunities and constraints related to displaced people's HLP rights. Understanding the legal context will help assess the degree of security of tenure displaced persons in the given context enjoy and identify which legal instruments are best suited for improving their security of tenure. In identifying the available and appropriate legal instruments for improving security of tenure, the following should be considered:
  - Whether the city lacks the legal and/or administrative capacity to introduce and enforce legal arrangements;
  - Whether the local governments lack the knowledge and expertise required for providing the necessary tailored protection that should be afforded to displaced people;
  - Whether there is a risk that the cost of titling and registration will displace tenants due to increasing rents and property values;
  - Whether legal arrangements are likely to exclude or discriminate against certain populations for example based on their legal status as refugees or asylum seekers, their sex or age, in which case supporting the attainment of HLP rights can help enable displaced people to be treated as equals before the law, granting them access to affordable housing and services;



- Whether legal instruments exist to provide temporary and renewable occupancy permits in cases where other security of tenure arrangements (rental agreements, property titling, etc.) are not available;
- Resettlement should be seen as a last resort (when it is not possible to provide in-situ solutions). When resettlement is unavoidable, assessing the existing housing conditions of potential resettlement sites and surroundings areas prior to resettlement can reduce the risk of conflict between host communities and displaced persons and ensure access to security of tenure.
  - Providing legal aid to displaced persons throughout the duration of the resettlement process will better enable the successful claiming of their HLP rights.
- Analyzing the issues and understanding the procedures related to property restitution and/or compensation can assist returnees in formalizing their property rights and will help mitigate property conflicts.
  - Simplify the restitution process for returnees by understanding the government-issued procedures and requirements and assisting returnees as they go through the restitution process (i.e. assist in finding evidentiary and civil documentation, clarify deadlines for applications and appeal, etc.)
  - Assess government readiness and capacity to enforce restitution decisions.
  - Understand documentary requirements for making property restitution/compensation claims and identify alternative means/evidence for property verification.
  - Identify dispute resolution mechanisms available for resolving and mitigating disputes caused by conflicting claims.
  - Implement and encourage the fit-for-purpose administrative procedures for obtaining legal rights for housing, land and properties.
- Linking housing to income-generating programmes for displaced people and local communities should support sustainable livelihoods and improve housing stock.
- Encouraging knowledge exchange and skill building programs<sup>xiv</sup> between displaced and host communities on adequate housing construction and maintenance will create potential livelihoods and community support systems
- Supporting national authorities and relevant actors to share data and information can be useful in measuring and monitoring the impact and effectiveness of responses to support the scaling-up of good practices and introduce necessary adjustments for future responses.
- Explore innovative and sustainable housing solutions in order to facilitate the access of adequate housing for the integration of migrant groups (incremental approaches, promoting mixed use development, and inclusionary housing policies).
- Partnering with multiple stakeholders<sup>44</sup> such as academic and research institutions, private sector, sectoral actors (e.g. health, education, transport, etc.), local government, traditional/tribal authorities, civil society organizations, different UN entities and INGOs, should assist in developing innovative and improved housing solutions that take local practices into account and encompass social, economic and environmental dimensions.
- Continuously assessing adequacy and appropriateness of housing assistance and monitoring impact (particularly if cash-based) could prevent exploitation and remove barriers for displaced people in the housing market.
  - Unintended harmful consequences of housing strategies should be addressed to protect vulnerable groups from exclusionary and exploitative practices.
  - Transition peripheral or informal settlements into planned neighborhoods by strengthening occupancy rights and access to basic services, allowing a range of tenure options could help formally integrate residents into the city.
- Maintain the dialogue with different stakeholders to ensure that the advocacy reaches out to all citizens including refugees, host community and returnees, and the advocacy should also target the technical and political level for the improvement of HLP rights for all and ensuring better implementation at local, regional, national and international levels.
- Stress the importance of building the capacity of women and youth that have been victims of human rights violations, on HLP rights in the conflict and post conflict context for a sustainable peace building and conflict prevention.
- Providing displaced persons with information on physical, material, and legal safety issues in their country and/or place of origin, in accordance with the Pinheiro Principles<sup>45</sup>, can enable the successful restitution of their property rights upon their voluntary return.
- Assisting displaced persons in taking the necessary measures and completing the required procedures for maintaining or re-establishing their property rights back home can enable their safe return to and security of tenure within their home country upon their voluntary return.
- Identifying the available dispute resolution mechanisms available to displaced persons is essential to quickly and peacefully addressing conflicts when they arise.

### Post-emergency:

- Developing a comprehensive housing strategy that provides an incremental approach based on participatory processes engaging the displaced and host communities and host government authorities will provide a clear trajectory for long-term solutions.
  - Assessing and expanding existing and successful housing schemes that are affordable, economically viable, suitable to the local built and cultural context, environmentally sustainable (e.g. utilizing locally accessible materials, climatic-responsive design), and encourage social cohesion.
- Identifying displaced persons access to statutory courts and right to judicial remedy is necessary to expedite this.
- Customary dispute resolution mechanisms should also be identified and supported. The establishment of committees containing parties/leaders both from host communities and displaced populations can be an effective option.

<sup>xiv</sup> E.g. cash for work, local sourcing and procurement to help foster cohesion between the displaced and the host community via shared economic benefit.



## 14 Cities + 7 Islands, Greece

### UNHCR Accommodation Scheme - Greece\*

<b>Host City Population</b>	Athens 3.15 million; Thessaloniki 811,000		
<b>Phase</b>	Post-emergency		
<b>Area of Intervention Beneficiaries</b>	In total, since November 2015, 64,577 individuals have benefitted from The Accommodation Scheme. 86% of individuals in The Accommodation Scheme are Syrians, Iraqis, Afghans, Iranians or Congolese (DRC).		
<b>Emergency Type</b>	Primarily conflict-induced		
<b>Emergency (influx) start date</b>	July 2015	<b>Emergency (influx) end date</b>	The official “emergency status” ended in 2017. New influxes started again in July 2019 but as of March 2020, UNHCR has not officially declared it an emergency.
<b>Intervention start date</b>	November 2015	<b>Intervention end date</b>	Ongoing
<b>Partners</b>	Praksis, Nostos, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Iliaktida, Solidarity Now, Arsis, Intersos, Omnes, Perichoresis, and the municipalities of Athens (ADDMA), Thessaloniki (MUNTHESS), Trikala (E-TRIKALA), Livadia (KEDHL), Larissa (DIKEL), Nea Philadelphia - Nea Chalkidona (KEDFX), Karditsa (ANKA), Tripoli (PARNONAS), Piraeus (KODEP), Tilos (TILOS) and a consortium of municipalities in Crete (HDA)		

**Sources (i.e. citations):** UNHCR Greece ([greatim@unhcr.org](mailto:greatim@unhcr.org))

\* UN-Habitat (2013). “Social Tenure Domain Model” Global Land Tenure Network. See: <https://stdm.glt.n.net/>.

## Introduction

More than one million refugees and migrants undertook the perilous journey into Europe from early 2015. At the start of this Mediterranean refugee crises an enormous number of arrivals on the Greek islands and mainland overwhelmed local municipality accommodation capacity and their stocks of appropriate shelter solutions. Over time the situation has stabilized, even though there are still challenges in sheltering new arrivals on islands where the Reception Identification Centers are overcrowded.

With a view to transitioning to more durable shelter approaches UNHCR developed an urban accommodation scheme as part of the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation Programme (ESTIA), which is funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO).

In cooperation with the Greek Government, NGOs and local authorities including the Municipalities of Athens and Thessaloniki, UNHCR provides urban accommodation and cash assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. The urban accommodation aspect of the programme allows refugees and asylum seekers to have a normal daily life and facilitates their access to services, including education, and the eventual integration of those who will remain in the country.

By the end of January 2020 almost 26,000 rental places have been created in The Accommodation Scheme, including 4600 apartments and 8 buildings across 14 Cities and seven islands.

## Description

Since the beginning of the emergency in 2015, The Urban Accommodation Scheme has been recognised by local and national authorities, as well as the host population, as the most appropriate solution for refugee accommodation. This is largely because:

- Refugee camps are not well-suited for the Greek terrain, where large plots of open land are not easily available.
- Greek cities offer better access to services, public space, and infrastructure than remote refugee camps.
- The Urban Accommodation Scheme enables more job opportunities and possibilities for integration.
- The Accommodation Scheme presents significant opportunities to incorporate solutions for both refugees and the host communities, which benefit from income generated through apartment rentals. Nearly all beneficiaries of the programme are housed in buildings inhabited by Persons of Concern only, or with other tenants of Greek and/or other nationalities. A very small minority are accommodated with host families and in hotels.

The success of the Scheme is reflected in its expansion. It started with UNHCR doing direct implementation, exploring rental solutions, and conducting building assessments in the centre of Athens, and now has expanded throughout the country in collaboration with 20 implementing partners in addition to local municipalities.

UNHCR partners address barriers to refugees' access to rental agreements by entering into direct contractual agreement with apartment owners, adopting common rental agreement templates based on national legislation. In parallel, ad hoc agreements between the partners managing the accommodation and the PoC beneficiaries ensure rights and obligations are stated upon the latter's entry in the apartment. The apartments are fully furnished with UNHCR stock and inventory items.

## Actions / Approach

- Providing urban accommodation and cash assistance to refugees and asylum seekers.
- The development of technical guidance for UNHCR and partners regarding the selection of apartments and buildings rented to accommodate refugees under the Scheme. This was developed to fill the gap in national legislation regarding refugee accommodation. The technical guidance is divided into two categories: Technical Standards, which refer to compulsory criteria based on Greek Law, and Technical Guidelines, which are not compulsory criteria, but should be followed to ensure a common approach amongst partners in the selection of accommodation facilities.
- Providing a range of complementary services, activities and in-kind support to beneficiaries, including psychosocial support and translation. Since most PoCs recognized the language barrier as a problem in their daily life, this service was greatly valued.

## Challenges

- The availability of affordable, safe buildings in good condition in relatively central urban areas that UNHCR could rent to host several families (to ensure economies of scale).
- Xenophobic attitudes in some municipalities, where authorities and citizens strongly opposed the idea of dedicated buildings hosting PoC.

## Lessons learned

- Large cities in Greece have been severely affected by the country's economic crisis, with reduced infrastructural development gains. The country's public housing agency was forced to close in 2012 and the housing and construction market has been almost paralysed. Shelter initiatives should move on to benefit urban and suburban economies and focus on sustainability issues, for example, by using the existing housing stock and unused buildings, as well as supporting the construction sector through rehabilitation and reconversion projects.
- Due to the constant movement of asylum seekers in and out of apartments in the Scheme, the need for repairs started becoming substantial. Many flats would remain empty for weeks before being repaired and ready to receive new beneficiaries. In response, UNHCR partners employed in-house skilled tradespersons (plumbers and electricians) to handle minor damage in a timely and cost-efficient manner. Initially, the scope of The Accommodation Scheme was to temporarily accommodate relocation candidates. Before long, this was amended to target the most vulnerable asylum seekers who effectively had no other options than to remain and settle in Greece, as well as asylum seekers awaiting reunification with family in other countries.
- The use of the apartments by the beneficiaries was different to that of the host population. The electricity and water bills were also significantly larger. In cases of excess use of utilities and minor repairs (changing light bulbs etc.) the partners added a minor contribution from the PoC, which was taken out of their monthly cash assistance. This intervention resulted in a large reduction of the bills and the minor repairs needed.



## KABUL AND HERAT, AFGHANISTAN

### Sustainable Human Settlements in Urban Areas to Support Reintegration

<b>Host City Population</b>	Kabul: 4.1 million; Herat: 400,000		
<b>Phase</b>	Emergency to post-emergency		
<b>Area of Intervention</b>	Kabul and Herat		
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	22,688 IDPs and returnee households in Herat (3,260), Jalalabad (6,418), Kandahar (2,309) and Mazar-e-Sharif (2,791)		
<b>Emergency Type</b>	Conflict-induced, instability		
<b>Emergency (influx) start date</b>	Over four decades ago	<b>Emergency (influx) end date</b>	Ongoing
<b>Intervention start date</b>	2017	<b>Intervention end date</b>	2019
<b>Partners</b>	UNHCR, IOM, government agencies and municipalities		

#### Sources:

1. UN-Habitat internal survey.
2. Interview with Marcus Tudehope and David Dominique Maliro, UN-Habitat Afghanistan team.
3. UN-Habitat, 'Government of Afghanistan launches SHURA, a New Programme to support Reintegration of Returnees and Displaced Persons', <http://unhabitat.af/news/government-of-afghanistan-launches-shura-a-new-programme-to-support-reintegration-of-returnees-and-displacedpersons-2/>, 2018, (accessed 14 February 2019).
4. UN-Habitat, 'Housing for IDPs Kick Off in Herat', <http://unhabitat.af/news/housing-for-idps-kick-off-in-herat/>, 2018, (accessed 14 February 2019).

## Introduction

War and drought have caused a serious humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, displacing 51 percent of its citizens either internally as IDPs or out of the country as refugees. Since 2014, more than 3.5 million refugees have returned home. The country is facing a housing and land rights challenge of critical proportions. The situation is particularly dire for returned refugee and displaced persons, many of whom are living in open spaces and urban informal settlements, making them vulnerable to eviction and violence. Meeting the challenge of accessing land, tenure security and housing is a critical step towards durable solutions, and the reintegration of the returnees and IDPs. UN-Habitat's Sustainable Human Settlements in Urban Areas to Support Reintegration in Afghanistan (SHURA) programme was launched by the Government of Afghanistan with the support of UN-Habitat to address the re-integration needs and livelihood opportunities for returnees and IDPs. It aims to reduce the creation of camp neighbourhoods or open-ended crisis situations through the establishment of safe and planned communities. This will provide the opportunity for families to enjoy inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable settlements, as reflected in SDG 11. The approach under SHURA is to provide the foundation for self-reliance and integration by allocating well-situated land in proximity to suitable livelihood opportunities. Following the identification of vacant state-owned land, a rapid assessment and rapid allocation process will facilitate the parallel delivery of humanitarian assistance and permanent development interventions to the most vulnerable families in order to augment their self-reliance.

## Description

A key consideration when securing HLP Rights for displaced people is to conduct assessments to understand existing legal frameworks and the status of land occupancy. The approach used in Afghanistan identified available land, assessed its capacity and proximity to suitable livelihood opportunities, and allocated land using a 'permission to stay' tenure method. This lay the foundations for self-reliance and the integration of beneficiaries.

## Actions / Approach

*Allocation of well-situated land for durable solutions and the creation of a Land Bank database*

- Land was identified for the reintegration of beneficiaries through:
  - Rapid identification of vacant state land within the city
  - Rapid assessment of the absorption capacity of identified durable solutions sites based on environmental, economic and social considerations
  - Rapid site planning and basic site preparation of durable solution locations
  - Rapid allocation of land, using a non-transferrable, collective 'permission to stay' approach



- Afghanistan Land Authority (ARAZI) inventoried 19,000 hectares of State land in provinces of high return and displacement and is working towards the finalization of land clearance
- A Land Bank database system was established by the government, with technical support from IOM. It catalogued suitable land for beneficiary selection and registration
- 1.4 million jeribs (or 2800km<sup>2</sup>) of land now registered under the Land Bank database by ARAZI
- A legal framework was created and adopted to enhance durable solutions for the affected communities

#### *'Permission to stay' approach*

- The approach was used in the space between formal and informal recognition of land rights (defined within the UN Habitat continuum of land security)
- 'Permission to stay' took the form of letters from the government that allowed people to stay on the land
- Once the approach was implemented, people were able to build their lives because they no longer feared evictions. As a result of this stability, schools and other infrastructure could be built, promoting livelihoods.

## URBAN BASIC SERVICES



The right to basic services like health and nutrition, water, energy, sanitation, waste management, and mobility is strongly linked with social protection, human rights and human development. Energy use is often inefficient, unsafe, expensive and inadequate for the needs of those targeted. Cooking impacts multiple program areas, including protection, food security, nutrition, health and the environment. To address this, practitioners addressing cooking challenges for displaced people are expected to apply comprehensive and holistic solutions that address multiple challenges at the same time. Access to basic services ensures that all individuals attain a minimum standard of living, which is a prerequisite for socio-economic growth and development.

Many urban areas, especially those experiencing rapid levels of unplanned growth and expansion, already face challenges in the adequate delivery of these services. This is most acutely witnessed in poor areas, such as informal settlements or slums. Humanitarian crises or disasters can further increase the strain on resources, exacerbating inequalities and increasing tensions in affected neighbourhoods. UN-Habitat has engaged with communities to profile cities and identify priorities for infrastructure investments and the creation of livelihood and development opportunities.

Identifying practical synergies between sectors and humanitarian and development actors will result in cost-effective solutions by reducing redundancy. Multi-stakeholder strategies for the inclusion of displaced people in national,<sup>46</sup> regional, and local systems promote partnerships and approaches that strengthen existing services rather than developing parallel humanitarian response systems. In addition, participatory and inclusive approaches that involve all stakeholders (i.e. local government, humanitarian and development actors, private and informal sectors and displaced people) can lead to increased ownership and sustainability of interventions, whilst maximizing resources to grow the local economy and create sustainable livelihoods.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Emergency:

- Conducting a rapid needs assessment of persons of concern and the host community (as appropriate) is fundamental to determine the appropriate response(s). Where possible, needs assessment should be designed to leverage existing socio-economic assessment frameworks which are used by government or local authorities.
- Any assessment should determine the level of access that urban PoCs have to basic services, and whether substandard conditions are a result of: (1) vulnerable population groups being blocked from accessing services (protection issue), (2) a lack of financial means for refugees to access the services (protection 'right to work'/Basic Needs Approach issue), (3) infrastructure and resulting services existing prior to influx is inadequate for the increased population (assistance issue). Develop an approach that can understand this rapidly and refine analysis over time. Conducting an age-gender-diversity based assessment of needs (e.g. Safety audits<sup>47</sup>), access and potential barriers can help prioritize the provision of basic services.
- Analysing the local context for the delivery of basic services can help identify existing capacities and gaps, and which partners will be necessary to engage in response. This will reduce the set-up of parallel services and limit market distortions.
  - When infrastructure and institutions for service delivery are intact, an assessment to map how and where services provisions can be extended to displaced people should be conducted. Any mapping should be sure to include services provided by the private as well as public sector, and should look at the reliability, adequacy, quality and affordability of services. Where possible a cost-benefit analyses can help direct investment towards repairs, upgrades or new infrastructure and services. Sector specific as well as multi-sector needs assessments have been developed by UNHCR and others.
- Often times programming will involve cash-based interventions (CBI). Considerable guidance is available on CBI programming including on situation and response analysis which can be used to determine the type of CBI programming that is appropriate. Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants (2015) has a considerable amount of information on: needs, capacities, risk assessment, vulnerability and targeting, market analysis,
- Applying area and community-based approaches that take equity and quality into account to address differing and overlapping needs, especially of the most vulnerable groups should help prevent tensions between displaced people and hosting communities.
  - Considering density and a comprehensive planning approach that integrates basic services can optimise land preservation, cost-efficiency, and accessibility of services.

- Building strong partnerships with municipalities, ministries, and service providers from the outset of an emergency, to strengthen their technical, operational and management capacity and advocate for equitable access and inclusion of displaced people in welfare programmes that provide subsidised services should assist in removing barriers to access in the long term.
- Supporting the alignment of newly introduced systems with local, regional or national policies, plans, standards, resources, and capacities can help the long-term operation and management of integrated basic services.
- During the transition from acute emergency to protracted, alignment with local and national systems is fundamental.

### Post-emergency:

- Following the acute emergency phase it is critical to engage and support medium term planning processes with key development actors including; Govt, financing institutions, civil societies, UN agencies, and the private sector. Performance standards should transition from emergency and should align with national standards and/or relevant SDG standards.
- A responsible exit strategy for UNHCR's operations will enable municipalities to adopt services and infrastructure initiated and supported in the emergency response as an integrated component of the city's development strategy.
- Addressing inefficiencies, bottlenecks, or damages inadvertently caused during emergency provisions will ease the transition into a longer-term strategy and increase impact.
  - Conducting regular assessments of the level and affordability of urban basic service provisions, paying particular attention to those who are most vulnerable, can help improve, prioritize and phase programmes that reduce identified inequalities.
- Collaborating with civil society can help establish community management frameworks that encourage community uptake and the equitable distribution of and access to resources.
- Ensuring that developers contribute to providing basic services in the form of exactions<sup>xv</sup> or upgrading existing infrastructure can ease the burden on local authorities to meet long-term demands.
- Assisting government and service providers to understand the life-cycle costs of service delivery and develop financing plans to meet these costs will help ensure the sustainability of services. This should be done as part of the overall capacity building of service providers and service authorities and should address all dimensions of service sustainability.
- Conducting willing and ability to pay studies is important for targeting of assistance to vulnerable groups and for designing tariffing structures. Usage fees can reduce inequalities between host and displaced communities, create awareness, encourage judicious use, and promote long-term sustainability.

xv "Exactions are burdens or requirements a local government places on a developer to dedicate land or construct or pay for all or a portion of the costs of capital improvements needed for public facilities as a condition of development approval. Exactions come in many forms—they may be called conditions or impact fees and may be in the form of infrastructure building, cash payments to the local government, dedications of land for public uses, conditions on future land use, restrictions on alienation, or other restrictions or burdens on the permit applicant." See: [https://www.law.ufl.edu/\\_pdf/academics/centers-clinics/clinics/conservation/resources/exactions.pdf](https://www.law.ufl.edu/_pdf/academics/centers-clinics/clinics/conservation/resources/exactions.pdf)



## KAMPALA, UGANDA

### Sustainable Human Settlements in Urban Areas to Support Reintegration

Host City Population	Kampala 1.75 million		
Phase	Emergency to Post-emergency		
Area of Intervention	Kampala		
Beneficiaries	94,958 registered refugees and asylum seekers. 100,00 unregistered refugees.		
Emergency Type	Conflict-induced, instability		
Emergency (influx) start date	From South Sudan: 2014 From Burundi: 2015 From Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2017	Emergency (influx) end date	Ongoing
Intervention start date		Intervention end date	Ongoing
Partners	UNHCR		

#### Sources:

*Urban WASH Planning Guidance Note, UNHCR*

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/68?sv=0&geo=220>

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/65982>

## Introduction

The Government of Uganda has a generous, open-door refugee policy, which grants refugees freedom of movement and the right to work. In March 2017, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) of Uganda launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). This adapts the principles and objectives set out in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to the Ugandan context. The Kampala Declaration reaffirms Uganda's commitment to promote refugee self-reliance and inclusion in the country's development planning. This includes adopting management models to serve refugee populations.

Kampala, the capital city, has about 1.75 million residents with a significant population of urban poor. The country's refugee population as of February 2020 stands at 1.4 million, hosted across 12 districts. Although most refugees live in settlements in the country's north, an increasing number reside in urban areas, including Kampala. In 2014, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) reported that approximately 32% of Kampala's population resided in informal settlements. These informal settlements are characterised by "poor physical infrastructure, including a lack of paved roads, minimal rubbish collection and inadequate drainage systems along with a persistent risk of flooding and presence of unhygienic and unsanitary practices." These conditions are exacerbated by registered and unregistered refugees settling in these informal areas without planned infrastructure.

A 2017 REACH study showed that urban refugees in Uganda appeared to fully integrate into the urban fabric, and that they tended to spread out across multiple neighbourhoods, rather than clustering in clearly defined refugee-hosting areas. However, the study also revealed that there was a considerable difference in economic means between refugee and host populations. Thirteen percent of refugee households indicated that they had no access to any income generating activity, compared with four percent of host community households (REACH, 2017).

## Description

It is important to determine the level of access that urban residents have to basic services. Where the level of access is substandard, it must be determined whether this is a result of: (1) vulnerable population groups being blocked from accessing services, (2) a lack of financial means for refugees to access the services, (3) the pre-existing infrastructure and resulting services from before the population influx are inadequate for the increased population. In Kampala, a significant barrier to access is a lack of finance to successfully implement the minimum standards for sanitation and hygiene in informal settlements.



Another key consideration is to build strong partnerships with municipalities, ministries and service providers from the outset of an emergency. This strengthens their technical, operational and management capacities to provide subsidised services, and assists in removing barriers to access in the long term. The KCCA initiated a Public Private Partnership for waste collection to meet the increased demand and maintain the quality of this service.

## Actions / Approach

- KCCA has established minimum standards for onsite sanitation. Funds are being sought to raise awareness of these standards and carry out enforcement measures. If funds were available and could be accessed by landlords at a low interest rate, facilities that meet the minimum standards could be constructed.
- In the past KCCA collected solid waste at no fee from informal settlements that house refugees, but it lacked the capacity to collect all the solid waste generated. A Public Private Partnership was created, where the private entity was contracted to collect waste from informal settlements at a very low price, supported by government subsidies.
- The National Water and Sewerage Cooperation (NWSC) – the body in charge of providing safe water to residents – devised pro-poor services to ensure that people living in informal settlements have access to clean safe water. However, there have been challenges to meet this demand with the limited resources in place.

## Lessons Learned

- WASH standards have been developed for use in refugee settlements, but these standards do not align with the needs and constraints of the urban environment. The humanitarian standards developed for camp settings do not always directly apply in urban areas, and need to be adapted to the context of the city.
- UNHCR and Partners must work closely with KCCA and NWSC to support service delivery for Persons of Concerns residing in the city and its suburbs.
- Pursuant to approaches laid out in the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and the CRRF, refugees and undocumented migrants are planned for under National Development Plans. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each socio-economic group (i.e. lower, middle and upper class) apply to both refugees and nationals living in the city.
- UNHCR can leverage its catalytic and convenor role to advocate for Development Partners to provide grants for service improvement in low income neighborhoods.
- The WASH sector can work closely with protection colleagues to map out locations where most vulnerable refugees reside. This leverages data as an advocacy tool for smart targeting resources.
- The WASH sector can take advantage of the Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM) to interact with refugees in the urban context.

## SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES



LEBANON. *Collective Centre Lebanon.*  
© UNHCR/ELENA DORFMAN

Social and recreational infrastructure includes facilities provided by the government to its population like health and education facilities, public spaces, government institutions, marketplaces, sports facilities and community centres. These shared resources can act as points of interaction and help to reduce conflicts and tensions by cultivating shared ownership and management. Shared facilities<sup>xvi</sup> and public spaces<sup>xvii</sup> not only provide services like education, training and disease prevention and control, but also support the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of displaced people essential to peacebuilding efforts. They are also crucial from a livelihood perspective as they support the growth of economic activities. Shared social and recreational facilities are a form of economic, cultural and social expression for different groups, including women, children, and the elderly, in cosmopolitan urban areas. Enhancing the quality of facilities and services and improving their accessibility can benefit host and displaced communities over the long-term by building social capital and boosting opportunities for economic development. Multi-stakeholder strategies for the inclusion of displaced people in national,<sup>48</sup> regional, and local systems promote partnerships and approaches that strengthen existing facilities, rather than developing parallel humanitarian response systems.

xvi E.g. schools, universities, hospitals, clinics, parks, community centers, courthouses, public libraries, museums, post offices, centers of faith etc.

xvii E.g. parks, plazas, streets, promenades, public beaches, natural features and marketplaces. Roads serve not only as connecting lines between destinations (e.g. between home and work), but can also serve as spaces for interaction, recreation and economic opportunity.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### Emergency:

- Integrating a shared facilities and public space component into existing displacement management emergency action plans (if available) can help address key social, educational, health and well-being and economic components of city life.
  - In the emergency phase, existing public spaces or identified open areas may adopt new functions as part of the response and be utilized as temporary areas for registration and/or distribution centres, storage, accommodation, etc.
  - Over time, some of these public spaces and their functions evolve - depending on the nature of the response, capacity, or availability of resources – into informal or formal settlement structures.
  - Particular attention should be paid to the use of educational and health facilities as temporary accommodation as it may interfere with their seasonal use (e.g. schools) or availability of services provided therein.
- Encouraging local authorities to include considerations for displaced people in the programming and management of shared facilities and public space might aid in reducing potential social tensions in the long run.
  - Although not always the case, the needs of displaced people can be different from host communities whom local governments are meant to serve.
  - Using participatory processes that include facilitated channels of open communication between displaced people and host communities to inform design and programming changes can help foster community cohesion<sup>xviii</sup>
  - Advocating for investment in a network of public spaces facilities that provide opportunities for interaction and enjoyment between all social groups can help to reduce conflicts and tensions, lowering rates of crime and violence<sup>49</sup>.
  - Ensuring access to publicly provided spaces like marketplaces and services that support employment and entrepreneurship is critical from the livelihood perspective by supporting the growth of economic activities

- Mapping settlement patterns and transportation networks (including roads, railway lines, waterways and bus lines) in relation to existing public spaces and facilities should assist efforts to identify gaps in access to education, health, recreational, and support services
  - In order to ensure adequate accessibility, facilities need to be in close proximity (or reachable through feasible/reliable transport means) as well as have the absorption capacity to serve additional people

### Post-emergency:

- Linking incentives for housing and job opportunities in proximity to shared facilities and public space can be further strengthened after the emergency response phase
  - Public space and facilities also foster empowerment and access to institutional and political space
- Including displaced people in management frameworks including encouraging stewardship over shared facilities, for example hiring refugees to maintain public spaces, might help reduce squatting and land-grabbing in those areas and increase community cooperation
  - Working with development agencies and the public sector can help deepen UNHCR's understanding of the technical and institutional capacities of public entities, private agencies, humanitarian and development actors and civil society groups and where UNHCR programming might be able to influence better stewardship over public space and shared facilities
- Encouraging local authorities to plan activities in public spaces and shared facilities that help connect displaced people and host communities can further aid in establishing a stronger sense of place and build social ties
  - Visioning workshops<sup>50</sup> and tools such as safety audits, exploratory walks, gaming, etc. are a common participatory way for development agencies to engage community members in contributing to the planning and design of spaces, networks, services and programmes that directly address their needs

<sup>xviii</sup> In Latin America, UNHCR developed a methodology for fostering social cohesion through schools. It is currently being deployed in hosting countries in the Venezuela crisis. See: <https://www.acnur.org/fileadmin/Documentos/Publicaciones/2016/10267.pdf>



## TRIPOLI, LEBANON

### Restoration of Chaarani Stairs as a Public Space for Social Inclusion

Host City Population	Tripoli: 229,000		
Phase	Emergency to post-emergency		
Area of Intervention	Qobbe neighborhood		
Beneficiaries	6,365 Individuals (14.5% of which are Syrian refugees)		
Emergency Type	Conflict-induced, instability		
Emergency (influx) start date	2008 and 2011	Emergency (influx) end date	
Intervention start date	October 2018	Intervention end date	Ongoing
Partners	UN-Habitat, Solidarités International (SI), EVA Studio, Municipality of Tripoli		

*Source: Solidarités International Annual Report*

#### Introduction

Qobbe is a residential neighbourhood in Tripoli, North Lebanon, that has been impacted by violent clashes since 2008. The influx of refugees from Syria has brought an additional level of complexity, and tensions exist between host and refugee communities. Within this context, a neighbourhood approach programme called “El Hay” was initiated in three sub-neighbourhoods of Qobbe: Chaarani, Rahbet and old Qobbe. The programme aims to respond to the urgent needs of both host and refugee communities, while starting to tackle the root causes of the challenges faced in the area. The first phase of the programme, funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF), included the rehabilitation of 200 sub-standard buildings (SSB), residential building rehabilitation, street lighting, rehabilitation of public spaces and solid waste management initiatives. As a continuation of the “El Hay” programme, SI is now working on the rehabilitation of public secondary access to the Chaarani stairs in cooperation with EVA Studio funded by UN-Habitat.

#### Description

A key consideration when planning for enhanced communal harmony that fosters physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing among displaced people in urban areas, is the location of and access to shared social and recreational facilities, including public spaces. This project aims at enhancing the living environment of vulnerable host and refugee households through the physical improvement of public spaces, and encouraging maintenance through awareness workshops and campaigns. The rehabilitation of the access to the Chaarani stairs also aims to reduce segregation among Qobbe’s communities by creating a cohesive and inclusive environment, and offering opportunities for exchange. The project will have an impact on different age and gender groups; it will facilitate safe movement of the elderly, people with disabilities and women (particularly at night). The provision of quality public spaces will contribute to greater resilience within the communities.



## **Actions / Approach**

### *Social inclusion and participation*

- In order to facilitate community inclusion, SI launched a “memory process” at the beginning of the project in 2018. The idea behind this initiative was to collect stories of the neighbourhood and its inhabitants in relation to the Chaarani stairs. The objective was to reinforce the links that local people have with the location, and to serve as a pretext for bringing people together and facilitating community exchanges. This mobilization process reinforced both communities’ ties and helped reduce social tensions.

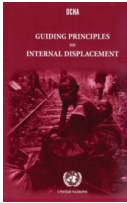
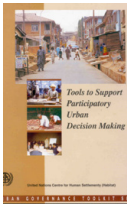


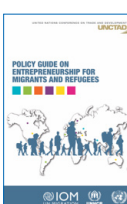
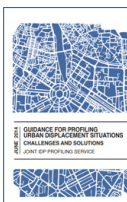
### *Creation of jobs*




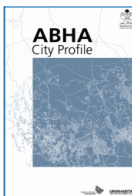
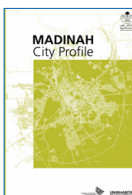
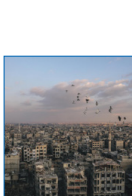

- Unemployment is a key issue in making Qobbe one of the most vulnerable areas in Lebanon. The agreement between SI and the contractor engaged to rehabilitate the stairs includes a clause stating that 100% of daily workers and 60% of skilled workers must be hired from the local community. This provides livelihood opportunities for the residents of the neighbourhood.

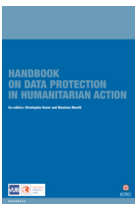
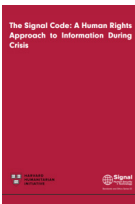
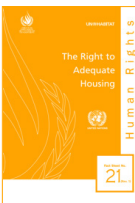
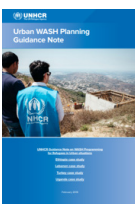



## **Lessons Learned**

It was very important to have clear partnerships and communication with the municipality and the communities in which the project was implemented. When engaged from the very beginning of the project, the municipality became a partner when unexpected difficulties arose. Engaging the communities from the outset ensured a sense of ownership from the community – a critical factor for the sustained maintenance of the public space.






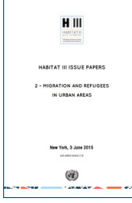

# REFERENCE TOOLBOX


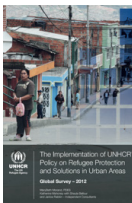




Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover	
THEMATIC AREAS					
1998	UNOCHA	Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement	In line with international human rights and humanitarian law, and with refugee law by analogy, these 30 principles set out the rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of IDPs in all phases of displacement.		
2001	UN-Habitat	Tools to Support Participatory Urban Decision Making	This toolkit is a contribution to the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, an initiative led by UN-Habitat in collaboration with a whole range of partners whose development goal is to contribute to the eradication of poverty through improved urban governance. This toolkit will contribute to the wider dialogue, advocacy and capacity-building efforts towards good urban governance.		
2019	European Commission	EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals	The multilingual EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals is intended for use by organisations offering assistance to Third Country Nationals. It helps to map the skills, qualifications and work experiences of the third country nationals and to give them personalised advice on further steps.		
29	2017	International Labour Organization; UNHCR	A Guide to Market-Based Livelihood Interventions for Refugees	This guide is written with the aim of providing a new way of looking at refugee livelihoods that combines a market system approach with more traditional livelihood interventions.	
30	2018	UNCTAD; IOM, UNHCR	Policy Guide on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees	The Guide is a practical tool aimed at strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus urged by the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted at the 71st United Nations General Assembly in September 2016. This policy guide focuses on the role of entrepreneurship in enhancing the positive effects of migration on economic growth and development.	
2014	Joint IDP Profiling Service	Guidance for Profiling Urban Displacement Situations	JIPS' Guidance for Profiling Urban Displacement Situations offers solutions to some of the challenges inherent in carrying out such exercises in towns and cities.		


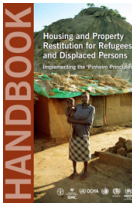
Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover
2012	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises	The Guidance explains the agreed methodologies, approaches and roles and responsibilities identified as best practice for coordinating assessments and analysis.	
48 2015	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment Guidance	The Guidance explains how to jointly design and execute a joint, multi-sectoral needs assessment in the initial weeks of an emergency, including IASC system-wide level 3 emergency responses (L3).	
2020	OHCA; Humanitarian Programme Cycle	2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview - Template	The HNO document compiles results from various sectoral and multi-sectoral assessments to identify priority humanitarian needs to be addressed. It feeds into the next stage of the programme cycle, strategic planning. It also highlights information gaps and country plans to address these gaps.	
32 2018	UN-Habitat	Future Saudi Cities Programme - Al-Ahasa City Profile	A series of urban profiles developed by UN-Habitat as part of the Future Saudi Cities Programme	
32 2018	UN-Habitat	Future Saudi Cities Programme - Madinah City Profile	A series of urban profiles developed by UN-Habitat as part of the Future Saudi Cities Programme	
33 2019	Global Alliance for Urban Crises; UN-Habitat; JIPS; Impact	Urban Profiling for Better Responses to Humanitarian Crises	The purpose of this research is to provide urban crisis responders with greater clarity about the concept of urban profiling by identifying key elements as well as lessons and examples from practice. In essence, this knowledge product is intended to contribute to improving the alignment of efforts by the many actors involved in crisis response, including but not limited to local governments, civil society groups, humanitarian and development actors, built environment professionals and academics, among others.	
36 2019	UNHCR	Data Transformation Strategy 2020-2025. Supporting protection and solutions	UNHCR's data transformation strategy presents a vision, strategic priorities and key actions that will be undertaken to enhance strategic and responsible use of timely, quality data and information.	

	Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover
35	2017	ICRC	Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action	The Handbook builds on existing guidelines, working procedures and practices established in humanitarian action in the most volatile environments and for the benefit of the most vulnerable victims of humanitarian emergencies. It seeks to help humanitarian organizations comply with personal data protection standards, by raising awareness and providing specific guidance on the interpretation of data protection principles in the context of humanitarian action, particularly when new technologies are employed.	
37	2017	Harvard Humanitarian Initiative	The Signal Code: A Human Rights Approach to Information During Crisis	The Signal Code identifies five rights from multiple sources of international human rights and humanitarian law and standards that already exist and apply to humanitarian information activities (HIAs).	
41	2009	OHCHR	The Right to Adequate Housing Toolkit	Collection of documents regarding housing rights legislation and indicators to implement and measure elements of the right to adequate housing.	
	2018	UNHCR	Urban WASH Planning Guidance Note	These brief guidelines are prepared primarily for UNHCR WASH staff and partners in response to refugees living “out of formalised camps” in urban areas, though have applicability to those in camps in urban areas too.	
47, 49	2019	UNHCR	Refugee Education 2030. A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion	The Strategy arises from lessons learned about parallel education provision for refugees reflected in the 2011 Review of refugee education, and from the experience of shifting to national education service provision across a wide range of distinct contexts as a result of the guidance provided in the 2012-2016 UNHCR Refugee Education Strategy.	
	2018	UNICEF	Safety Audits: A How-To Guide	UNICEF Helpdesk, - Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies	
	2018	Global Shelter Cluster	The State of Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements 2018	This report paints a broad picture of humanitarian shelter and settlements. It sets the general scene about the sector, its scope and effects; discuss major issues and links to other disciplines; and identify difficulties and gaps. It covers a wide array of topics, emphasizing the complexity, relevance and foundational nature of shelter and settlements, providing the basis for future reports, which will focus on particular topics	



Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover	
2019	UNHCR	Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement	This Policy reaffirms UNHCR's commitment to a decisive and predictable engagement in situations of internal displacement, as an integral aspect of our operations worldwide, and of our protection leadership role in humanitarian crises.		
19	2014	UNHCR	UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps	The policy is directed primarily towards UNHCR staff members engaged in strategic and operational planning, the design and delivery of activities in the field and those responsible for the development of protection, programme and technical policies, standards, guidance, tools and training that support such activities.	
2018	International Rescue Committee	Urban Refuge. How Cities are Building Inclusive Communities	This report published by the International Rescue Committee with support from Citi serves as a call to action for private sector and international humanitarian actors to build on the initiative that city governments are showing in building inclusive communities for displaced populations.		
2018	ALNAPSTUDY	What's missing? Adding context to the urban response toolbox	Despite increasing recognition of the need for context-relevant in humanitarian response, particularly in urban areas, there is little clarity of what this looks like or how to achieve it. In order to explore whether 'context tools' can help improve humanitarian's ability to think and act more effectively in urban environments, this paper asks questions related to the tools needed to understand context .		
2019	UNHCR	Guidance Package for UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement	This checklist is intended to guide UNHCR Representatives in their efforts to fulfil institutional commitments in situations of internal displacement. It is an integral part of the Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement.		
20	2015	United Nations	Habitat III Issue Papers 2 - Migration and Refugees in Urban Areas	The purpose of this Issue Paper is to raise awareness of how inclusive planning for rapid urbanisation, migration and displacement – through improved rights and protection for migrants and refugees, access to adequate services, opportunities and space, and regulations that create an enabling environment – can maximise the skills, resources and creativity of migrants and refugees that drive sustainable development.	
2008	UNHCR	Ignored Displaced Persons: the plight of IDPs in urban areas	UNHCR Research Paper No. 161		

Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover	
16, 18	2009	UNHCR	UNHCR policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas	UNHCR Policy	
2010	IASC	Strategy - Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas	The aim of this IASC Strategy is to recommend actions which humanitarian actors can take to make their responses to humanitarian crises in urban areas more effective and thereby save more lives and accelerate early recovery		
2012	UNHCR	The Implementation of UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas	Recommendations on how UNHCR could improve the protection environment for urban refugees		
2017	Overseas Development Institute	Mass displacement and the challenge for urban resilience	The paper assesses the impact of mass displacement on the wellbeing of all urban residents, using an urban resilience framework to explore how different parts of the system respond to large influxes of people moving into areas often already suffering from inadequate housing, a lack of basic services and insecurity		
2017	Stronger Cities Consortium; IRC; NRC; WVI	Urban context analysis toolkit. Guidance not for humanitarian practitioners	The urban context analysis toolkit and this narrative guide have been designed for use by programme staff members or consultants with experience of conducting assessments or qualitative studies. The primary users are presumed to be a technical lead in-country, a technical advisor in headquarters, an emergency response team member, or a programme generalist with programme design and assessment experience.		
2017	UNHCR	Needs Assessment Handbook	The Needs Assessment Handbook consolidates existing policies, practices and guidance, and represents the first guidance UNHCR has produced on needs assessments that applies to all sectors, situations, methods, and populations of concern.		
2019	GAUC	Urban Displacement from Different Perspectives. An Overview of Approaches to Urban Displacement.	This paper identifies the divergences and convergences of activities between local authorities, international organizations, local civil society organizations and, where relevant, built environment professionals in assisting refugees and IDPs living in urban areas.		

Year	Publisher	Title	Summary	Publication Cover	
51	2012	UN-Habitat	Better Cities for Kosovo. Visioning as participatory planning tool'	The goal is to explore ideas and tools for future community visioning activities, to broaden and deepen the inclusive planning approach, and finally to contribute and advise in practical ways to improve the quality of life for all communities in Kosovo and elsewhere.	
45	2007	OCHA; FAO; IDMC; OHCHR; UN-Habitat; UNHCR	Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons. Implementing the Pinheiro Principles	This Handbook provides important and practical guidance to all those working on housing and property restitution issues. It aims at promoting durable solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees, including the right to return to the homes and properties from which they fled or were forced to leave due to armed conflict and human rights violations.	

# WAY FORWARD

- ◆ This Guidance is a first attempt to co-ordinate the respective expertise of the UN's Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), to inform decision-making based on existing experiences in responding to displacement in urban areas.
- ◆ By integrating actions and resources in the emergency phase of displacement with longer-term development goals, both individuals (displaced and hosts) and urban environments can become more resilient, supporting the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the UN's commitment to leave no-one behind.
- ◆ Conducting a spatial analysis of the city, as described in "Preparing for Response in Urban Areas", highlights gaps and opportunities that can help inform a decision-making process, taking the local context into account.
- ◆ A systemic approach to cities and towns explained through an urban planning lens in the "Thematic Areas" section can help organize programming that allocates services and develops infrastructure in a more inclusive and impactful way.
- ◆ The Thematic Areas, comprised of Enabling and Built components, should be understood and evaluated through their intersection, supporting an integrated, comprehensive and sustainable response to displacement in urban areas.
- ◆ This *Guidance* should be enhanced through lessons learned in cities by adding to the Key Considerations already listed. Likewise, the Reference Toolbox should be updated to include guidelines currently under development.
- ◆ Most importantly, the global community and city consortia need to establish coordination mechanisms for working in urban areas to leverage the interests and capacities of local and national authorities in hosting countries with donor resources, humanitarian and development agencies and civil society groups. These mechanisms "will contribute to fast-tracking transition to recovery, resilience building and sustainable development, maximizing synergies within the humanitarian-development continuum."<sup>51</sup>

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABA	Area-Based Approach
CBIs	Cash-Based Incentives
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAR	Floor Area Ratio
GCR	Global Compact for Refugees
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
HIAs	Humanitarian Information Activities
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NWoW	New Way of Working
PoC	Persons of Concern
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIP	Settlement Information Portal
STDM	Social Tenure Domain Model
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
WHO	The World Health Organization

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