Daily life is hard when settlements lack basic services.
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Shelter in the city
The new game-changer

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In the future, most of humanity will live in cities. Population growth and rural-to-urban migration are combining to change the physical environment, influencing social and economic interactions, culture, norms and belief systems, and forcing humanitarian organizations to think beyond local community-level approaches. Cities are highly complex systems with many sub-systems co-existing and interacting at a variety of levels. Disasters and other crises act like a magnifying glass, exposing pre-existing inequalities and weaknesses in these systems. But they also bring to light untapped resources and opportunities that can lead to better policies and legislation, more active public participation, greater private investment and new financing opportunities for rebuilding homes and infrastructure. Influxes of refugees and displaced populations during crises can bring some benefits to host cities: improved housing units and service delivery systems, and increased market opportunities for local businesses, mainly as a result of cash grants.[1]

A number of case studies, evaluations and research papers discuss the difficulties, barriers and gaps in shelter and settlement in cities, and present lessons learned and good practices.[2] Most of these resources explore in particular density; the sheer scale of built-up environments; complexities of social interactions, infrastructure, urban governance systems and financial systems; and diversity of livelihoods and markets.

Shelter at the humanitarian–development nexus

The scope and operational context of humanitarian shelter and settlements programmes are intrinsically linked to how cities are built and governed, and how their systems function during non-disaster times.

In this sense, such programmes are at the nexus of development and humanitarian services. The conventional direct service delivery approach of humanitarian agencies is neither responsive nor effective in urban areas.[3] In urban disasters and crises, humanitarians find themselves face to face with systemic barriers, conventionally deemed to be 'development' problems, such as complex infrastructure, city governance, poverty and markets.

The Sustainable Development Goals refer frequently to access to basic services including shelter, sustainability, quality of the physical and natural environment, and the resilience of infrastructure.[4] The globally agreed New Urban Agenda,[5] resulting from 2016's Habitat III Summit, also sets out many ways for humanitarians to work with local governments and development agencies to improve the quality of the built environment, increase social cohesion and foster inclusive development in cities. This kind of cooperation *before* an emergency could potentially reduce the need for shelter interventions during disasters and crises.

A high-quality built environment, or more broadly a high quality of life in cities, is hard to attain, especially in developing countries, where informality tends to prevail. Urban professionals, development agencies, local governments, humanitarian bodies and city dwellers all have different perspectives. Yet improving the quality of the built environment is essential if we are to create inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities, as stipulated by Sustainable Development Goal 11. The New Urban Agenda provides a set of commitments by governments on how to achieve this overarching goal, with a clear vision: 'cities for all'.

The number of urban residents is growing by nearly 60 million every year.[6] Disasters, large displaced populations moving into urban areas, as well as the current and forecast effects of climate change, are all challenging the conventional isolated, sectorial ways of working of humanitarian and development groups. The Global Shelter Cluster strategy (2018–2022) emphasizes the need 'to be well-versed in working with issues of chronic vulnerability as much as emergency response. The best development approaches need to be understood and synchronized with humanitarian efforts'.[7]

Many aid organizations are also recognizing the importance of connecting with *people*, instead of investing solely in infrastructure at the city or regional level, or in policy support at the national level. The growing availability, reliability and accessibility of data on spatial patterns of risks, vulnerabilities and capacities of people at a local level are encouraging, but also necessitate strong connection and feedback loops between the different socio-geographic levels in urban systems.[8]

Shelter in cities: three dimensions

The three dimensions of shelter in cities are as follows:

1. Shelter and its link to everyday life

The scope and operational context of humanitarian shelter and settlements programmes are intrinsically linked to how cities are built and governed, and how their systems function during non-disaster times. In urban disasters and crises, humanitarian bodies find themselves face to face with systemic difficulties – conventionally deemed to be 'development' issues – such as complex infrastructure, city governance, and poverty. The conventional direct service delivery approach (building houses for people) typically employed by humanitarian agencies is neither responsive nor effective in cities.[9]

In cities, informal systems are just as important and ubiquitous as formal governance structures.[10] It is important to understand the nature of informality, which requires embracing iterative and participatory processes of planning and implementation. A lack of adequate and reliable access to safe shelter and basic service delivery systems,[11] when coupled with exposure to hazards, is one of the most important determinants of vulnerability in cities, and loss of life during disasters.[12] Access to both formal and informal

systems in cities is controlled not just by laws and policies, but also by culture and social norms, during both disaster and non-disaster times.

The division of roles and responsibilities between formal and informal actors, and their inter-relationships, is often unclear even in non-disaster times, but particularly during crises, when rapid adaptation or improvisation may occur, and official organizations' mandates, authority and legitimacy may not be acknowledged by communities who may have alternative, informal arrangements in place.[13] The varied systems in cities can be governed by sets of rules that are often unfamiliar and invisible to non-residents and external observers. Informal networks can be crucial to meeting basic needs (such as shelter, medicines and water) during the initial response, and to providing goods and services (such as psychological support, legal advice, jobs orientation, housing reallocation) during the lengthier stage of disaster recovery.[14] Therefore, humanitarian agencies should analyze the context, in order to understand and incorporate linkages to both formal and informal systems, to provide viable urban shelter solutions.

It is not easy to predict the end result of a humanitarian programme. When working in cities, a continual process of learning and questioning, and iterative planning in which all affected people can participate without discrimination, is essential.[15] The United States Agency for International Development/Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance and Catholic Relief Services urban shelter and settlements recovery programme in the Philippines offered alternatives such as financial support for families to move to a safe location where they can potentially attain land tenure, a full shelter and latrine package, or helping typhoon-affected households rent an apartment or house in a safe location. Working at the community and household levels, the programme has focused on helping households make their own arrangements for shelter and settlement, close to their original homes, livelihoods and social structures.[16]

2. Transition from emergency to long-term reconstruction

Long-term reconstruction differs from emergency work in terms of time, scale, beneficiary involvement and physical space. Making this transition successfully calls for innovative, place-specific and adaptive solutions. Effective shelter transition and recovery are among the biggest gaps in shelter response, according to the Global Shelter Cluster.[17] Major disasters in cities, such as the 2010 earthquake in Port-au-Prince (which also damaged other cities and non-urban areas in Haiti) and the recent mass-population displacements caused by the conflict in Syria, demonstrate that it can take a prolonged time to arrive at a point of stability where humanitarian recovery operations can make a responsible exit. Rebuilding housing and infrastructure requires long-term solutions connected to city-wide systems, rather than fixing the problem at a local scale. In some cases of protracted and recurring crises, people end up living in urban camps and informal settlements for decades.[18]

Urban recovery requires adaptive, flexible solutions and design that provide options for different needs and choices that accommodate changing conditions, such as continued movement of people within, into or out of the city. Beneficiary selection criteria must be transparent; this can be achieved by working with affected community groups to design the criteria or asking for feedback on criteria designed by humanitarian agencies. Communication methods can marry old and new technologies, such as loudspeakers and drones. Working with local organizations that are knowledgeable on legal matters, building regulations, land tenure and the context for that pocket of the city or town is also recommended.

Physical characteristics of the built environment present particular impediments to urban recovery, such as multiple families occupying single apartment units, limited access in high-rise buildings when the power is out, and lack of space for adding new residential units or public spaces. The traditional focus has

been on delivering 'products' to meet the shelter needs of individual families, often based on rural experience. In a city, humanitarian agencies tend to switch to a facilitator's role, initiating and strengthening access to the variety of available shelter services, based on priorities and capacities identified for each neighbourhood.[19] For this reason they should strive for solutions that provide space and means for people to participate in design and implementation, taking ownership rather than being passive 'beneficiaries'.[20]

3. Aligning humanitarian action with long-term development and planning

In addition to alleviating the consequences of recent shocks, humanitarian action can provide opportunities to tackle the root causes of vulnerability, and avoid contributing to (or even help mitigate) continuing stresses or long-term risks. A particular difficulty here is the focus on short-term relief without paying attention to longer-term repercussions.

Humanitarian organizations' growing use of shelter-related cash transfers has proven to be an effective way to support affected urban populations with relief and long-term recovery. When urban residents rebuild or repair their homes by purchasing labour and materials from existing markets and services, this compounds the local benefits.[21] (Cash is discussed further in Chapter 16.)

After a crisis in a city, it is important to understand the complexity of tenure status and land and property rights, in order to ensure legal security and increase equity. Different land tenure systems – statutory, customary and religious – are found in different countries, and may co-exist and overlap. Factors that can make tenure vastly more complex in urban areas include:[22]

- a relatively high percentage of renters (documented and undocumented) in multiple-occupancy buildings

- a lack of tenure security for the majority of tenants in informal settlements

- multiple-occupancy and multi-storey dwellings (such as house or flat shares, and the sharing of single rooms)

- frequent movement of people within the neighbourhood or city, and between rural and urban areas (seasonal work in the city by rural dwellers is a long-recognized trend). Conflict and disasters increase population movements and bring about significant demographic changes

- enormous pressure on urban land, due to high demand for development – restricting the ability to provide shelter for all.

Humanitarian agencies must work closely not only with the affected populations but also with representatives of all interest groups – including landowners, civic organizations, formal and informal networks and local governments – to untangle the existing patterns of tenure and rights. They should also adapt participatory planning and decision-making processes to increase the equity and ownership of urban space by city dwellers and promote social integration and peaceful coexistence. Genuine transparency and clear communication throughout the humanitarian shelter operation are fundamental.

How can we become better at providing humanitarian shelter in cities?

A 2018 review of urban shelter case studies indicates that, although humanitarian agencies have been changing the way they approach, work with and learn from shelter operations in cities – whether following disaster, conflict or displacement – significant difficulties and gaps remain.[23] Many of these studies refer to a lack of urban-specific tools, gaps in knowledge and skills, inefficiencies in coordination among humanitarian organizations and with local authorities, poor understanding of the legal aspects of housing and land rights, and a strong tendency to

underestimate the time needed to complete urban projects. The following four activities are essential if we are to improve humanitarian shelter practice:

1. Understanding the context

Although many guidance tools for humanitarian operations emphasize the importance of understanding and being relevant to the local context, a new study by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action found that 'surprisingly few definitions of "context" exist and the term is used inconsistently to mean a variety of different things such as situation, needs and conflict'.[24] This is a serious shortcoming, especially in urban contexts, where the fluidity of spatial and socio-economic parameters, diversity and multiplicity of stakeholders, and layers of engagement necessary must all be understood, to bring a significant benefit. So far the typical response to this need has been to adapt or modify existing tools to urban contexts, by focusing on conventional humanitarian sectors, such as 'livelihoods in urban settings' or 'urban WASH' (water/sanitation/hygiene).[25] What is needed are tools and processes that allow affected people and their host communities to be part of the assessment process and solutions. Participatory human-centred design principles and co-designing practice with communities, such as those found in the Participatory Approach for Shelter and Settlements (PASSA) tool of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, are examples of this.[26]

2. Future-focused shelter planning

While understanding the *current* operating context is undeniably important, for cities a future-oriented perspective is equally important. This is particularly true when working in rapidly urbanizing nations. The role of humanitarian groups is to facilitate and enable ways to build safe, adequate and sustainable shelter for all, in ways that take account of risks and are consistent with long-term housing and infrastructure needs and strategies. This needs a dialogue between neighbourhood residents, humanitarian agencies, development agencies, local and national governments, the private sector, and built environment professionals (such as architects, planners and engineers) on how the cities of the future will be shaped, how people will likely live and work, and their likely needs for mobility and public space. Mobile technologies that enable people to take direct action, share peer-to-peer information, and conveniently conduct financial exchanges are already profoundly changing human interactions. Humanitarian organizations should embrace these changes and promote innovation, not only when providing shelter but in all aspects of humanitarian action.

3. Cross-disciplinary cooperation

The complexity of urban environments calls for cross-disciplinary cooperation and exchange of information between urban residents, humanitarian bodies and urban professionals. Many studies and organizations emphasize the need to work closely with municipal governments and urban planners.[27] Humanitarians should recalibrate their roles and skills, to work as conveners and facilitators rather than as service providers. Shelter practitioners often find themselves in roles for which they have no expertise, such as mediating between parties with conflicting interests (for example, between displaced families and landowners in securing tenure), or managing long and complex negotiations with contractors and public service providers.

4. Urban-specific data

Reliable data on the effects of disasters and crises and the needs of affected populations is the basis for providing suitable and sustainable shelter, whether in urban or rural settings. In the case of humanitarian shelter, data is often gathered by practitioners on the ground shortly after a disaster, and might not be disaggregated by settlement type (such as peri-urban, formal, informal), depending on the purpose for which it was collected. This kind of occasional and non-standardized data collection

results in gaps in accurately profiling affected populations and geographical areas. The Global Shelter Cluster annual reports, for instance, do not differentiate between urban and rural settings. This may be partly due to the continuing debate on defining 'urban'.[28]

Several organizations collect data at a city scale, for example the City Resilience Profiling Program of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,[29] and the shelter-related indicators monitored by the UN-Habitat Global Urban Observatory.[30] The humanitarian shelter sector should work with urban professionals and other development agencies to agree on a set of terminology and types of data to be collected on urban shelter and settlement risks, harms and solutions.

Cities are fluid and dynamic. We need reliable, accountable, systematically collected and updated data on demographics and the socio-economic characteristics of city dwellers, coupled with geospatial data, as evidence on which to base our decisions in humanitarian shelter and settlements operations. As citizen-generated data from mobile technologies is becoming more common, future humanitarian workers may be more data-literate than we are, and will need to find new ways to capture and use this data to create shelter that better meets the needs of affected people. The Humanitarian Data Exchange is an open platform that can be used to aggregate, store and share city-specific data.[31] There are also examples of effective community-driven data collection in informal settlements through surveys, participatory mapping or enumerations.[32]

Conclusion

Providing humanitarian shelter in cities is a multi-faceted, multi-layered and highly complex process, which demands a thorough understanding of the relationships between the physical patterns of urban spaces (such as residential and commercial areas, roads and public spaces) and the systemic features of human decisions and activities that take place in these spaces. It requires participatory planning at the city level, a continuing dialogue among all concerned parties, cross-disciplinary cooperation, and collecting and analyzing urban-specific data. And, perhaps above all, a new type of humanitarian, working as convener and facilitator, rather than as service provider.

1   World Bank (2017) *Cities of Refuge in the Middle East: Bringing an Urban Lens to the Forced Displacement Challenge*. Policy Note. World Bank, Washington DC. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/922371511267498593/Cities-of-refuge-in-the-Middle-East-bringing-an-urban-lens-to-the-forced-displacement-challenge.

2   Shelterprojects.org, for example, is a repository for more than 200 case studies and overviews of post-disaster and post-conflict shelter projects, plus 13 opinion pieces, all originally published in the Shelter Projects series of six books.

3   World Bank (2017).

4   United Nations (2015) *Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to Transform our World*. www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals.

5   UN-Habitat (nd) *Implementing the New Urban Agenda*. http://nua.unhabitat.org.

6   United Nations (2015) *The World Population Prospects: 2015 Revision.* United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. www.un.org/en/development/desa/publications/world-population-prospects-2015-revision.html.

7   Global Shelter Cluster (2018) *Strategy 2018–2022*. www.sheltercluster.org/strategy.

8   GSC emphasizes the importance of engagement with multiple and diverse stakeholders and improved understanding of context through the use of maps, spatial data and participatory mapping exercises. While highlighting the benefits of settlement-based approaches in urban areas, mainly as a platform for information sharing, dialogue and coordination and as a nexus of humanitarian and development, the study also points out the need for strengthening local resources, sustainable ownership and leadership. Global Shelter Cluster (2018).

9   World Bank (2017).

10 Here informality includes people living and working in the informal economy, such as in street markets, or living in low-income informal settlements.

11 Safe shelter goes beyond physical structure; it includes application of building codes, risk reduction measures and security of tenure. Global Shelter Cluster (2018).

12 E Dickson et al (2012) *Urban Risk Assessments: Understanding Disaster and Climate Risk in Cities*. Urban Development Series. World Bank, Washington DC. http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/659161468182066104/Urban-risk-assessments-understanding-disaster-and-climate-risk-in-cities.

13 J Twigg and I Mosel (2018) *Informality in Urban Crisis Response*. Working Paper 532. Overseas Development Institute, London. www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12065.pdf.

14 University College London (2016) *Invisible Threads: Informal Governance Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction*. www.ucl.ac.uk/steapp/research/projects/informal-governance-systems.

15 Global Disaster Preparedness Center (2017) *City-Wide Risk Assessment: Do-It-Together Toolkit for Building Urban Community Resilience*. American Red Cross and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. www.preparecenter.org/resources/city-wide-risk-assessment-do-it-together-toolkit-building-urban-community-resilience.

16 Catholic Relief Services Philippines (2015) *Urban Shelter and Settlement Recovery: A 'Menu of Options' for Households*. Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute. odihpn.org/magazine/urban-shelter-and-settlement-recovery-a-%C2%91menu-of-options%C2%92-for-households/.

17 Global Shelter Cluster (2018).

18 Thousands of Somali refugees arrived at the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya in 1991; the camp continues to grow, reaching 463,000 residents in 2015.

19 K Crawford et al (2017) 'Enabling post-disaster shelter recovery: Changing our standard approaches to risk and success'. In Global Shelter Cluster (2017) *Shelter Projects 2015–2016*. Opinion Pieces, pp. 186–188. http://shelterprojects.org/shelterprojects2015-2016.html.

20 As an example, the American Red Cross recovery program LAMIKA (an acronym for 'A Better Life in My Neighborhood' in Creole) invested time and resources to ensure that residents of Carrefour Feuilles (in Port-au-Prince, Haiti) fully participated in and owned the process of designing houses and public facilities, rebuilding infrastructure, and creating a robust community-feedback system to inform every planning decision (source: Global Shelter Cluster Working Group (2018) *Settlement Approaches in Urban Areas: Compendium of Case Studies*. Global Shelter Cluster, Geneva. www.preparecenter.org/resources/examples/Settlement%20Approaches%20in%20Urban%20Areas).

21 G Smith and L Mohiddin (2015) *A Review of Evidence of Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programming in Urban Areas*. Working Paper. International Institute for Environment and Development, London. http://pubs.iied.org/10759IIED; M Ulrichs et al (2017) *Cash Transfers for Refugees: An Opportunity to Bridge the Gap Between Humanitarian Assistance and Social Protection*. ODI Briefing. Overseas Development Institute, London. www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11252.pdf.

22 Norwegian Refugee Council, and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2014) *Security of Tenure in Humanitarian Shelter Operations*. www.nrc.no/resources/reports/security-of-tenure-in-humanitarian-shelter-operations/.

23 Global Shelter Cluster (2018) *Shelter Projects. Shelter in Urban Contexts: 10 Relevant Case Studies*. Case Studies of Humanitarian Shelter and Settlement Responses in Urban Settings. ShelterCluster.org. http://shelterprojects.org/shelterprojects-compilations/Shelter-Projects-Urban-Booklet-2018.pdf.

24 L Campbell (2018) *What's Missing? Adding Context to the Urban Response Toolbox*. ALNAP Study. www.alnap.org/help-library/whats-missing-adding-context-to-the-urban-response-toolbox. Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, and Overseas Development Institute, London.

25 The most recent revisions to the Sphere Project, which aim to contextualize the existing humanitarian response standards for use in urban responses, also include a concise summary of characteristics of urban settings. Sphere Project (2018, forthcoming) *Using the Sphere Standards in Urban Settings*.

26 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2011) *PASSA: Participatory Assessment for Shelter and Settlements*. IFRC, Geneva. www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/95526/publications/305400-PASSA%20manual-EN-LR.pdf.

27 Such as the Global Alliance for Urban Crises (2016) *Adapting Global Crisis Response to an Urban World*. www.uclg.org/en/media/news/adapting-global-crisis-response-urban-world.

28 UN-Habitat Global Urban Observatory (GUO) describes the city proper as the single political jurisdiction which contains the historical city centre. Urban agglomeration is the built-up or densely populated area containing the city proper, suburbs, and continuously settled commuter areas.

29 UN-Habitat (2012) *City Resilience Profiling Programme*. https://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/city-resilience-profiling-programme. The findings of UNISDR's DesInventar methodology shows that the quantity of data and the coverage of disaster events is not enough to make robust conclusions for a particular city. Data about losses to health from everyday hazards is provided by demographic and health surveys, but their sample sizes are often too small to provide accurate or detailed data on individual urban centres or on 'slums' or informal settlements.

30 United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2004) *Urban Indicators Guidelines: Monitoring the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Nairobi. https://unhabitat.org/urban-knowledge/guo.

31 The Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) (https://data.humdata.org) is an open platform for sharing data; city-specific data can be found for certain data sets.

32 D Satterthwaite and S Barret (2017) *Community-Driven Data Collection in Informal Settlements*. International Institute for Environment and Development, London. http://pubs.iied.org/17406IIED.

Box 6.1

Still two worlds apart
Humanitarians and urban hosts in the Greece migration crisis 2015–2018

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The migration crisis that has been occurring since 2015 in Greece, the doorstep of Europe, reveals that city administrators (the hosts) and humanitarian actors speak in completely different languages. Such experience has taught us that the two are still worlds apart, and that we must bridge this gap and establish a common language if we are to work together to serve the region's most vulnerable people.

The city of Athens has always been a pivotal place on the migration route into Europe. In 2015, for the first time, the migration influx surged to above 1 million, as people from Syria and other war-affected countries passed through Greece on their way to northern Europe.[1] Thousands of refugees and migrants would arrive each day, via the islands, into the ports of Athens,[2] seeking temporary shelter in the city and in the Attika region.[3] Such a massive influx created a unique international humanitarian crisis in Greece, eliciting a commensurate humanitarian response.

This crisis coincided with the height of the Greek economic crisis, under which the city of Athens had been experiencing rapid decay. Businesses continued to close, and much of the local working population left, transforming the demographics of the city centre. Many properties became vacant,[4] the rental housing market collapsed, and streets and parks were informally occupied by homeless people. This combination of migration and economic crises increased pressure on the host society, which itself was struggling to maintain fundamental services such as social security, health and education.

Such conditions offered an opportunity to develop a unique approach to securing temporary accommodation,[5] by tapping into the host community's assets: vacant buildings, hotels and apartments were rented to accommodate the new arrivals. In order to support the largest possible number of families, humanitarian agencies and charities relied on the market, renting properties in areas with lower rental costs. But this urban accommodation strategy came with its own pros and cons: renting otherwise vacant housing units benefited landlords, and the cash assistance given to refugees and migrants injected cash into the local economies, but at the same time the migrant populations were concentrated in neighbourhoods that were already struggling. This resulted in social disharmony and xenophobia, fuelling right-wing (nationalist) politics.

What do we mean when we say that we must develop a shared language? Let us consider the notion of 'temporary shelter', commonly used by the humanitarian sector. Interestingly, this concept never reflected the citizens of Athens' understanding of the prevailing situation. They were worried about the additional stress and burden placed on their already stretched public services and places – schools, hospitals, streets, neighbourhoods and public spaces – and the devaluation of private property. From the beginning, local communities were not convinced that the humanitarian assistance was in fact temporary, having learned from past migration waves into Greece and from the experiences of cities around the world that 'temporary' arrangements can stretch into a state of practical permanence. And they were right: out of the approximately 66,000 migrants trapped in Greece in 2016 when neighbouring countries closed their borders, by October 2017 only 20,410 had been officially relocated to other EU countries.[6] In 2018 approximately 45,000 remain, among a total Greek population of 10.8 million.[7] As a result, three years into the process, there is a densification of migrants and asylums seekers in particular areas of the city,[8] a situation partly caused by the method used by humanitarian programmes to select locations for urban accommodation units.

Let us now consider the term 'integration'. Integration is an ambition of those standing up for the new arrivals – the humanitarians – but it represents only one point of view, whereas 'social cohesion' looks at the issue from both sides,[9] to work towards mutual acceptance. Greece's experience vividly illustrates the significant repercussions for a host city of a humanitarian response on this large scale. The ultimate bearer of responsibility for the new arrivals is indeed the host, including local government and authorities, civil society, urban networks, citizens and neighbours. The goal is to support the urban host to turn the guest relationship into a functioning urban neighbourhood – for the benefit of *all* inhabitants.

There are no simple answers to how we can reach a common language, though many organizations across the world are attempting it, by testing out various new methods. What we have learned from this crisis is that making decisions on where, how, when and at what scale we accommodate new arrivals in a city is complex. Neither a city-led strategy nor a humanitarian-led response can offer an equitable and sustainable solution to such a complex problem. The two worlds need to start by understanding and respecting each other's mandates, responsibilities and constituencies. If they do, there is still an opportunity for humanitarian actors and hosts to come together, by communicating through a common language.

Box 6.1 **Still two worlds apart** **59**

1   The main countries of origin are Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2018) *Operational Portal: Refugee Situations: Mediterranean Situation*. http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean.

2   Ibid. Sea arrivals in 2014: 216,054. 2015: 1,015,078. 2016: 362,753. 2017: 172,301. 2018 (to 29 March): 13,289.

3   Temporary accommodation centres were established to accommodate the influx and provide emergency support in the Attika region in 2015–16.

4   A city-wide study of shelter options by Catholic Relief Services in 2016 estimated that more than 180,000 properties in the centre of Athens were vacant.

5   Funded by European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, administered through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Emergency Support to Integration & Accommodation (2018) *Blog*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. http://estia.unhcr.gr/en.

6   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2018); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2017) *Europe Monthly Report* September. https://data2.unhcr.org/es/documents/download/60384.

7   Countrymeters (2018) *Greece Population*. http://countrymeters.info/en/Greece.

8   An estimated 16,000 migrants and refugees are living in central Athens, according to informal discussions with municipal officials.

9   The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion uses five domains of social cohesion: belonging; worth; social justice and equity; participation; acceptance and rejection; legitimacy. A Markus (2017) *SMI: The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion*. Public Opinion Fact Sheet 1. Scanlon Foundation Social Cohesion Research Program, Monash University, Melbourne. www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/134549/social-cohesion-fact-sheet.pdf.