GP20 Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday 17 June 2020, 15:00-17:30

Internal Displacement in Cities: Prevention, Protection and Solutions

SUMMARY

Internal displacement is increasingly an urban challenge. Warfare, criminal violence, inadequately planned urban growth and the rising cost of living in once affordable areas are displacing people in cities. Residents of coastal cities or informal settlements in cities located on floodplains or hillsides face increasing exposure to natural hazards and risk of displacement, an adverse effect of climate change. At the same time, IDPs from elsewhere arrive in cities seeking safety, jobs, services and assistance, thereby contributing to urbanization.

This seventh meeting of the GP20 Steering Group focused on internal displacement in cities. The aim was to learn from the experiences of governments and others who have taken important steps to prevent, address and resolve internal displacement in cities, discuss the relevance of the four GP20 priorities in the GP20 Plan of Action as they relate to urban displacement, outline key challenges and gaps in current responses, and formulate new ideas and recommendations that can inform the deliberations of the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.

Key messages

Drawing on experiences from Burkina Faso, Colombia and Iraq as well as of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the World Bank and other stakeholders working on internal displacement, the following key messages emerged from the presentations and discussion on internal displacement in cities.

Responding to internal displacement in cities requires an understanding of the complexity of urban environments. Urban areas are complex not only in terms of the systems in place for the city to function, but also in terms of the various communities that reside there, including IDPs. While the authorities have the primary responsibility to protect and assist IDPs, supporting the authorities in cities requires an understanding of the urban systems as well as resident communities' social structures, dynamics of interaction, population movements, aspirations and proposals for durable solutions. Leveraging the comparative advantages of agencies and working in partnership are important.

IDPs, including those in urban settings, are a diverse group. While all have endured displacement, dispossession and loss, IDPs have different needs, capacities and aspirations. Particular attention may need to be paid, for example, to those with additional vulnerabilities, including persons with disabilities, or the particular situation of women and girls. IDPs should not only be seen as victims of displacement, as they also contribute to local communities and economies and facilitate their own progress towards durable solutions. Ongoing participation of IDPs in decision making processes that affect them and dialogue with local communities are essential to facilitating inclusion of IDPs.

The global number of IDPs living in cities is unknown.[1] Estimating the global number of IDPs living in urban areas depends on the definition of an urban boundary, on which there is a lack of consensus. Current work on designing a methodology includes exploration of tools such as satellite imagery, mapping, dissipation mapping and social media tracking. A major challenge and important consideration is that IDPs do not always want to be identified or tracked, particularly in a geospatial sense. Differentiating IDPs from the urban poor also continues to be a challenge.

---

[1] There are various estimates of the global number of IDPs in cities. For example, UNHCR estimated in 2016 that 80 per cent of IDPs live in cities. However, this includes only IDPs of concern to UNHCR. While other estimates also have limitations, they all point to the majority of IDPs living in urban areas.

Addressing internal displacement requires qualitative data and evidence on urban IDPs' experience. To plan, implement and achieve durable solutions, quality evidence is required to build a comprehensive understanding of and response to urban internal displacement. While such data is available for some IDPs through profiling exercises and longitudinal studies, these are not available for all internal displacement situations. This would include the specific experiences IDPs face in cities, aspirations of the displaced over time and how the host community is affected by displacement. Interagency urban profiling exercises under the government's leadership such as in Erbil, Iraq, have been a useful tool to convene relevant stakeholders and lay the groundwork for coordinated and multidisciplinary area-based programming.

Local authorities should be supported from the beginning of displacement. Local authorities are often the first to respond to displacement, yet they do not always have the technical capacity, staff or budget to adequately respond. Support is required from the national level to strengthen the absorption capacity of cities and local authorities to help meet IDPs' immediate needs and drive solutions. This includes fiscal transfers and technical resources among other support such as data sharing. Investments in water, sanitation, electricity, shelter, access to livelihoods and social services are particularly important as large numbers of new residents place the most pressure on these areas.

Support for durable solutions to internal displacement should include local integration of IDPs in cities in addition to their return and settlement elsewhere. IDPs living in cities may build a new life and wish to stay rather than return to their place of origin. Even if IDPs wish to return, they should be supported to progress towards a durable solution in the meantime by regaining access to their rights and addressing their displacement-related needs. One promising practice is to integrate IDPs into existing public employment programmes for skills certification, training and job matching, as in Colombia. At the same time, cities and their existing neighborhoods may still struggle to absorb all IDPs in situations of major displacement. Supporting planned city extensions can create a conducive environment for settlement, enabling IDPs to access the benefits of the city while managing strains, likewise the role of secondary cities and rural-urban dynamics in securing durable solutions should be explored further.

Solutions for IDPs in urban areas often require significant strengthening or reform of the land administration system. Displacement often occurs in contexts where the land administration systems are functioning poorly or where various land systems co-exist and overlap. Land is a key economic and political asset in cities. IDPs living in cities without security of tenure face a risk of eviction and multiple displacements. Fit- for-purpose land administration systems can be introduced or strengthened in situations of internal displacement and return, such as in Iraq, and encourages IDP/host community engagement as well as the recognition of customary, informal and formal rights.

IDPs in cities may be particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is predominantly urban and is affecting urban infrastructure, services and jobs. It is also exacerbating vulnerabilities of some groups already living in precarious situations, such as IDPs. The loss of livelihoods and breakdown in social support systems such as remittances caused by the lockdown measures is adding massive strain on displaced families, especially in urban locations for those employed in the informal sectors. IDPs are also at risk of COVID-related stigmatization, potentially causing tension with host communities.

World Bank approach to urban internal displacement

World Bank, Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice
Ms. Maitreyi Bordia Das, Manager

Many IDPs in urban areas face significant pressure. They may struggle to access basic services, such as water, sanitation and housing, as well as markets and spaces. They may be subject to stigma and discrimination on the basis of their displacement leading to marginalization and exclusion. In these situations, the risk of tension and conflict between host communities and IDPs increases. Some IDPs face additional layers of exclusion based on gender, language, disability, ethnic origin, or lack of documentation, reinforcing the denial of opportunities.

However, some IDPs who arrive in urban areas have higher human capital than the host community. They may have more skills and come from non-poor households, though they settle with other IDPs on the margins of the city or in informal settlements. It is important to understand the needs, capacities and perspectives of both IDPs and the host communities to identify how to best support their interaction. IDPs' access to livelihoods in cities is key not only to cover their costs of food, housing and other basic needs, but also to grow social cohesion and shared local prosperity.

Being able to understand the kinds of challenges that local governments face is essential. The World Bank supports strengthening the capacity of local governments, including their financial capacity, their fiscal capacity, as well as their capacity to deliver services. This also includes support for building empathy and creating cohesion between IDPs and other groups. The key is to have strong local governments with high capacity and the empathy to deal with IDPs. The World Bank report Inclusion Matters: the Foundation for Shared Prosperity[2] details how social inclusion can be planned and achieved.

Country approaches to urban internal displacement

Burkina Faso, National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (CONASUR)
Mr. Bakouan Florent, General Secretary

On 17 June 2020, there were 921,400 people registered as internally displaced in all 13 regions of Burkina Faso due to conflict and violence. Cities, towns and rural communities are all affected, with 54 per cent of registered IDPs living in rural areas and 46 per cent living in cities and towns. Urban populations have significantly increased. The populations of the top five cities receiving IDPs have all increased, from 18 per cent in Fada N`Gourma, Eastern region to 169 per cent in Djibo, Sahel region. Djibo now has more registered IDPs (142,622) than other non-displaced residents (84,376), and Kaya has nearly equal numbers of IDPs (80,703) and other non-displaced residents (81,674).

To better support disaster and crisis management in Burkina Faso, a National Council mechanism was established. It gathers all relevant ministerial departments in the administration as well as the international community, the Red Cross and civil society. Under the National Council, there are regional, provincial and local councils. Local authorities are included in the preparation of the response from the outset. They are key actors in the coordination and management of the humanitarian response for IDPs and host communities, and they benefit from the support of other levels of government and humanitarian partners.

Municipalities have taken the following actions to protect and assist IDPs: budget allocation and mobilization of resources, land allocation for settlement of IDPs, emergency assistance (food, health care, education, water, sanitation), access to information on employment and livelihoods programmes, systematic inclusion in beneficiary lists for assistance projects and programmes, access to civil documentation, promotion of social cohesion and support to humanitarian actors in the implementation of their activities.

Challenges have included weak capacity of the municipalities to address structural challenges such as urban planning and development, risk management and development investments. Other difficulties relate to access to land, accommodation, food and drinking water for IDPs, their socio-economic and cultural integration and the weak capacity of authorities to mobilize resources due to insecurity and its negative impacts on the economy. Ensuring quality data on the internal displacement situation has also been a challenge, though the national data available gives an overview of the situation.

To consolidate the important results already attained, the following plans are envisaged: strengthening capacities of municipalities on urban planning and development in the context of massive displacement, insecurity, humanitarian crisis and limited functioning of public services; increasing the financial support of municipalities from the national level; and strengthening synergies between municipalities in their implementation of durable solutions for IDPs whether through return, local integration or settlement elsewhere. Support to the host communities must be ensured as they welcome the displaced and are also a key actors in the preparation and implementation of the response.

Colombia, Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparation of Victims
Mr. Ramón Alberto Rodríguez Andrade, National Director

Internal displacement in Colombia has an urban character. Between 2019 and 2020, 87 per cent of IDPs were registered in the west of the country, in the pacific and northwestern regions, such as the rural zones of Chocó, Valle

[2] World Bank. 2013. Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity. New Frontiers of Social Policy; Washington, DC. Available at:
https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16195

del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño, Antioquia and Córdoba, towards urban areas, mainly to the municipalities of Buenaventura, Medellín, Tumaco, Cali, Bogotá, Quibdó, Guapi, Cúcuta, Barranquilla and Bello.

Colombia's Victims Registry is an essential tool for the recognition and categorization of the victims of the armed conflict. It facilitates the organization of the State's response, and to that extent is a fundamental instrument for the design of public policies towards realizing the rights of IDPs. It is also a mechanism for dignifying and engraving in historical memory those who suffered during the armed conflict in Colombia.

The Registry corresponds to a historical and cumulative number of victims and IDPs over the past 35 years. From the total number of registered persons, those who have died, returned to their places of origin, settled at a new place of residence, or progressed towards durable solutions have not been subtracted. Of the 9,014,766 persons included in the Registry, 8,036,014 have been recognized as IDPs (cumulative number since 1985). Currently, the Victims' Unit is carrying out a process of identifying gaps in humanitarian assistance for IDPs included in the Registry.

In addition to the Registry, Colombia has a National System of Comprehensive Care for Victims composed of national law enforcement agencies, territorial entities, victim participation roundtables and congressional legal committees and oversight bodies (Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Ombudsman and Office of the Comptroller General). To meet the needs of IDPs in Colombia, it has been important for the government, which leads the response, to have the support of international organizations as well as the local authorities, in particular the municipalities. Coordination between institutions includes technical assistance in the formulation of contingency plans, as well as financial issues.

Colombia, National Training Service (SENA)
Mr. Jaime Vence, National Coordinator of Public Employment Agencies

The Public Employment Agency SENA is the largest entity in Colombia responsible for job training, improving occupational profiles and engagement in the workforce of Colombians. SENA collects information on the labor market to match people who are unemployed or want to improve their job situation with companies that have submitted their human resources vacancies to SENA. Currently, SENA is training around 7 million apprentices in its 117 centers and facilitates and has 65 percent of job placement nationwide.

SENA is one of the entry points for serving vulnerable groups, including IDPs. It has an assistance protocol for IDPs to help them improve their occupational profile and increase their levels of social and economic integration. The process begins with specialized psychologists who offer IDPs occupational guidance, help them identify their occupational interests and direct them to the different types of assistance that SENA offers. SENA also provides orientation to the workplace and sensitizes employers to the plight of IDPs.

The opportunities that SENA offers include training for work, which can be complementary and certified. IDPs are more often enrolled in the complementary training because they have low levels of schooling. Certified training requires ninth grade for technical training and eleventh grade for technological training. IDPs may also have their previously acquired skills certified. The certification of skills is based on assessing those skills that people have due to their work experience. If they have a satisfactory competence level, they receive a certificate valid for two years that they can present to prospective employers.

Iraq: Urban internal displacement in Erbil
Ms. Vian Rasheed, Head of Joint Crisis Coordination Centre, Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region

Erbil has been hosting IDPs since 2003 and refugees since 2013. IDPs live in camps and elsewhere in Erbil city. From 2016 to 2020, the number of IDPs in Erbil had decreased, including the number living in camps. In 2016, there were 145,000 internally displaced families living in 13 camps. In 2020, there were 75,000 internally displaced families, and 6,000 families were living in six camps. Mostly vulnerable or low-income internally displaced families live in the camps since services and accommodation are provided free of charge. Other IDPs with some financial means, including governmental employees who receive a monthly income, opt to live in the city outside of the camps. The local authorities coordinated with donors, UN agencies and international NGOs to focus projects in the urban areas where most IDPs and refugees were concentrated.

With a population increase of 30 per cent in Erbil from 2014 to 2016, the water and electricity infrastructure endured the most pressure. The host community`s access to water and electricity also became more difficult. The budgets for emergency response and resilience projects were therefore used to build more infrastructure for electricity and water. The local government installed a portable power plant to reduce the load and advocated that any projects for IDPs should ensure that 15 to 20 per cent of vulnerable residents in the host community also benefit. This also served the goal of increasing social cohesion, a key recommendation of the 2015 IDP and refugee profiling study. Livelihood projects that included training and micro-credit to open small businesses for refugees, IDPs and the host community were most successful. However, some of these businesses have since closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic crisis in Iraq.

Iraq: Supporting the return of IDPs to Sinjar
Mr. Mohamed Taher Al-Tamimi, Director General of NGO Department and Chairman of the Operations Room

The return of internally displaced Yezidis from the north of Iraq to Sinjar is a complex process. These IDPs were vulnerable before displacement with no proper land or property rights. Obstacles to their return include the presence of landmines, limited health care and education, and poor access to electricity. The identification of Yezidi victims in mass graves has not been concluded and perpetrators have not been brought to justice or held accountable. This limits social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in Sinjar, the strengthening of which the Iraqi government is keen to cooperate with the international community on.

Sinjar's approach has been to preempt many of the challenges of IDP return and build the confidence of IDPs to return through legislation, monitoring and supporting implementation of relevant laws. Yezidi IDPs return with many uncertainties and risks, and legislation put in place aims to ensure the human rights of returnees, including security, housing, land and property rights, employment, and education. Authorities are also working to address the problems related to discriminatory policies that the previous regime followed since 1975 against the people of Sinjar.

Agreed by the Iraqi government and UN Mission in Iraq, the General Conference to restore stability in Sinjar in the fall of 2020 will focus on stabilization and peaceful coexistence in the context of return of IDPs. Other government efforts to support return have included mine clearance, reconstruction of damaged housing, a draft resolution on home ownership for residents of eleven Yezidi complexes, repair and maintenance of the electricity and water systems and reconstruction of schools, though more work is needed in all of these areas. The Iraqi government has also been keen to ensure the return of government employees who were displaced to ensure the functioning of local government.

Switzerland, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Anne Savary, Programme Officer, Global Programme on Migration and Development

Migration and internal displacement in urban settings is being increasingly addressed in the programming of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In partnership with the Cities Alliance, SDC is supporting a program on cities and migration to enable local governments as well as communities, migrants, IDPs and the private sector to manage the challenges and leverage the opportunities that arise from displacement for sustainable and inclusive development. The aim is to generate new knowledge and deepen the understanding of interlinkages between migration, displacement, urbanization and urban development, to fill the knowledge gaps on less visible internal flows, and to improve local capacities for more inclusive urban policies and systems.

One partner city for this program is Adama, Ethiopia. As the second most populous and one of the fastest growing cities in the country, it is characterized by multiple migration flows, including internal displacement. Adama has designed a project to improve its capacities in receiving, managing and integrating displaced people. The city has learned that there is a great need for collecting information on their vulnerabilities, sharing guidance on the available services to tackle their identified needs, establishing a network group to create a space for discussion and cooperation among the different stakeholders at the local level, and developing the infrastructure in IDP and migrant settlements to improve their living conditions and offer economic opportunities.

More lessons can be shared on how to address urban displacement have been drawn from the Durable Solutions Initiative in Somalia. First, innovative ways to mobilize funidng to support local integration of IDPs are needed. Two possibilities to explore are the mobilization of the private sector and the diaspora. Second, the role of secondary cities and the rural-urban dynamic in securing durable solutions to internal displacement should be explored further. Cities may not be able to absorb all IDPs or offer them all livelihood opportunities. While skills adaptation programs in cities

are important for IDPs with an agricultural pastoral livelihood, support to areas outside of cities can create a conducive environment for settlement and return of IDPs and also restore value chains. A study will be launched on this topic with FAO in Somalia.

Displacement often occurs in contexts where the land administration systems are functioning poorly or where various land systems co-exist and overlap. Land is of paramount importance in cities. IDPs living without security of tenure face a risk of eviction and multiple displacements. Solutions for IDPs and vulnerable groups in urban areas often require significant strengthening or reform of the land administration system. A Swiss-supported study presented different models that show how the negative externalities related to land speculation can be transformed into positive re-distributive dynamics for sustainable service delivery for IDPs. A better land management system requires participatory urban planning processes to be in place.