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Towards inclusive solutions to urban internal displacement:

A global framework for Governments, UN agencies, the Resident Coordinator System and partners

An IDP site made of self-built traditional buul within the urban fabric of Kismayo, Somalia
@Abdirahman Barkhadle, UN-Habitat, Kismayo, Somalia, 2017

Executive Summary

This Framework provides a resource for policymakers and program managers to help them design short-, medium- and long-term responses to urban internal displacement that are **sustainable***,* **scalable** and **transformative**. It closely aligns with the Secretary General's *Action Agenda on Internal Displacement*, which clarified that solutions to this crisis are only achievable if we "go beyond treating internal displacement as just a humanitarian problem and recognize it as a priority for development, peace and climate action" (United Nations, 2022). The Framework then tailors this call for reform to the particular challenges and opportunities posed by internal displacement in cities and towns — an increasingly common phenomenon in an urbanizing world.

To do so, this guidance presents **three critical 'shifts in mindset'** necessary for more effective programming, **five operational principles** that grow out of this new mindset, and a detailed discussion of **six essential programmatic elements**, which must be considered in any successful response to urban internal displacement. It then offers concrete examples of how this change can and should occur sector by sector — highlighting the substantial shifts in thinking and acting that will be required from humanitarian, development and peace actors for such change to be realized.

Critical shifts in mindset

Most fundamentally, governments and international aid actors need to adjust how they think about urban internal displacement:

- From "delivering durable solutions for IDPs in cities" to "facilitating pathways to inclusive urban development"
- From emergency crisis to development challenge… *and* opportunity
- From IDPs as a "humanitarian caseload" to IDPs as urban citizens within larger Displacement Affected Communities

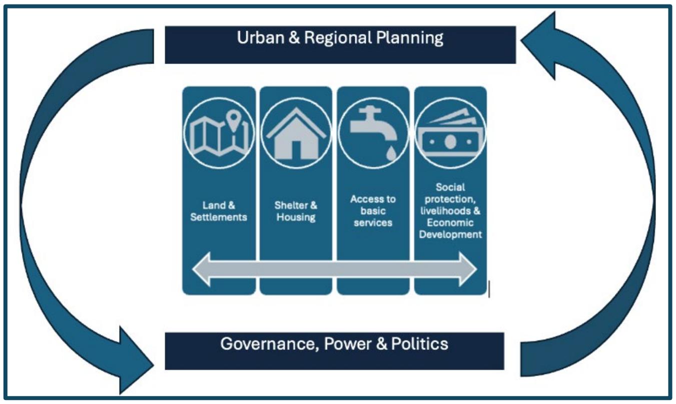
Core operational principles

Rethinking urban internal displacement leads to a set of foundational principles to follow in policy and programming:

- Understand and leverage pre-existing urban systems
- Emphasize agency and voice of 'displacement affected communities'
- Fully embrace the central importance of location and space
- Prioritize 'No Regrets' urban investments that 'Do No Harm'
- Truly 'own' the commitment to government ownership

Essential programmatic elements

Finally, the Framework presents six "essential programmatic elements" necessary for holistic, integrated responses. The elements are bound together through iterative urban planning exercises, and undergirded by a deep understanding of "governance, participation, power and politics."


Urban & Regional Planning
Land & Settlements
Shelter & Housing
Access to basic services
Social protection, livelihoods & Economic Development
Governance, Power & Politics

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background & Methodology

This Framework contributes to ongoing efforts to operationalize the UN Secretary General's "Action Agenda on Internal Displacement[1]." The Action Agenda seeks to prevent, address and resolve internal displacement crises around the world. This Framework specifically responds to calls within the Action Agenda and elsewhere for better policy and operational guidance on the unique challenges — and also opportunities — presented by *urban* internal displacement. The scope of this document also extends to refugee returnees as set out also in the Global Compact on Refugees, in particular objective 4.

The Framework builds on policies and institutional guidelines of various UN agencies and partners related to internal displacement (and forced displacement more broadly) in urban settings. While significant progress on understanding and responding to urban internal displacement has taken place over the past decade, the consultations conducted during the development of the Framework demonstrated that a continued push to move beyond the rural-, camp- and humanitarian-centric thinking that has characterized many responses to internal displacement is still sorely needed.

The design of this Framework has benefited from detailed inputs from an "informal Task Force" convened by UN-Habitat[2]. The development of the Framework also involved a comprehensive literature review and detailed consultations with over 50 experts from UN agencies, governments, donors and international financial institutions (IFIs), international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academics. Country-level analyses of Colombia, Iraq, Mozambique and Somalia were also completed (see Annex 2 for an additional discussion of the initiative's methodology).

1.2. Framework Overview

1.2.1. What is the purpose of this Framework?

This Framework is designed to help policymakers and program managers within concerned national and local governments, UN agencies, the UN Resident Coordinator system, bilateral and multilateral donors and International Financial Institutions, and national and international NGOs drive solutions to internal displacement crises in urban settings. It is aimed at stakeholders engaged across humanitarian, development[3], and peacebuilding, stabilization and transition programming.

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[1] The Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement was launched in June 2022, as a key outcome of the UN's High-level Panel on Internal Displacement. The Office of the Special Advisor on Solutions to Internal Displacement (OSA), has worked to operationalize the commitments of the Action Agenda across the UN system.

[2] The Task Force comprised global-level focal points on urban and internal/forced displacement issues from the following organizations (in alphabetical order): IMPACT Initiatives, IOM, JIPS, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and the World Bank.

The document presents high-level guidance on the "dos and don'ts" of urban internal displacement programming, with the goal of promoting government-led, development-anchored solutions that set IDPs on pathways to sustainability, inclusion and prosperity. Such guidance can inform the use of increasingly scarce[4] international and domestic assistance resources and promote joined-up short-, medium- and long-term interventions across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus. It is intended to be used at the beginning of a program cycle — either when actors are mobilizing to tackle a new crisis or need a shift in strategy to better respond to protracted displacement situations.

This guidance presents **three critical 'shifts in mindset'** necessary for more effective programming, **five operational principles** that grow out of this new mindset, and a detailed discussion of **six essential programmatic elements**, which must be considered in any successful response to urban internal displacement.

Success is defined as **interventions that are sustainable, scalable and transformational** for both displaced households and the larger displacement affected communities and city systems in which they are located (See box 1 for additional details). By meeting these criteria, IDPs can be assisted entering into and progressing along "solutions pathways" (Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement Taskforce, 2023) that lead to long-term inclusion and resilience. As discussed in more detail in the next section, this Framework focuses on protracted displacement situations in which returns are difficult and many of the displaced households are likely to choose (or be compelled) to settle in urban areas in question for an extended, and often indefinite, period. This framework thus focuses on the dynamics of local integration (or lack thereof) and recognizes possible secondary displacements to other cities and towns, informed by pull and push factors (social networks, livelihood opportunities, availability of land, etc.). Returns to rural areas is not the focus here.

Box 1. Defining Success of HDP Nexus Programming in Response to Urban Internal Displacement Crises

This Framework provides three criteria with which to assess success of initiatives undertaken by government and international actors, across the duration of the crisis:

- **Sustainable**: Can the intended gains be maintained beyond the duration of international aid programs and projects
- **Scalable**: Can benefits realistically be extended to the all those displaced and the entire group of urban citizens in need, *even without additional external interventions*

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[3] For the purposes of this Framework, programming to respond to the effects of climate change falls primarily under the rubric of "development programming".

[4] See discussion of the international aid architecture below.

- **Transformational**: Most ambitiously, can interventions both meet the immediate and longer-term needs of IDPs, and catalyze positive long-term changes in the city's governance, provision of basic services and socio-economic growth prospects, allowing for inclusive and planned urban growth, rather than precarious informality

1.1.1. Key Characteristics of the Framework

The framework has the following characteristics:

- **Focuses on *protracted* displacement crises.** The framework focuses on urban internal displacement crises which are — or are likely to become — protracted. Given protracted displacement crises' close relationship with conflict and violence (IDMC, 2015; Grip, 2017; World Bank, 2021; Kälin, 2023), the framework is directly relevant for conflict contexts. There is also significant overlap with slow-onset disasters related to climate change (such as long-term drought or recurrent flooding), in which returns to areas of origin are difficult. The Framework is less directly relevant for displacement from acute disasters, where returns are possible soon after the initial crisis[5].
- **Is geared to addressing *internal* displacement, as opposed to other forms of forced displacement.** Given the goal of contributing to the UN Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, the Framework does not explicitly consider the issues of refugees (except in the case of refugee returnees). It does recognize that – despite distinct legal statuses – IDPs, asylum seekers and refugees live side-by-side in cities throughout the Global South and often face similar social, political and economic challenges (Landau, 2014).
- **Is primarily applicable to fragile and crisis contexts, where returns are difficult and protracted displacement is the norm.** The Framework is intended as a "global" document that can be applied to programming in any urban internal displacement crisis, but it is particularly geared towards settings in which pre-existing political and economic fragility can result in crises that result in large-scale, protracted displacement. In such contexts, internal displacement typically fuels rapid, unplanned urbanization, and returns to areas of origin are difficult. This subset of urban internal displacement crises requires a new way of thinking and working, on the part of both humanitarian and development actors.
- **Adopts a broad definition of 'urban' and 'urban displacement'**: Urban internal displacement is defined here as displacement from any origin within the same country where IDPs seek refuge within an urban area[6]. Displacement could be initiated from a rural area, another city or town, or from another neighborhood within the same city[7].
- **Addresses key Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus issues**. Urban internal displacement is a Nexus issue *par excellence*: failure to achieve joined-up humanitarian,

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[5] However, in contexts of marked political fragility and severe economic underdevelopment, even a one-off, acute disaster may cause displacement dynamics in which return is difficult (e.g. post-earthquake displacement in Port-au-Prince, Haiti); this Framework *would* directly apply in such cases.

[6] 'Urban area' defined broadly and in a "forward-looking" sense; see Box 2 below.

[7] As noted in IDMC's 2019 GRID report, "In this urban century, a growing proportion of displacement can also be expected to start and end within the same city." (IDMC, 2019)

development and peace programming can irrevocably harm the built environment, in terms of entrenched spatial growth pathways and sub-optimal infrastructure configurations (Soraya Goga *et al.*, 2021). The attendant reductions in both productivity and inclusion can have severe consequences for economic dynamism, state-society relations, and sustainability. On the other hand, proactively and effectively addressing urban internal displacement can provide win-wins for both highly vulnerable populations affected by crisis and the cities in which they settle. While undoubtedly challenging, urban internal displacement crises may be a uniquely conducive setting for operationalizing broader Nexus thinking.

- **Reflects Emerging Thinking on "Solutions Pathways" for Internal Displacement.** A solutions pathway begins when "an IDP is no longer in displacement, either due to moving to a location of solution (return or resettlement locations), or has decided to locally integrate in the area of displacement (local integration), however has not yet overcome their displacement-related vulnerabilities" (Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement Taskforce, 2023). This Framework embraces this thinking and considers how it applies to different phases of an urban displacement crisis.
- **Works within the current (imperfect) international assistance[8] architecture**. As highlighted in a diverse and growing literature, there is a clear need for donors to provide more flexible, longer-term, politically-informed and holistic funding streams to address both urban internal displacement (Earle, 2016a; Earle *et al.*, 2020) and internal displacement more broadly (Nguya and Siddiqui, 2020; United Nations, 2021; Sida *et al.*, 2024). This Framework strongly echoes these calls. However, as an operational document, the Framework takes the existing system as a given, seeking ways to work effectively within it.

  And within this system, tradeoffs between difference aid and assistance goals are very real (Furman, 2024). Indeed, we are confronted with growing shortfalls in humanitarian aid, combined with decreases in development funding to countries in protracted crisis (Development Initiatives, 2023). The Framework thus encourages creative funding and financing arrangements, including inserting development thinking into humanitarian programs ('solutions from the start'; see below); interlinking multiple short-term initiatives into longer-term cohesive programming; and assisting governments—particularly at the sub-national level—to better access sufficient and sustainable development finance (see Box 3 below) and focusing on own-source revenue generation. This will require substantial shifts from both humanitarian and development actors in how they think about and respond to protracted urban displacement crises.

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[8] 'Assistance' in the sense of "Official Development Assistance" as defined by the OECD (OECD, 2024), which encompasses both humanitarian aid and longer-term development aid. In the Framework, the terms "aid" and "assistance" are used interchangeably, unless when otherwise stated

2. The Scale and Scope of Urban Internal Displacement

2.1. The Global Internal Displacement Crisis

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) there were an estimated 76 million IDPs as a result of disasters, conflict, and violence at the end of 2023 (IDMC, 2024). This enormous figure includes IDPs living in conditions of both acute and protracted displacement[9] and an unknown number who have achieved 'sustainable local integration'[10]. While reliable data on internal displacement is notoriously difficult to collect (Crawford *et al.*, 2015; Devictor, 2017a) and robust data remains elusive, what is certain is that this represents a significant increase in absolute terms since 2014.

Moreover, with increasing fragility and conflict, combined with new stressors like climate change, the policy consensus is that these figures are likely to increase (United Nations, 2021; IDMC, 2024). A report by the World Bank, for example, has predicted 200 million IDPs resulting from climate change in the coming years (Clement *et al.*, 2021). Framework consultations and the literature review demonstrated how rural-to-urban displacement owing to slow-onset disasters such as drought in Somalia and Afghanistan, are often irreversible and have many similarities to conflict-induced displacement.

2.2. The Urbanization of (Internal) Displacement

Internal displacement has become increasingly urbanized over the past several decades, leading to what is now frequently referred to as the "urbanization of displacement" (Earle *et al.*, 2020; Earle, 2023). This trend encompasses both refugees and IDPs. UNHCR estimates that in 2023, at least 58% of all refugees were located in cities and towns (UNHCR, 2024)[11]. While robust figures are also elusive here (IDMC, 2019), it is generally believed that a majority of IDPs are now settling in urban areas (Grayson and Cotroneo, 2018; IDMC, 2019; United Nations, 2021; Earle, 2023).

Unprecedented rapid urbanization is occurring in many internal displacement "hotspots". There are extreme examples of internal displacement contributing to phenomenal urban growth rates in certain cities, such as Maiduguiri, Nigeria (IDMC, 2018) Kaya, Burkina Faso (Baker, Debomy and Goga, 2023), and Pemba, Mozambique (JIPS, 2024). The intertwining of these phenomena has led to growing calls to treat internal displacement as a 'sped-up form of urbanization' (Earle and Ward, 2021). This urbanization is unique in the sense that it is "forced", which creates unique dynamics that require something beyond a business-as-usual approach to dealing with urban in-migration (Soraya Goga *et al.*, 2021).

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[9] Protracted displacement is composed of a wide range of disparate situations, from a household stuck in a highly regulated peri-urban camp to a household that has lived, worked—and perhaps even prospered—in an urban neighborhood for more than a decade. A consensus definition of and robust global figures for protracted internal displacement do not yet exist (Crawford *et al.*, 2015; Devictor, 2017a) but we do know that many crisis and conflict-affected countries struggle with long-term IDP caseloads (IDMC, 2015).

[10] Per the IASC Framework (2010) sustainable local integration is one of the three recognized pathways to achieving a durable solution. As the same time, clearly defining and operationalizing when this has occurred is a difficult—and often highly political—proposition (Kälin, 2023)

[11] Moreover, this percentage is likely an underestimate, with UNHCR noting that "It is likely that this proportion will increase given that most IDPs are likely to be in urban areas in the countries with missing data." (UNHCR, 2024)

Nevertheless, while the importance of urbanization is increasingly mentioned in global policy documents, the literature review and the consultations conducted for this Framework confirm that programming has been slow to shift from its rural, camp-based traditions.

Box 2. Defining the "urban" in "urban internal displacement": Statistical Measures versus Operational Realities

There is a wide range of country-level approaches to defining urban and quantifying "urban displacement" (IDMC, 2019). From an ***operational*** standpoint, the Framework strongly advocates for an expansive definition of urban. In this conception, a settlement is urban if it meets any of the following criteria: 1) is administratively defined as urban; 2) qualifies as urban under measurements of functional degree of urbanization (see below); 3) does not *currently* meet either of the above criteria, but can be reasonably expected to *become* urban in the next 10 years, based on projected occupation densities, livelihoods profiles, or service delivery systems. This Framework does not directly address the complicated issue of defining 'urban' for ***statistical*** purposes. National practices for designating urban regions should be used as a starting point. When possible, however, new statistical approaches that capture the functional degree of urbanization (DEGURBA) (European Union *et al.*, 2021) are useful in contexts where country-level statistics have not kept pace with recent urbanization and where many localities are *de jure* rural, but *de facto* urban.

1.2. Internal Displacement's Inherent Links to Fragility

Contexts of "fragility, conflict and violence" (Bank, 2020; OECD, 2022) are the common denominator for many countries experiencing internal displacement. Indeed, governance challenges are both cause and consequence of displacement (Kälin, 2023), often trapping societies in a vicious cycle. In 2023, for example, the 15 most fragile countries accounted for approximately 50% of all IDPs (Ward, 2024).

Fragility is of critical importance for this framework, because it reflects the highly strained governance context in which international actors try (but often fail) to forge *truly* "durable" solutions. In such settings, internal displacement is often one challenge amongst many confronting states and their international partners. Pragmatism and a nuanced understanding of the local political and institutional contexts are thus essential for forging solutions to internal displacement.

3. A Framework for inclusive solutions to urban internal displacement

This Framework presents:

- **Three critical shifts** in mindset that structure how affected governments and national and international aid actors should approach urban internal displacement;
- **Five key principles** that actors across the HDP Nexus should follow when engaging in any urban internal displacement context; and,
- **Six essential programmatic elements** that must be included in any sustainable, scalable and transformational response to urban internal displacement.

3.1.1. Critical Shifts in Mindset

The Framework advocates for a shift in how national and local-level governments and international aid agencies should conceive of urban internal displacement crises and offers concrete examples of how this change can and should happen.

- **From delivering "durable solutions for IDPs in cities" to facilitating "pathways to inclusive urban displacement solutions"**

The Framework supports recent calls for a "radical shift in the way internal displacement is understood and addressed" (UNDP, 2022, p. 45), from one that is based on a largely humanitarian footing, to an approach grounded in a "renewed emphasis on development as the only way to provide sustainable solutions to internal displacement" (UNDP, 2022, p. 5). This dovetails with calls for "solutions from the outset" (Sida *et al.*, 2024, p. 41) the need to incorporate 'long-term considerations' (Grayson and Cotroneo, 2018, p. 45), and the importance of inclusion goals within urban development programming (Majidi, Saliba and Yu, 2024).

This Framework tailors these calls for reform to urban contexts. Rather than a humanitarian-centric vocabulary and a logic of 'durable solutions' mechanically applied within a city, it advocates for "inclusive urban development solutions" that bring *development thinking* into the earliest stages of the response (see below) and more quickly and fully joins it with integrated, government-led *development programming*. Such programming capitalizes on the ability of urban area's potential to drive economic growth, livelihoods opportunities, and improvements in quality of life (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020).

- **From emergency crisis to development challenge… *and* opportunity**

Current humanitarian discourse and practice tends to focus on short-term needs, despite the fact that "in the majority of cases, the humanitarian system is engaged in something that can be described as recurrent 'care and maintenance'" (Sida *et al.*, 2024, p. 37) as opposed to lifesaving assistance. The incentives and logic of humanitarian *funding* cycles are a bottleneck to shifting towards developmental priorities and opportunities. While there is no shortage of humanitarian need in countless IDP and DAC communities around the world, we must collectively improve our ability to distinguish material deprivation and protection needs resulting from the immediate effects of displacement and those that are instead the product of pre-existing structural factors in domestic economic, political and social systems. Humanitarian-oriented interventions are appropriate in the former contexts, but often ineffective or even counterproductive in the latter.

Shifting this emphasis aligns well with what the World Bank has described as a "people-in-place" approach to forced displacement in towns and cities (Soraya Goga *et al.*, 2021). Such an approach combines a "'people-based' approach that focuses on addressing the specific vulnerabilities of the displaced and the needs of the host community" (Soraya Goga *et al.*, 2021) with a 'place-based' approach that focuses on managing and improving the existing institutions, systems and capacities.

The emphasis on speed in humanitarian programming results in a tendency to consistently underestimate the agency and abilities of displaced populations (Landau, 2014; Bradley, Milner and Peruniak, 2019; Sherwood, 2019) and DACs, as well as the inherent economic dynamism of cities. While displacement affected communities and local governments need assistance in dealing with the shock of large, unplanned displacement events, such population inflows can also spur significant "development returns" (Zetter, 2014).

At the same time, *development* actors (including donors) need to more proactively engage in contexts of protracted displacement. This means increasing risk tolerance for investing in inherently unstable political and economic settings and seeing both the development challenges and opportunities in protracted urban internal displacement contexts.

- **From IDPs as a "humanitarian caseload" to urban citizens within displacement affected communities**

Conceiving of urban internal displacement as a primarily development issue changes how urban IDPs are viewed. Instead of a "humanitarian caseload" (Earle *et al.*, 2020) to be managed, they "become equal citizens benefiting from and contributing to national and community life." (UNDP, 2022, p. 30) This does not mean that many IDPs do not require emergency and protection assistance at critical moments of their displacement. But it does highlight that all actors have an obligation to work across the nexus to decrease this caseload as quickly and efficiently as possible, addressing the root causes of protection challenges, transitioning individuals, communities, cities and countries onto an upward development trajectory. and towards sustaining peace.

Displacement crises must also be seen as a community-level and society-level phenomenon, as opposed to an issue of household-level deprivation. Such a shift from household- or individual-level needs and rights to social-level systems and goods is a key aspect of the move towards a development-oriented mindset and operational footing. This is particularly critical in urban displacement crises in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where the non-displaced urban poor frequently face similarly severe material deprivations and struggle with comparable political and economic marginalization. That said, the obstacles for IDPs to integration, be it ethnic, linguistic, legislative need to be properly understood This Framework thus embraces the concept of "displacement affected communities" (UNDP, 2022) and a shift from working exclusively (or at least primarily) with IDPs to inclusively with displacement affected communities. A productive --- and politically smart --- approach that operationalizes the concept of displacement affected communities is to focus on win-win urban investments (IIED, 2021) that match up the often-competing interests between marginalized IDPs and DACs, and particular the urban poor, and those of local elites (UNDP, 2022).

3.1.2. 5 Foundational Principles for Policy and Programming

Rethinking urban internal displacement as advocated above leads to a set of foundational principles for policy and programming.

- **Understand and capitalize on pre-existing urban systems**

Cities are defined by a complex and "institutionally dense" (Goodfellow, 2018, p. 205) array of pre-existing systems (Campbell, 2016; Earle, 2016b) that, however imperfectly, structure life and livelihoods in crisis-affected societies. These systems include governance, infrastructure, markets and social networks (Earle, 2016a) and are characterized by their interconnectedness, density, heterogeneity, and their informal and formal characters. Far from a blank slate upon which programming is imposed, these urban systems can react to the arrival of international aid in often unexpected ways. Aid actors must then "work with the grain" (Booth, 2012; Levy, 2014) of these systems, to capitalize on potential synergies and opportunities for scale and to avoid unintended negative consequences, while also working to improve these informal or formal systems, where possible given the many constraints facing aid actors.

- **Emphasize agency and voice of 'displacement affected communities', and the IDPs within them**

Despite the calls for a greater say in their future, IDPs continue to face an overly disempowering international aid system. To overcome this, aid actors should take the difficult but necessary steps to devolve actual decision-making power and real resources to both communities themselves and focus on strengthening inclusive and participatory local governance mechanisms, led by local governments.

As importantly, this principle requires working with the entire "displacement affected community" (see above) rather than just IDPs. Such an approach is politically pragmatic – ensuring greater buy-in from key local stakeholders who can make or break program success (Hammond, 2021). It also addresses the need for social equity across various vulnerable groups that is key for repairing the frayed social contract.

- **Fully embrace the central importance of location and space**

In general, aid actors continue to pay insufficient attention[12] to spatial issues when engaging in the urban sphere. *Where* IDPs are located and their connections to the larger city are important determinants of their prospects for integration, access to services and livelihoods, (including peri-urban areas). When cities facilitate mobility and interconnectivity, all residents can benefit; poor connectivity, on the other hand, can lead to marginalization of vulnerable groups and/or increased congestion that places a drag on economic growth (World Bank, 2009).

- **Prioritize "No Regrets" urban investments**

Failure to consider existing urban systems can create inefficiencies and marginalizing effects in local markets for food, water and energy" (Earle, 2016a). Moreover, because of the "path dependency" inherent in urban infrastructure and urban growth patterns, such impacts can do lasting damage to the urban fabric (Soraya Goga *et al.*, 2021). For example, drilling bore holes to provide water to displaced communities *may* be an improvement on water trucking (Sida *et al.*, 2024), but only if there has been a consideration of the long-term effects on water supply across the entire city have first been carefully taken into account. Similarly, if services are extended to new displacement-related settlements that are located in areas that will constrain future urban economic growth, short-term gains maybe outweighed by the long-term loss of productivity that results (Devictor, 2017a; Soraya Goga *et al.*, 2021). It is therefore essential to ensure that any near-term investments during the humanitarian or stabilization phases do not unduly forestall, distort or undermine the medium- and long-term sustainable urban growth.

- **Truly 'own' the commitment to "government ownership"**

One of the most important reasons to shift from a humanitarian to a development orientation is to allow for national and local government-led planning and programming, whenever and wherever possible. Humanitarian interventions to address urgent life-saving needs in crisis contexts currently entail the creation of parallel systems and coordination structures, such as the Cluster System and Durable Solutions Working Groups. There is a recognized need to shift towards contextualized, locally-led and politically embedded coordination and program implementation structures as quickly as possible.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that simply shifting to a "development footing" is not a panacea in-and-of-itself, given the incredibly complicated issues found in displacement crises (Ward, 2024). Instead, development interventions should be politically-smart, and deeply aware of context-specific nuances (Hammond, 2021). Moreover, to foster truly scalable and transformational results, there must be devolution of both decision-making authority and actual resource management to local and national government actors[13] (te Lintelo and Liptrot, 2023).

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[12] The increasing promotion of "settlements-based" approaches is a notable exception; see below for additional discussion of this generally welcome trend.

[13] While also keeping in mind that such local actors are not necessarily politically neutral and need to be assessed as appropriate partners within the context of a deep understanding of the urban political economy and the national-local settlement.

3.1.3. Conceptualizing Phases of Displacement Response in Urban Contexts

As a nexus issue *par excellence* (see above), the interlinkages between different phases of a displacement crisis—and how humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming operate within them—are of central importance for operational decisions on the ground. However, mapping these phases and ensuring they can be used to inform programming raises various knotty issues, such as: When does the "acute phase" of a crisis end? How can international actors recognize when this shift is occurring? How does humanitarian and development programming align during a protracted displacement situation, which can include additional new acute displacements? And how should programming adjust to reflect this change in on-the-ground conditions?

The Framework presents a conceptual model of three primary phases of displacement. Of course, crises in fragile contexts are complex; displaced populations are often at a high risk of suffering subsequent shocks, and different waves of displacement can occur over months, years or even decades. But this complexity cannot be a justification for failing to clarify when a predominantly humanitarian footing is needed, and when there must be a shift to a more development one.

Clarifying which of these phases should apply to a particular displaced group is essential if we are to disentangle lifesaving, displacement-related needs with those that are structural and long-term in nature. Similarly, there must be a way to differentiate between different groups of IDPs, rather than treating them as an undifferentiated mass. This includes the duration of their displacement, and the current "trajectory" they are currently on in terms of achieving local integration.

To do, there must be a shared terminology and clear set of parameters for defining when and how "pivots" from one logic and operational footing to another are executed. The phases are briefly presented below.

- The '***Acute phase***,' characterized by the initial flight of a displaced group and their settlement in an urban area. At this stage, urgency is justified and thus the fast-reacting parallel systems that humanitarian actors specialize in are likely called for. At the same time, there should already be a focus on incorporating "solutions from the start" and a forward-looking stance (Sanderson, 2020) into all programming.
- A '***Consolidation phase'*** in which a given displaced population begins to transition from needing urgent life-saving assistance to longer-term support, either related to their displacement specific needs or to broader structural development challenges. This phase corresponds to the entry of a given displacement household or population onto a "solutions pathway", in which they are no longer "in displacement" but have "not yet overcome their displacement-related vulnerabilities." (Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement Taskforce, 2023). Here, there should be a presumption of agency on the part IDPs, and an effort to accurately gauge their ongoing integration and coping efforts, rather than simply assuming they require ongoing humanitarian assistance, as has been the

default in the past, thereby “rendering those attempting to locally integrate invisible to decision-makers”.

- And a ‘***Protracted phase’***, in which the particular displaced population’s situation has largely converged with that of the surrounding DAC. Here, conflating structural conditions of deprivation (however severe) with “humanitarian need” risks creating aid dependency, unsustainable programs, and a tendency to engage in a dynamic of “‘aid until the money runs out’, rather than thinking about what could be done to help with agency, sustainability and reinforcing people’s capacities” (Sida *et al.,* 2024*,* p. 74).

As discussed below on a sector-by-sector basis below, two key changes for this revised approach are necessary:

- Inclusion of “**solutions from the start**”. Development expertise should be incorporated from the earliest moments of a displacement event, helping to optimize the effectiveness of the response across multiple sectors and embrace the emphasis on ‘no regrets urban investments’ to avoid blocking pathways to solutions.
- Enactment of sector-by-sector discussions on re-aligning humanitarian and development approaches, to facilitate a more systematic and planned transition from a humanitarian to a development posture.

3.1.4. Foundational data Inputs and analysis

An in-depth and nuanced understanding of the urban context and its displacement dynamics is essential for successful programming. Because no two cities or towns are alike, each context must be carefully analyzed as a unique set of complex urban systems (see discussion in Section 4.1.2.5 above), interests and power dynamics, and challenges and opportunities. Without the inputs cited below, programming will tend to be haphazard and insufficiently attuned to local context. However, the consultations revealed that such foundational inputs are often partially or wholly missing in many programming responses.

Urban profiling is one such essential input that allows external actors to “see” the city in all of its complexity and interconnectivity. Urban profiling is a “collaborative information-gathering process that provides disaggregated, comparative data about displacement situations”(GAUC, 2019). It takes a “people and place” approach, paying attention to both spatial issues and the specific vulnerabilities, and strengths of IDPs and DACs. Profiling moves beyond the acute humanitarian phase to take into account issues that emerge in protracted displacement contexts.

Urban-centric displacement data is also critical. Fine-grained analyses of displacement that is spatially, temporally, and socioeconomically disaggregated is necessary for informed and targeted programming. Such details are needed to assess displacement trends over time, their spatial distribution, and different experiences with integration of sub-groups within the displaced population. *Profiling of displacement affected communities* allows actors to disentangle the displacement-related vulnerabilities of IDPs from larger structural challenges for the communities in which they live and work. Such displacement data should capitalize on recent proposals for creating agreed upon methods for disaggregating IDPs depending on whether they are still in “displacement” or are on a solutions pathway towards local integration (Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement Taskforce, 2023).

Improved displacement and local integration data is also important because of its links to the financial capacity of local governments to manage IDP inflows. These entities are typically heavily dependent on national government transfers for both operational expenses (service delivery) and infrastructure investment (see below and Box 3 for a more detailed discussion of local government financing). Unfortunately, the population-based formulas on which the amounts of these transfers are based seldomly take into account IDP populations.

A **comprehensive view of the health of (local) government financing for urban management and development** will help ensure that responders understand authorities’ ability to take on the additional costs that come with an influx IDPs. This is often overlooked in the current model of IDP response that relies on humanitarian actors largely footing the bill for IDP needs, but without any plans for long-term financial sustainability.

Finally, there is an increased need for more **nuanced insights into the political economy of affected cities.** Designing and implementing successful interventions under the six programmatic elements described below will typically require a deep familiarity with sensitive issues of politics and political economy. A good example is the control and use of land in fragile contexts, where land is governed, in absence of formalized land systems, by customary practices. As an emerging body of research has documented, land and housing are intimately linked to power and politics throughout the Global South, including in crisis-affected settings (Goodfellow and Jackman, 2020; Mitlin, 2022; Goodfellow *et al.*, 2024). As such, coordinated *city- or regional-level political economy analyses* will also be required, in complement to national level PEAs (see UNDP’s Political Economy Approach to Internal Displacement (Hammond, 2021)). An example is recent district-level analyses — completed by IOM and the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) under the DANWADAAG program consortium (IOM Somalia, 2024) — on how internal displacement links to the interests of political, economic and security elites in Somalia.

3.2. 6 Essential Programmatic Elements

The core of the Framework is presented in the form of six “essential programmatic elements” that should be fully integrated and carefully considered in any urban displacement crisis, across all phases of the response[14].

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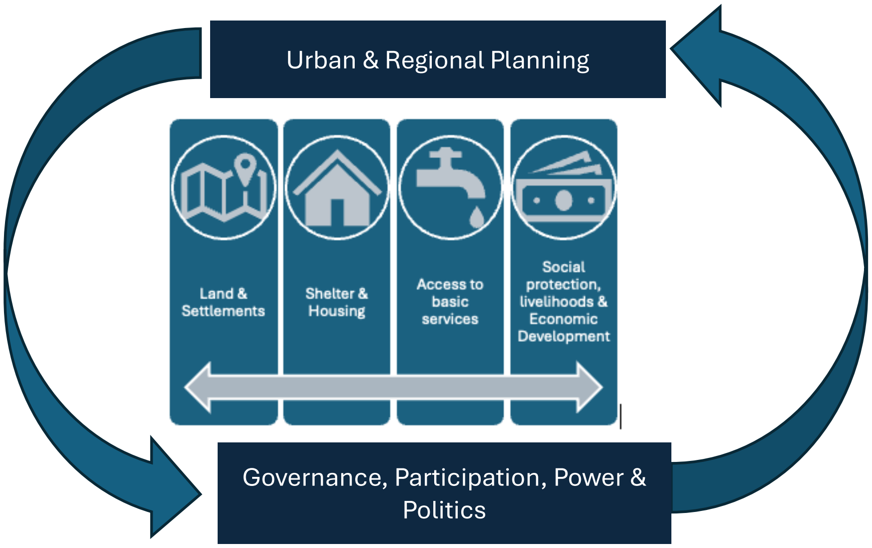
[14] Other elements can and should come to the fore based on the specificities of each crisis context. These six elements are presented as the minimal set of issues that must be addressed in some form in a protracted urban internal displacement crisis. This is not meant to replace existing guidance for humanitarian actors

Figure 1. 6 Essential Programmatic Elements for Inclusive Urban Development Solutions to Internal Displacement


Urban & Regional Planning
Land & Settlements
Shelter & Housing
Access to basic services
Social protection, livelihoods & Economic Development
Governance, Participation, Power & Politics

Each of the elements is presented in turn below. Each of the six sections contains:

- A general discussion of the element and its relevance within this framework.
- Recommendations for how the element should be addressed during, 1) the acute phase of the crisis, 2) during the consolidation phase, and 3) during the protracted phase.
- To facilitate nexus-oriented thinking and programming, each element concludes with reflections on inclusion of development approaches in the acute phase of the crisis, and how to fully operationalize the development posture when entering the protracted phase.

3.2.1. **ELEMENT 1:** Urban and Regional Planning

A systemic approach to cities and towns explained through an urban planning lens …can help organize programming that allocates services and develops infrastructure in a more inclusive and impactful way. (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020)

In this Framework, urban and regional planning is the glue that integrates the various sectoral interventions required for inclusive solutions to urban internal displacement. Planning provides a literal and figurative map for how an urban area can both meet the needs of displacement affected communities and foster sustainable urban development pathways. In this sense, the process of urban planning is as important — or arguably even more so — than the final product. It should gather all key stakeholders, and facilitate dialogue, discussion and consensus building around often highly sensitive political issues. *It is important that*[15] planning is intimately linked to a deep understanding of and engagement with governance, participation, power and politics.

Urban and Regional Planning during the Acute Phase

Rapidly identify no-go and growth areas

Two urgent urban planning issues that must be addressed at the outset of any urban displacement crisis are the identification (where they exist) of, 1) high-risk sites, and 2) options for planned urban extensions. Evidence shows that settlement patterns in the early stages of a crisis will often become permanent. Humanitarian efforts should, to the greatest extent possible, use programming to incentivize self-settlement in growth corridors and disincentivize occupation of high-risk areas. (see discussion on the Land & Settlements Element below for additional details). During the crisis phase, this information can be collected and disseminated through a **Rapid City Planning Exercise**[16] conducted by a small, dedicated team over the course of several weeks, culminating in a structured workshop that convenes key partners and stakeholders. In many fragile and crisis-affected contexts (particularly smaller secondary cities), urban plans may not exist or be extremely outdated. In these contexts, gathering existing knowledge of the city from formal and community-based sources and charting a strategy for a "good-enough" identification of possible high-risk sites and likely urban extension areas can be undertaken.

Embrace settlements-based programming methodologies to reinforce pre-existing urban planning goals

"The increasing prevalence of "settlements-based (Urban Settlements Working Group, 2020)" in humanitarian responses is a welcome trend. Area-based programming tends to be understood as a mere geographic delineation of areas of intervention. The framework focuses on the settlements-based approaches, which recognizes the inherent systems shaping neighborhoods and cities, which operate at different scale levels. Key features of settlement-based programming approaches include: a spatial orientation that facilitates equitable assistance, an integrated multi-sectoral treatment of needs, a focus on displacement affected communities and not just the forcibly displaced, and a proactive inclusion of local authorities and institutions (Parker, 2015; Hirano, Hilmi and Schell, 2020). As such, they can be an important precursor to the longer-term urban planning advocated for in this Framework. To achieve this integration, however, humanitarian actors should:

1) Carefully assess the pull factors created by the spatial distribution of assistance, in order to avoid incentivizing the consolidation of IDP settlement in high-risk areas and more remote peri-urban zones, while simultaneously promoting settlement in existing residential zones (formal or informal) and/or into designated urban growth corridors.

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[15] There are, however, too many cases where technically sophisticated plans are developed in the absence of actual political buy-in from local actors (UN-Habitat, 2010), and going largely unused.

[16] During the early stages of the acute phase of the crisis, this Rapid City Planning Exercise is envisioned as a light-touch, initial version of "Strategic Citywide Spatial Planning" (UN-Habitat, 2010)

Similarly, humanitarian actors should attempt to eschew a focus on camp-based and/or parallel delivery modalities, towards extending assistance into host communities, where IDPs tend to settle in a more dispersed fashion (Sida *et al.*, 2024, p. 30)

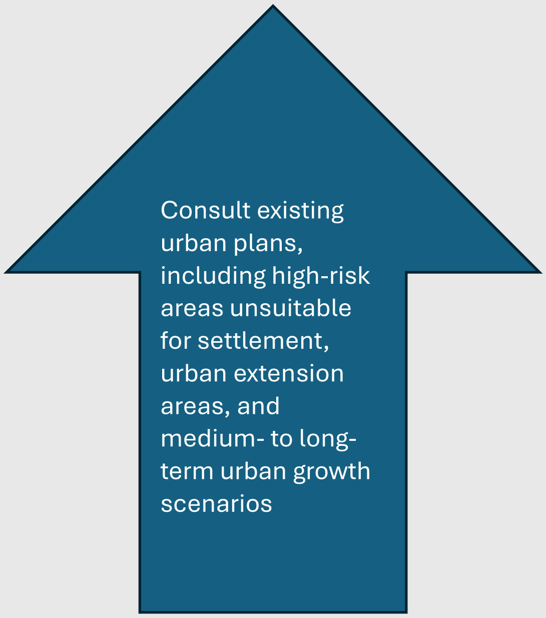
2) Engage with longer-term development actors (local and national authorities, as well as development funders/financers) from the very beginning of their response, progressively aligning their interventions with official plans and policies.

Better understand regional-level displacement push and pull factors to facilitate anticipatory action and response

People's decisions to leave one place and move to another are complex. Understanding the constantly shifting pull and the push factors across a territory and within a city are important to identify anticipatory action and response. This needs to be combined with an understanding of the absorption capacity of human settlements and cities, including availability of land, economic opportunities, and carrying capacity of public services. A regional and urban planning approach allows to better anticipate how interventions can shape population flows and systematically manage these effects, rather than simply reacting to displacement. And because of the strong "path dependency" of urban land-use decisions, this can affect cities' ability to successfully integrate IDP populations and foster sustainable urban growth for decades to come. At a regional level, anticipatory action can help incentivize displacement to cities and towns with greater absorption capacity, livelihoods opportunities, or other beneficial characteristics.

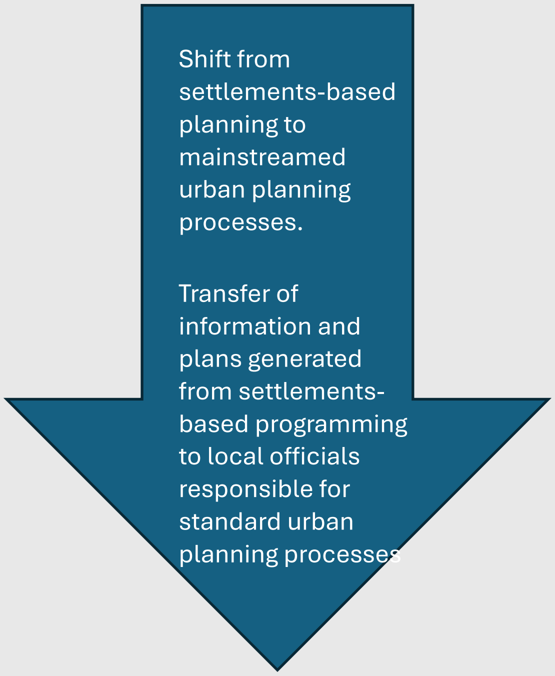
One well-documented pull factor is accessibility to humanitarian assistance. In some circumstances, conflict or disaster response falls short in its efforts to provide aid in remote or difficult-to-access areas (Haver and Carter, 2016; IFRC, 2018). Affected groups in areas of origin may thus be forced to relocate to access aid (Haysom, 2023) to towns or cities where it is easier for humanitarian actors to operate.

Operationalizing ‘Solutions from the Start’



Consult existing urban plans, including high-risk areas unsuitable for settlement, urban extension areas, and medium- to long-term urban growth scenarios

Facilitating periodic adjustments towards a Development-centric logic



Shift from settlements-based planning to mainstreamed urban planning processes.

Transfer of information and plans generated from settlements-based programming to local officials responsible for standard urban planning processes

Urban and Regional Planning during the Protracted phase

Transition from settlements-based programming to locally-led urban planning

Planning and data collection efforts conducted as part of humanitarian settlements-based programming should transition to locally-owned and implemented processes as quickly as possible.

Advocate for inclusion of population data—including displaced households—in official planning processes

Even where planning regimes exist, the evidence base used for official urban planning systems fails to adequately reflect IDPs inflows (as well as other newcomers, like low-income economic migrants and refugees (Earle, 2016a). This distorts planning for land use, basic service delivery, own-source revenue generation, and even municipal funds transfers from central governments. International aid actors should thus advocate for the inclusion of these groups in official population figures, with similar disaggregation as used for existing communities.

Urban planning can also be informed by forecasting initiatives that attempt to predict future rates of urbanization resulting from forced displacement and other population flows. Several initiatives identified during consultations include the Somalia Movement Projections Dashboard, which provides district-level projections of displacements and returns over a six-month period to inform humanitarian planning, and the Danish Refugee Council’s (DRC) Foresight Displacement forecasts that predicts forced displacement at the national level for one to three years into the future. There seems to be potential for this nascent work stream to be refined and systematized by aid actors for application in cities and regions with historically high levels of forced displacement.

Planning as a social cohesion and peacebuilding tool

Urban planning processes can build on community engagement strategies begun by humanitarian actors in order to foster greater social harmony and defuse ongoing or potential conflict between groups. Given that the national and/or local authorities in conflict settings are not always neutral actors, The UN can play a "brokering" role to strongly advocate for non-discriminatory approaches to being employed. There are three key criteria for success of these efforts:

- Planning should be local government-led and -owned, if it is to have an impact beyond a specific project or program and positively impact state-society relations.
- Carefully facilitated, participatory planning is necessary for understanding power dynamics and social, political and cultural divisions amongst the stakeholders.
- Planning processes need to become "concrete" if they are to have any lasting impact. Communities engaged in planning must see visible infrastructural and service investments that directly correspond to the planning process if greater social cohesion is to be realized. So-called "win-win" investments that spread benefits across IDP households, wider displacement affected communities, and to other interest groups within urban society can be particularly fruitful (IIED, 2021) (see discussion below).

Integrate regional planning into the urban planning process to foster broader economic growth and inform urban trajectories

Aid actors should more deeply consider how city-level issues are nested within larger regional and national dynamics related to population movements, natural resource assets and risks, economic interlinkages, and sociocultural ties.

A regional planning lens is particularly important for fostering feasible economic growth strategies and understanding forced displacement flows and mobility (pull and push factors). A regional understanding of a city's place in the regional context can thus help local leaders better address challenges and capitalize on opportunities of urban internal displacement now and in the future[17].

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[17] A promising example is the "Spatial Development Strategy for the Sahel", being conducted by UN-Habitat.

3.2.2. **ELEMENT 2:** Governance, Participation, Power and Politics

> Applied to internal displacement, a political economy approach considers the ways that arrangements of power and the pursuit of particular economic and political interests by different actors influence the ability of individuals and communities to exercise their rights as citizens and to live safely and securely. (Hammond, 2021)

Engaging with issues of governance, participation, power and politics is essential for repairing damaged social contracts, which sit at the heart of internal displacement crises (UNDP, 2022). The complicated patchwork of regulatory and political oversight across urban domains must be understood to inform the overall work across the other five Essential Programmatic Elements presented in this framework.

However, external aid actors' understanding of the governance landscape is typically under-developed. Instead, a more politically-nuanced analysis of city systems must be conducted, which identifies various power brokers (Hammond, 2021) at different institutional scales that can serve as either supporters or spoilers of inclusive urban development. **City-level Political Economy Analyses** should be considered to better understand these dynamics.

Given the role that conflict and violence typically play in protracted internal displacement crises, governance issues must also be approached through a protection and peacebuilding lens. In conflict contexts, widespread urban deprivations for both IDPs and displacement affected communities can be compounded by exclusion of the displaced from social, political and economic life (incl. access to land, security of tenure).

The issue of "multilevel governance[18]" is central to responding to displacement crises in city. National and city-level governments may have very different viewpoints and interests in responding to a crisis. Aid actors must carefully assess this situation to make informed decisions into how to intervene constructively into the "national-local settlement".

Governance, power, participation and politics in the Acute phase

Engage existing institutions early and often, particularly at the city level.
As noted above, cities represent an "institutionally dense" environment, with multiple formal *and informal* institutions all present in a geographically constrained and socially-connected space. As part of urban profiling and city-level political economic analysis, A good

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[18] Multilevel governance "concerns the vertical and horizontal integration of governance systems, necessary to enable efficient policy making, service delivery, and cohesive leadership by and among all spheres of governance." (UN-Habitat, 2024)

understanding is needed to what extend local governance mechanisms are inclusive and participatory.

Relations with national government are often complicated for humanitarian actors, given core humanitarian principles and long-standing organizational practices (Sida *et al.*, 2024). Working with city-level actors can be more feasible and impactful. At the same time, there should be a recognition that — just like national authorities — municipalities are not always neutral actors in conflict settings. As such, the UN should seek to play a brokering role, balancing the interests across the different stakeholders.

Settlements-based programming practices that highlight partnerships with local authorities and civil society and recognize existing neighborhoods and communities are a solid base from which to continue to expand this municipal orientation[19].

Use humanitarian diplomacy to advocate for city-level inclusion and protection of IDPs.
In many crises, IDPs within a city can face exclusion, stigmatization and harassment, often worse than the urban poor. Employing humanitarian diplomacy to combat these tendencies is often relatively overlooked in programming (Sida *et al.*, 2024). Even small adjustments to (formal or informal) city-wide policies (or how they are enforced in practice) can have much larger and longer-term multiplier effects than traditional response approaches involving household-level distributions.

At its most basic, humanitarian diplomacy should include protection from violence and abuses of IDPs' human rights—conducted by state actors and/or by other social groups. More broadly, it should work to ensure inclusion of IDPs' voices in the formal and informal political systems that govern the city. Utilizing participatory planning processes to facilitate social cohesion is one means of doing so (see below). Aid actors should also continue to focus on advocacy to ensure that administrative barriers are not raised to prevent IDPs' access to formal services, such as education, healthcare, and social welfare assistance and land and security of tenure.

Relatedly, aid actors can also work to promote the fundamental "socioeconomic rights" of IDPs: freedom of movement within the city, and their right to work without undue restriction in their displacement location (Devictor, 2017a).

It is also critical to remember that the larger Displacement Affected Communities within which IDPs tend to settle also typically face social, political and economic exclusion. Findings ways to increase the voices and agency of both IDPs and the Displacement Affected Communities within which they live — while defusing potential tensions between them— should be an overarching goal of any intervention.

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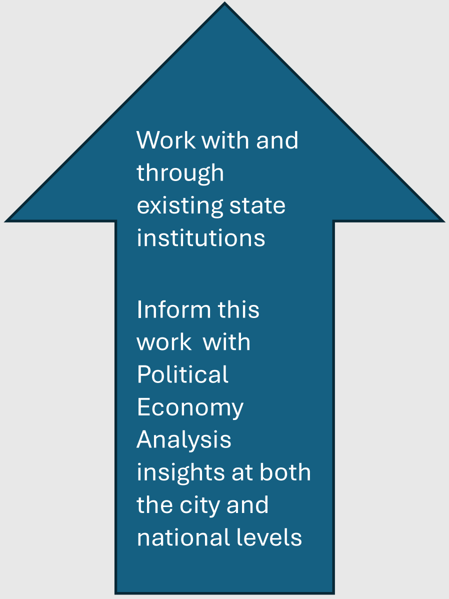
[19] This can prove particularly useful where international actors' relations with national regimes are particularly fraught. Consultations with organizations working in Afghanistan, for example, highlighted how municipal partners offered ways to work with local institutions while distancing themselves from the national regime.

Engage displacement affected communities through more inclusive and participatory local governance mechanisms.

When and how partnering with local authorities is conducted needs to reflect as well the insights from the city-level political economy analysis and the mapping of local governance mechanisms. Whenever possible, local governments should take the lead in identifying IDPs and other vulnerable households for targeting as beneficiaries. Not only are they "best suited to identify and reach out to them and ensure their adequate representation," (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020, p. 24) such an approach will better contribute to efforts to strengthen state-society relations, and also increase the likelihood that collected data will be included beyond the end of international aid programming. This, where needed, can be complemented with independent checks and balances through civil society (ex. complaint mechanisms).

Operationalizing "Solutions from the Start"


Work with and through existing state institutions
Inform this work with Political Economy Analysis insights at both the city and national levels

Facilitating periodic adjustments towards a Development-centric logic

Insights gained from conflict sensitivity assessments transferred to development-oriented programming

Governance, participation power, and politics in the protracted phase

Tackling the central issue of security and the Rule-of-Law

Unfortunately, conflict and/or violence is a consistent through-line in the causes of many —if not most—protracted urban displacements crises today. Security concerns typically continue to hang over efforts to find solutions to displacement, even in places of relative "refuge" for displaced groups. Without the confidence that they can live free of violence and harassment, both IDPs and the larger Displacement Affected Communities of which they form apart will be hard-pressed to make progress in the other areas advocated for in this framework. Capitalizing on the protection efforts mentioned above, aid actors should in the protracted phase undertake a set of security-related actions, including "restoring the rule of law, improving security and access to justice, and fostering return to peace" (UNDP, 2022).

Shift from humanitarian coordination mechanisms to local governance channels

International aid deployed in response to a displacement crisis can often create "counterproductive incentives" (Devictor, 2017a) in local and national-governance systems. By creating parallel, internationally-established mechanisms for everything from policy formulation to service delivery, existing governance relationships can be undermined or distorted. Shifting aid programming out of international-led coordination arrangements should be initiated as quickly as possible in favor of contextualized arrangements that taking into account local governance mechanisms. This transition can be facilitated by including government authorities in humanitarian coordination as early as possible, in support of localization, and providing targeted technical assistance and capacity building before, during and after the transition.

Increasing the government resource base

Many local governments struggle to expand their service delivery systems in response to the shock of rapid urban population growth due to internal displacement, given their limited fiscal base (Zetter, 2014; Earle, 2016a) and institutional capacity. Some of this need is (temporarily) offset by humanitarian programming, but over time local authorities will increasingly shoulder the operational costs of operating these systems (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020). Development actors should do more to roll out technical assistance to help support optimized own-source revenue generation and expenditures to off-set these shocks. This critical issue is discussed in more detail in Box 3.

Box 3: Empowering Local Governments Through Improved Development Finance

Municipal governments and other sub-national authorities are on the front lines of dealing with the challenges (and opportunities) of influx of IDPs within their communities. Indeed, most countries throughout the world – including those most affected by large scale or recurrent internal displacement crises – have moved towards decentralized governance models (Manor, 1999; Faguet, 2014). The result is that local governments are responsible for delivering essential local services to urban populations, including IDPs.

To effectively respond to protracted urban internal displacement, a shift towards a development orientation is required, with a focus not only on changing how and by whom response activities are implemented…but how they are *financed*. Sub-national authorities must be empowered to assume greater responsibility for the increased costs of service delivery and infrastructure investment that is required to meet the needs of growing urban populations.

The status quo in protracted displacement response is that the international community supports the needs of IDPs, while local governments focus primarily on the pre-existing local population (or some privileged sectors within it). This approach has several drawbacks: it limits IDP integration, potentially reinforcing tensions between IDPs and local populations; it reduces the ability of IDPs to develop their full economic potential, given their isolated socio-economic position; and it results in a missed opportunity to strengthen capacity of local government to deliver the services and infrastructure upon which urban populations depend, which is essential for long-term development.

This shift towards durable solutions to protracted internal displacement is best managed by the implementation of an integrated transition plan, supported by aid actors, which sets out financing interventions and resource supports over time that align with the local government's urban and land use planning. This transition plan would ensure a coordinated, strategic set of finance instruments and approaches are deployed based on the capacity of the local government and the expenditure needs to service IDPs and local populations. In this way, developing financial strategies should be an integral part of the shift towards development-oriented solutions to internal displacement.

Technical assistance and policy reform advocacy are essential to effectively mobilize resources to support development-oriented solutions at the local level. While there are various approaches to financing supports for urban IDPs, not all financial mechanisms are equally suited to each context. It is important to support local governments to strategically prioritize and sequence financial interventions, typically beginning with national government transfers and local own-source revenues, to deliver essential services to growing urban populations. Strategic financial interventions and capacity development will also serve to improve the financial position of local governments over time and enable the deployment of more complex financial interventions. With this in mind, the following financial approaches could be considered:

- *National government transfers*: Local authorities heavily rely on intergovernmental transfers, making them a crucial mechanism for financing development-oriented solutions at the local level. The source of these funds can be from the national government's own resources, international humanitarian assistance or loans. Mechanisms to adjust transfers to account for sudden and sustained increases in urban population must be considered to ensure adequate service delivery at the local level.
- *Local government own-source revenues (OSR):* Local governments typically have some authority to raise revenue through their own sources, for example, through taxes on land and property, user-fees and charges. In low-resource contexts, subnational governments often lack the capacity to implement reforms that optimize revenue generation, resulting in untapped opportunities for increasing local revenues to fund essential local services.
- *Innovative land-based financing mechanisms*: Capturing increased land values that result from administrative land use changes (e.g., rezoning land) and public infrastructure investment offer opportunities for local governments to provide public goods that benefit both local and displaced populations. Land value capture has significant potential in fast-growing urban areas like those affected by forced

displacement crises. In Somalia, for example, the city of Bossaso and its partners are analyzing “land value sharing tools”, in which a portion of privately owned land is transferred to the municipality in exchange for public investment in roads and basic services for use. These "land swaps" would improve internally displaced persons' access to services and enhance their tenancy rights through a property registration process (Aubrey and Cardoso, 2019).

- *External financing (local borrowing):* Not all local governments possess the authority to borrow, nor are they equally equipped or positioned to access external financing, even at concessional rates. Attracting private capital investment may currently be out of reach in many fragile and conflict-affected contexts, but may be possible in the long term through concerted institutional capacity development to accountably manage revenues and expenditures and to effectively negotiate partnerships with the private sector.

3.2.3. **ELEMENT 3:** Land Governance & Settlements

> *There is increasing acknowledgement that land can be a root cause or trigger for conflict, a critical factor causing its relapse, or a bottleneck to recovery. Evidence from the field demonstrates the significance of resolving land-related issue in the achievement of sustainable and durable peace. (UN Secretary-General, 2019)*

Land governance arrangements and their effective administration are central to how a city functions, grows and develops (Wehrmann, 2017). Large and/or rapid inflows of internally displaced populations—and the international aid responses they engender—can have significant impacts on land use and the urban form. Better managing such effects is a central element of this framework. Doing so, however, can be extremely challenging for international aid organizations, given land's highly context-specific nature and its linkages to political and power dynamics at both city- and national-levels (Goodfellow, 2018; Goodfellow *et al.*, 2024), The influx of IDPs into a zone can significantly drive up land prices, further complicating already poorly functioning land management systems. Perhaps most challengingly, the issue of land is directly linked to the question of IDP *resettlement*, which is discussed in detail below.

In this section, the issue of land and land use is approached as a city-level and collective phenomenon; related questions of *household-level* tenure security and property rights are explored in the Shelter, Housing, Land and Property section below.

Land Governance & Settlements Issues during the Acute phase

Facilitate short-term access to land within the urban core and on (high-quality) peri-urban land
In many recent urban internal displacement crises, vulnerable displaced IDPs self-settle on vacant or under-utilized areas in or around the city. Often this is done with the active or passive involvement of the local actors who control access to the land (formal owners, use holders, traditional authorities, municipal officials, etc.).

Humanitarian actors can play an important role by helping facilitate short- to medium-term access (in areas that lie outside of high-risk zones), through a variety of means that work through the existing (formal and informal) land markets that are always present --- though not always visible to external observers. The following modalities may be followed:

- The development of a "land bank" (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020) during the earliest stages of a displacement crisis should be explored to help inform the land options available to response actors.
- 'Humanitarian diplomacy' can be more systematically employed to unlock access to public land (Sida *et al.*, 2024)

- To off-set IDP rental costs, multi-purpose cash may be considered[20].
- Negotiating with (and potentially compensating) landowners for access to particular parcels can be considered as a fallback option. In general, direct involvement by humanitarian actors in land transactions should be approached with extreme caution, given: the complexity and informality of many of these systems; the short-time frames available during which humanitarian actors can get up to speed on them; and the high-risk of distortionary market effects on other vulnerable displacement affected communities' households if large numbers of IDPs are assisted in this manner. A thorough hazard risk assessment is also necessary. A potential win-win approach can include negotiating with existing landowners to allow temporary or even permanent use of land in exchange for the increased land values that will accrue as the result of aid actors' investments in basic services and infrastructure in their adjacent holdings.

Operationalizing "Solutions from the Start"

Incorporate a spatial understanding of the city and region in programming

Consider the effects of near-term land use decisions on the long-term health of the city

Facilitating periodic adjustments towards a Development-centric logic

Share information on land, settlement mapping, and informal administrative boundaries with state officials and development actors, for future inclusion in planning.

Link this land information to other programming elements – in particular protection needs and access to services.
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Land Governance & Settlements issues during the Protracted phase

Approach resettlement with caution

Evidence from the literature review and consultations highlights that IDP resettlement should be approached with significant caution. This is largely because the land often made available for resettlement is remote, disconnected and/or exposed to risk factors. Despite these concerns, following the return to area of origin, resettlement is often a top priority of many governments' urban IDP policies. This presents aid actors with a difficult set of tradeoffs that need to be considered. See Box 4 below for additional reflections on the "resettlement conundrum".

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[20] It should be noted that a less visible and direct role for aid actors may have less distortionary effects on land rental markets than direct intervention in the rental process. This also reinforces the principle of engaging more fully with existing urban systems.

Safeguard access to land in displacement affected communities' existing locations
The majority of urban IDPs settle outside of formal camps, in either self-settled informal sites or dispersed throughout the existing urban fabric (Global CCCM Cluster, 2021, 2022). In general, such arrangements offer IDPs more agency and opportunities to locally integrate than residing in more formal camp settings (Sida *et al.*, 2024).

Aid actors should work to safeguard IDPs' access to this land in two ways:

- At a minimum, IDPs should be protected from unlawful evictions in self-settled areas. Using humanitarian diplomacy, aid agencies can push for stopping or at least slowing these eviction processes, including through rental arrangements.
- In the medium- to long-term, supporting efforts to regularize the land on which IDPs have settled should be pursued. Innovative approaches that recognize the complexity of tenure in many cities of the Global South can be useful here. The Global Land Tool Network's "Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM)", for example, allows for documenting the 'messy reality' of land tenure in these contexts. The STDM is designed to provide "good enough" tenure security that does not (yet) meet the level of "formality, legality and technical accuracy" (GLTN, 2017) associated with a fully operational and formalized land cadaster. Often this land will also be occupied by other sub-groups within the urban poor, presenting an opportunity for "win-win" solutions that foster social cohesion between IDPs and the local communities in which they settle (see below for more information on win-win investments).

Mobilize urban land for adequate (incl. affordable) housing construction
In order to cope with increased populations of the urban poor now and in the future, development actors should also work with local authorities and private sector actors to develop longer-term policies and programming that mobilizes additional land on which adequate (incl. affordable) housing can be constructed by the (formal and informal) private sector, or by public housing agencies.

As discussed below (Element 4: Shelter and Housing), 'quality' land is often *the* critical constraint preventing adequate (incl. affordable) housing from being built. Proactively addressing this through a systems-thinking lens will go far in addressing city-level housing deficits. Such strategies can also be used with more sophisticated efforts to increase local authorities' own-source revenue generation capacities, such as land value capture (discussed above) and development.

Box 4: The 'Resettlement Conundrum': Government-led Solutions or 'White Elephants'?

In many protracted displacement crises, governments have promoted IDP resettlement to newly constructed developments in peri-urban or rural zones. In many cases these involve provision of permanent homes on serviced or semi-serviced sites. In others, only the land may be provided. Unfortunately, a growing (although still incomplete) body of evidence indicates that such projects are often plagued by high per capita costs, questionable sustainability, and uncertain benefits for intended beneficiaries.

This presents major challenges for aid agencies, as it places two central tenets of displacement responses in direct tension: government-led solutions, and the cost-effective maximization of IDP well-being. Based on the available research, several insights should thus be considered when assessing the viability and desirability of a proposed resettlement initiative.

First, many of the challenges confronted by resettlement programs result from the fact that land allocated for these programs tends to be relatively remote (and as such cheap or free to the government), reducing livelihoods opportunities for residents and increasing the cost of providing basic services. These spatially-determined disadvantages swamp whatever positive effects beneficiaries enjoy from having a well-built house to live in. In many cases, the sites are ultimately abandoned[21]. Less dramatically, a resettlement project can undercut vulnerable households' ability to reach self-reliance and local integration, and the ghettoization of their communities.

Second, in the *rare* occasions where the government offers land of higher quality, market forces can incentivize a form of gentrification of the zone, driving out intended beneficiaries in favor of better-off residents in the city. In low-capacity governance contexts, the ability of state officials to prevent the sale or rental of plots or houses over the medium-term is extremely low (See the box on housing above for additional details on this phenomenon).

3.2.4. **ELEMENT 4:** Shelter, Housing, Land & Property

Inadequate shelter is arguably the most visible manifestation of IDPs' vulnerability. Based on consultations conducted for this report, it is often of preeminent concern for political leaders in host governments. Housing's perceived importance for internal displacement solutions has also been highlighted in the policy literature (IOM, 2023).

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[21] One example is provided by IIED's research on resettlement sites in Afghanistan (Majidi and Barratt, 2024).

It is important to make a distinction between (temporary and transitional) shelter and (long-term or permanent) adequate housing[22], although they are part of a continuum with increased security of tenure. International actors have existing methods for short-term, emergency contexts. These solutions, discussed below, have the advantage that they engage with existing land, housing and rental markets, provide IDPs with relatively more agency[23] in finding their shelter solutions, and can be deployed relatively quickly. However, provision of *permanent* IDP housing should be approached with caution, as discussed below and in Box 5. In the absence of strong governance systems – which are often lacking in many fragile contexts – risks can be high that permanent housing construction initiatives can be poorly-located, prohibitively expensive to take to scale, and prone to benefiting better-off or better-connected households than the intended beneficiaries.

Shelter, Housing, Land & Property during the Acute Phase

Work within the Existing Housing Ecosystem

During the acute stage, humanitarian actors should be providing minimally adequate shelter as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to stabilize the *emergency* situation. If agencies have begun to contemplate the construction of permanent housing, the protracted phase of the crisis has already begun and housing should be approached as a development - and not a humanitarian - issue (see below).

An emergency shelter response should focus on developing a systems-oriented, “cohesive strategy” (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020) for housing during the emergency phase of a crisis. Options consistent with such an approach include: focusing on cash for rent (of land and/or housing), supporting organic hosting arrangements[24]; repairing damaged, but not destroyed, structures; upgrading of temporary collective centers or squatting in abandoned buildings; and providing high-quality, low-cost shelter materials.

Each of the above options can be appropriate in certain contexts, but multi-purpose cash or cash-for-rent most closely with this Framework’s operational principles, given that it engages directly with existing housing and land systems. This helps ensure more context-appropriate (Landau *et al.*, 2017) and scalable interventions. Thanks to recent policy reforms and shifts in thinking, such approaches are being increasingly mainstreamed and scaled through the Global Shelter Cluster and international actors like the Norwegian Refugee Council and Habitat for

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[23] At the same time, it should be noted that this agency can be significantly constrained by structural factors in land and housing markets that marginalize vulnerable households. Such solutions do little to counteract this larger market-driven and/or political forces.

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[24] There is an unhelpful tendency in the policy literature to use the term “hosting” to refer to both situations where rent is and is not paid. Here the term “organic hosting” indicates hosting without direct monetary rent.

Humanity. These organizations are increasingly viewing housing as a system to be supported and strategically ‘tweaked’, rather than a specific product to be delivered.

Avoid short-term distortions to the affordable housing market

In keeping with the “No Regrets” principle advocated above, shelter interventions should also strive to avoid undue disruption to the existing housing system. Price distortions in the housing or rental market are one area of concern (Goodfellow *et al.*, 2024). So too are situations in which short-term shelter interventions inadvertently frustrate longer-term housing construction and urban development[25]. Particularly when cash is being widely used, monitoring of market distortions should be put in place.

Embrace short-term, “good enough” land tenure options

Where aid actors conduct repairs or semi-permanent housing construction, there is a need to conduct due diligence on the underlying tenure[26] situation. However, they should also recognize the messy reality of tenure (Levine *et al.*, 2012) in many urban settings in the Global South, and be honest about what is in their manageable interest in emergency settings. Overly legalistic treatment of tenure issues can tie humanitarian actors in knots, delaying or even cancelling badly needed assistance. Instead, “good enough” tenure arrangements that provide only short-term assurances, or which rely on less-than-formal confirmation of ownership or access may be sufficient, as long as they are seen within the continuum of tenure rights.

Operationalizing “Solutions from the Start”

- Introduce the concept of housing ecosystems - monitor housing and land prices.
- Incorporate STDM tools to inform “good-enough” tenure solutions and avoid overly legalistic tenure approaches

Facilitating periodic adjustments towards a Development-centric logic

Information on DAC settlement patterns can help guide development actors’ assessment of affordable housing system gaps and opportunities analysis.

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[25] This has been the case, for example, in situations like the post-earthquake Haiti, where transitional shelters were erected on plots where multi-story buildings once stood, slowing densification efforts.

[26] Tenure refers to both land ownership and access arrangements (lease, rent, usufruct, communal access, etc.) and to property ownership and control.

ELEMENT 4: Shelter, Housing, Land & Property During the Protracted Phase

View IDP housing as a system, not a product

As highlighted in the consultations, there is an increasing recognition that neither international actors nor affected governments will be able to build themselves out of an urban internal displacement crisis. Most cities in which internal displacement crises occur will already suffer from a lack of adequate housing for the urban poor. The influx of new, vulnerable arrivals simply multiplies this underlying, structural challenge.

Instead, housing needs to be considered as both a constellation of different housing “inputs” and “products” and as an interrelated system of private-sector actors and formal and informal policies. This system is market-based, interrelated, and city-wide, meaning that any efforts to assist IDPs or Displacement Affected Communities can have knock-on effects (either negative or positive) across the system. Interventions should identify key bottlenecks to greater supply of affordable housing for both and then carefully address them. Options include:

- increasing access to land for affordable housing, including through ‘sites and services’ schemes
- targeted rental subsidies for vulnerable members of displacement affected communities accompanied by measures to increase the rental housing stock (ex. encouraging home-owners to expand existing structures incrementally;
- housing finance to catalyze affordable housing construction or densification;
- developer incentives/regulations for mixed-income construction and development;
- link housing interventions for IDPs to broader “urban upgrading schemes” that distribute benefits across the entire Displacement Affected Community (see discussion below).

Seeing the silver lining: IDP Housing Demand as an Economic Driver

In keeping with the principle of seeing displacement as not only crisis, but also opportunity, it is important to recall that the housing construction sector (whether formal or informal) can be an important source of livelihoods and an engine of economic dynamism in growing cities (Zetter, 2014; Guiu, 2016). For example, one recent study highlighted how wage rates in Somalia increased due to an IDP-led construction boom (Yasukawa, 2020). Aid actors should seek to harness this opportunity by first better understanding it and then working to make it more inclusive and sustainable.

Box 5. Revisiting the potential of Sites and Services Approaches

Sites and services involve a range of broadly similar approaches to providing affordable housing for the (urban) poor. Key characteristics of such schemes involve the provision of publicly-financed trunk infrastructure, which then facilitates private sector (formal or informal) incremental home construction on the serviced plots (The World Bank, 2022). Such schemes were used in many countries in the 1960s and 1970s, and their continued potential has recently been documented in both the academic and policy literature (Owens, Gulyani and Rizvi, 2018; The World Bank, 2022). Applying such schemes in response to urban forced displacement may offer cost-effective, scalable, locally-led solutions for at least certain segments of IDP populations.

Box 6. Weighing the Pros and Cons of Bricks-and-Mortar Solutions to IDP Housing Needs

Providing vulnerable IDP households trapped in substandard housing conditions with new permanent housing has been one way in which governments and aid agencies have responded to protracted displacement. However, the literature review and consultations for this Framework indicate a series of interrelated challenges for such programs.

- In many contexts, lack of access to adequate housing is not specific to displaced populations. Rather, large swaths of the urban and rural poor fail to meet basic housing standards as defined locally, irrespective of displacement status (Sanyal, 2014; Landau *et al.*, 2017; Patel and Chadhuri, 2019). Lack of IDP housing is thus a symptom of much larger dysfunctions in the affordable housing ecosystem; international standards (such as SPHERE) are thus less relevant for development-oriented solutions to protracted displacement.
- Unlike many other of IDPs' basic services needs (e.g. water and sanitation, education, safety and security), housing is typically supplied as a private—not public—good. Indeed, relatively few countries affected by internal displacement crises have affordably housing policies in place, let alone functioning social housing institutions[27].
- Availability of land is typically *the* binding constraint on the affordable housing ecosystem; failure to grapple with the politically fraught (Earle, 2016a) issue of availability of *adequate* land risks promoting expensive housing construction in politically convenient but sub-optimal locations.
- Assumed causal links between providing IDPs housing and as a cost-effective means of improving their long-term economic well-being cannot be assumed. While there is indeed a correlation (IOM, 2023), there is little empirical basis for assuming that better housing is a *cost-effective* means for increasing household incomes. While the socioeconomic conditions of a given household are obviously improved by subsidizing their housing costs, the high financial burden that providing even a portion of IDPs in a given country with homes would entail is exceedingly high.

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[27] Exceptions to this rule within the 15 priority OSA countries include Colombia, Iraq, Nigeria and (possibly) Libya, where the state has in the past or is currently planning to invest in social housing stock and has functioning social housing institutions. In the other 11 countries, decades of conflict and political and economic underdevelopment have left a state that struggles to maintain public order and functioning basic services; here, large scale social housing programs are a much riskier undertaking.

- Finally, public provision of permanent housing is an extremely expensive per capita investment, and in most countries the costs of supplying even a subset of IDPs with newly constructed homes would place significant strain on national coffers and international aid flows[28] and rarely be scalable.

Any housing construction initiative aimed solely at vulnerable IDPs should be carefully considered, and underpinned by a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the overarching project aims and the impact on social cohesion and integration.

3.2.5. **ELEMENT 5**: Access to basic services

As noted above, a key feature of urban contexts is the presence of existing institutions and systems that are relatively complex, sophisticated and politically influential. Unlike rural, camp-based interventions, this demands that programming work with and through these existing systems if they are to be sustainable, scalable and transformational. Shared access to basic services offers also key opportunities to foster inclusion with displacement affected communities, while improving the living conditions of the urban poor.

In lower-income and fragile settings, lack of access to services is linked not only to displacement but to long-term political, social, spatial and economic marginalization of the non-displaced urban poor. Ignoring this fact can result in increased social tensions and ultimately frustrated local integration efforts. More modest, wider-scale improvements to service provisioning should generally be preferred on both efficiency and social equity grounds. Apart from local governments, many contexts have other public sector agencies or private (formal or informal) operators that are critical for the delivery of key services, such as water, electricity, solid waste management, sanitation, etc. Education and health facilities tend to be more government-led, but parallel (informal or formal) private sector options can also abound in these two sectors.

Access to Basic Services During the Acute Phase

Better understand existing systems to inform No Regrets investments.
Lack of access to services for IDPs can result from multiple factors (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020), including:

- IDPs being administratively or legally blocked from accessing a particular service;
- IDPs are formally allowed to access a service, but lack the economic means to do so (e.g. paying for water tariffs); and,

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[28] Again, Colombia and Iraq—as the only two middle income countries within OSA's list—may be exceptions.

- IDPs lack access because of existing shortcomings in the infrastructure and management of existing services. This is also the case in least developed countries' informal settlements, where even the existing population lacks adequate services.

Any service delivery interventions should be based on an understanding on which of these factor(s) are at play in a given context. Too often, aid actors operate based on a "largely untested faith that the observed challenges facing people are largely due to displacement" [add citation] in cities in the global South, instead of a consequence of the widespread lack of access to services for large swaths of the urban poor, regardless of displacement status.

'Urban profiling' exercises are essential tools for capturing such information. They entail a "collaborative process for collecting and analyzing data on the conditions of an urban area and its neighborhoods, the systems that organize them, and the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the population groups that reside in them, to inform decision-making and planning before, during or after a crisis situation."(GAUC, 2019)

Avoid parallel systems that deliver "aid until the money runs out"
Whenever possible, existing systems should be improved and extended, rather than establishing a parallel system that is maintained "until the money runs out" (Sida et al., 2024, p. 34) and then shuttered. Cash assistance, in the form of multi-purpose, unconditional transfers offers a low friction and logistically streamlined way to facilitate access to existing urban networks (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020). Targeted subsidies coordinated with service providers are another efficient and effective way to defray service costs.

While parallel service delivery systems should be seen as a second-best option, they are still necessary in some settings. Establishment of such systems should follow a "no regrets" investment approach, in which the broader socioeconomic, political and natural resources context of the system is considered and protected[29]. With better upfront planning, stand-alone systems such as boreholes or off-grid renewable energy systems can be linked to existing utility systems as the city expands.

Proactively address essential services excluded from the humanitarian coordination system
The sectoral services that are relevant for responding to an urban internal displacement crisis are broader than those covered by the existing humanitarian coordination system (as reflected in the IASC clusters). In urban areas, sectors that fall outside these silos --- such as electricity, storm water management and wastewater treatment, --- are often just as important as traditional humanitarian sectors. Development thinking and expertise is likely needed from the earliest stages of the crisis to address needs in these sectors.

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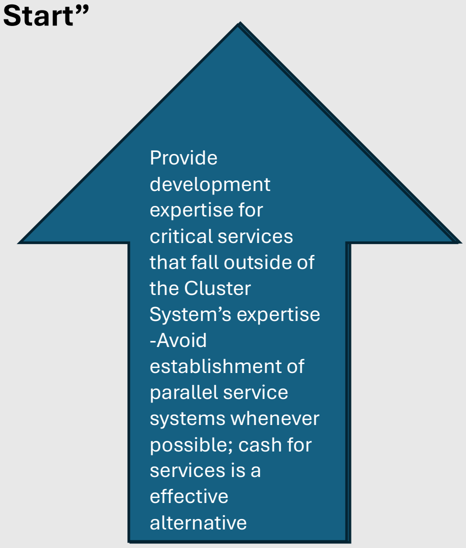
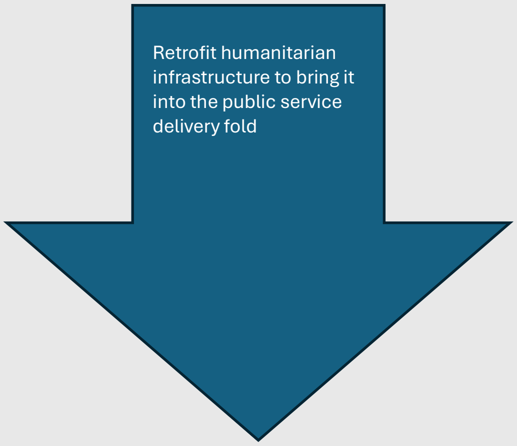
[29] A classic example of failure to take such considerations into account is the drilling of boreholes in peri-urban IDP settlements, but neglecting to integrate them into existing systems and ignoring their potential for aquifer depletion.

Operationalizing "Solutions from the Start"


Provide development expertise for critical services that fall outside of the Cluster System's expertise
-Avoid establishment of parallel service systems whenever possible; cash for services is a effective alternative

Facilitating periodic adjustments towards a Development-centric logic


Retrofit humanitarian infrastructure to bring it into the public service delivery fold

Access to Basic Services during the Protracted Phase

Facilitate "Win-win" service delivery

"Win-win" investments in service improvements (IIED, 2021) in informal and low-income neighborhoods can benefit IDPs, the larger displacement affected communities in which they settle and particularly the most vulnerable urban poor, and local elites, all at the same time. Such investments are politically savvy, serving as a form of neighborhood-level development diplomacy and ensuring buy-in from powerful local voices who may resent or resist IDP integration and will retain their influence long after aid actors have left. Urban upgrading is a tested way to achieve widespread *in situ* benefits for the entire DAC in an urban displacement crisis.

Apply a suite of service delivery access improvements: policy reform, infrastructure, and targeted subsidies

Improving service delivery access for displacement affected communities during the protracted phase of a crisis should begin by deepening the analysis of existing systems during the early phases of the crisis (including how it is and can continue to be funded). Importantly, relevant systems may be formal, informal or a "co-produced"(Joshi and Moore, 2004) mix of both.

Interventions to tackle this heterogeneous set of issues can span the following areas, depending on context:

- policy reform: including oversight, operations and management, fee structures, and public investment

- infrastructural interventions: including repairs, upgrades and extensions
- subsidization: targeted subsidies for displacement affected communities' sub-groups to increase affordability of access.

Planning for these interventions should also be fully shifted from international service delivery standards (e.g. SPHERE) to national standards, to support sustainable, locally-owned targets.

Facilitate integration of "orphaned" humanitarian infrastructure

As soon as possible, planning for the responsible phase-out of parallel systems needs to begin. Unfortunately, this is often politically challenging, requires detailed technical expertise, and falls outside of the typical roles and responsibilities of both aid actors and local utilities. However, the danger of failing to do so can have calamitous consequences, with long-running systems on which displaced populations rely suddenly shuttered when aid resources dry up. BMZ/KFW's ongoing R-WASH program in Somalia provides one model for how aid actors can work to rectify such situations (see Box 6).

Box 7. BMZ/KFW's 'R-WASH' Program: Bringing humanitarian infrastructure back into the public services fold

The Regional WASH Programme for Refugees, IDPs and Host Communities in East Africa (or R-WASH) is a BMZ/KFW-funded initiative that seeks to formalize and professionalize the management of water systems in Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan (Snuggs, 2023). The project in Somalia is focused on the city of Dolow, where many years of population growth due to internal displacement into the city and its surroundings has resulted in a multitude of humanitarian projects. These initiatives have helped meet urgent needs but lacked sustainability and coherence.

By investing in water infrastructure, and capacity building for local governments and water utility operators, R-WASH seeks to upgrade existing WASH infrastructure and utility management systems to meet both immediate and long-term needs of the entire displacement-affected communities in the zone.

Such forward-thinking retrofitting of humanitarian investments, in close cooperation with local authorities, provides a potential model for pivoting to a more development-oriented approach in similar contexts and across multiple sectors.

3.2.6. **ELEMENT 6:** Social Protection, Livelihoods and Economic Growth

> *Support for establishing and continuing sustainable livelihoods is a priority for forcibly displaced people. This support is essential due to the myriad challenges forcibly displaced people face, including broken social networks, restrictive legal and policy environments, discrimination and trauma. (Crawford and Holloway, 2024)*

Livelihoods are an essential aspect of IDPs' medium and long-term self-reliance, essential to reduce the humanitarian caseload. However, they can be a relative afterthought in many responses (Crawford and Holloway, 2024; Sida *et al.*, 2024). This is then compounded by the fact that the specific livelihood needs of displacement affected communities are also often insufficiently addressed in development-oriented programming. Importantly, both formal and informal economies need to be considered by aid actors. Particularly in the short and medium-term, aid actors need to work within the overwhelmingly informal nature of the economy that most IDPs in cities of the Global South will find themselves in. It is important to map out the role they play —or could play based on their skills set — in local economies.

In urban areas, a three-pronged approach should be followed to ensure IDPs' have the economic resources they need to thrive:

- Ensuring equal access to labor markets from the earliest stages of the crisis
- Providing social protection transfers to vulnerable households
- Growing the city's economy through smart, inclusive growth strategies

Social Protection, Livelihoods and Economic Growth During the Acute Phase

Advocating for Access to formal and informal labor markets

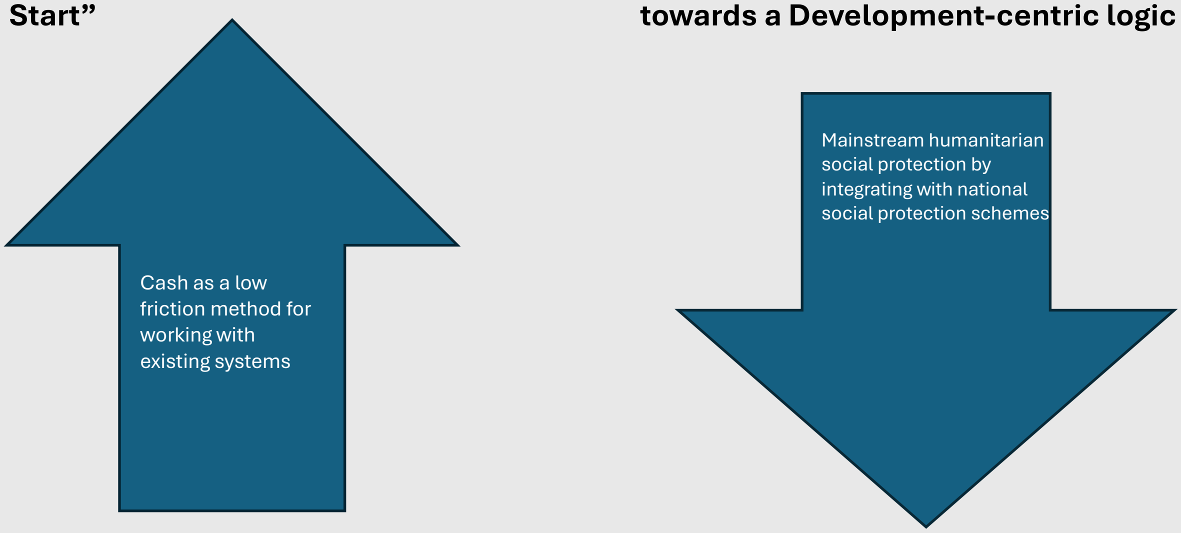
Reducing restrictions on IDPs' access to labor markets can be more powerful and far-reaching than implementing new and often ineffectual livelihoods programs(Crawford and Holloway, 2024)) livelihoods programs. A simple but often overlooked strategy for improving IDP economic well-being is thus using humanitarian diplomacy to facilitate access to formal and informal labor markets. This can include lessening harassment of street vendors, removing any mobility and residence restrictions and supporting entrepreneurship (UN-Habitat and UNHCR, 2020).

Provide low-friction Emergency Assistance through multi-purpose cash

Especially in the earlier stages of the crisis, cash assistance is highly appropriate in many urban settings. Market systems are typically highly developed in even small cities and towns, and cash thus optimizes IDP choice and provides a stimulus for the local economy (Earle, 2016a; Sida *et al.*, 2024)

Operationalizing "Solutions from the Start"

Facilitating periodic adjustments towards a Development-centric logic


Cash as a low friction method for working with existing systems
Mainstream humanitarian social protection by integrating with national social protection schemes

Seize economic development opportunities that displacement-induced urbanization can provide

As discussed earlier, urban internal displacement brings many challenges, but also an underappreciated potential for economic growth. Even vulnerable IDPs positively affect the local economy through their consumer spending, labor activity, and entrepreneurship (Devictor, 2017b). As noted by Zetter (2014), "IDPs have many assets, skills, resources, and evidence confirms the economic and social contribution they make to their host cities by expanding markets, importing new skills, creating transnational linkages, rejuvenating communities." Development programming — in coordination with local economic development planning — can unlock this potential, with sufficient foresight, expertise and catalytic resources. (see discussion above of the economic growth and employment opportunities from the (informal) housing sector). However, one should acknowledge the difficulties of urban IDPs that were reliant on agriculture for their livelihoods prior to their displacement (IDMC, 2018; Pape and Sharma, 2019; Crawford and Holloway, 2024).

Unlock economic growth with spatially-informed local economic development strategies.

Long-term urban economic growth can be fostered through a spatially-informed process that defines the strengths and opportunities of the city's economic and natural resources, and its link within the larger regional economic network. This requires whole-of-government thinking and coordination, multiple sources of data inputs and multi-sectoral technical expertise.

Mainstreaming emergency cash assistance

In much the same way that service delivery should seek to hand over to existing utilities and other institutions, short-term protection assistance should be proactively linked to government social protection schemes, where they exist.

4. Operationalizing this Framework's Guidance

This Framework has presented a comprehensive overview of the shifts in thinking, operational principles and essential programming elements needed to effectively respond to urban internal displacement. The policy guidance it contains offers overarching "dos and don'ts" of successful responses. Its use in developing response strategies for urban areas as inputs into Humanitarian Country Team and UN Country Team planning tools and national and local government-led roadmaps should benefit from joined up expertise of key international actors. This strategic guidance can be supplemented with the operational tools and resources listed below.

Guidance on producing foundational data inputs and analysis

- JIPS (2014) *Guidance for Profiling Urban Displacement Situations*. Joint IDP Profiling Service. Available at: https://www.jips.org/jips-publication/jips-guidance-profiling-urban-displacement-2014/ (Accessed: 7 August 2024).
- Campbell, L. (2016) *Stepping back: Understanding cities and their systems | Urban Response Portal*. ALNAP. Available at: https://www.urban-response.org/help-library/stepping-back-understanding-cities-and-their-systems (Accessed: 7 August 2024).https://www.urban-response.org/help-library/stepping-back-understanding-cities-and-their-systems
- Jennings, R.S., Colletta, N. and Chesnutt, C. (2014) *Political economy and forced displacement: guidance and lessons from nine country case studies*. The World Bank.

Operational guidelines and toolkits

- UN-Habitat and UNHCR (2020) *Guidance for Responding to Displacement in Urban Areas*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Available at: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/03/unhcr_unhabitat_urban_guidance_report.pdf (Accessed: 17 January 2024).
- IASC (2018) *Guidance Note for Coordination in Urban Crises*.

Additional Resources and access to technical expertise

- GP2.0 (2024) *GP2.0 – A global online knowledge platform and community of practice on internal displacement.* Available at: https://gp2point0.org/ (Accessed: 7 August 2024).
- Urban Humanitarian Response Portal, GAUC: https://www.urban-response.org/

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Annex 1: Methodology for developing the Framework

Launched in December 2023, the Framework development process involved a core team from IIED and UN-Habitat. The Framework has also benefited from detailed inputs from an "informal Task Force" convened by UN-Habitat; this Task Force has helped guide the process, providing important intellectual inputs and contacts with field offices during the course of the Framework's development. The Task Force consisted of global level focal points on urban and internal/forced displacement issues from the following organizations (in alphabetical order): IMPACT Initiatives, IOM, JIPS, UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and the World Bank.

This Framework is the product of a three-pronged process:

- **Comprehensive literature review** of both academic and policy literature, as well as national laws and policies concerning internal displacement and various UN, donor and INGO project documents.
- **Consultations with global focal points** engaged in policy and programming that overlapped with the issue of urban internal displacement. Individuals targeted for the consultations were organizations' global focal points on issues of forced displacement and/or urban development. The list of organizations consulted is listed in Annex 3. These consultations were conducted online and in-person, between February 2024 to May 2024. To move beyond what have been referred to as sometimes "defensive" institutional positions [cite], respondents were offered anonymity to speak freely.
- **Field-level case studies** in four countries, chosen in agreement with the Task Force, were also conducted. These countries were Colombia, Iraq, Mozambique and Somalia. UN agencies, host country governments and international NGOs were all consulted, and country-specific programming documents and reports were reviewed.

Finally, a **series of touch points with the Task Force guiding the process** helped ensure overall quality and consistency with existing guidelines and policies. This included initial inputs during the kick-off period, a one-day Expert Group Meeting in March 2024 to bring key actors together in person and online to debate and discuss, the draft outline and proposed contents of the framework[30]. [add review process of full draft]

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[30] See the "Summary Report: Expert Group Meeting Outcomes, April 2024"