

Local Solutions for Displaced Populations: – Alternatives to a “Transit”-Generation’s Time “in-limbo”*

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Abstract: This article highlights key challenges for displaced populations, starting from a lack of an over-arching expanded definition and research framework to analyse and theoretically address the “mixed migrations” phenomenon from a conflict analysis and peacebuilding perspective. Thus, the article examines how facilitation of social cohesion, beyond traditionally somewhat disconnected approaches based on very rigid categorizations of the displaced, can effectively promote opportunities for multi-dimensional interaction and socio-economic self-reliance based on a social contract. It secondly assesses how such opportunities could help to address issues of protracted “in-limbo” forced displacement and migration in notoriously unstable macro-contexts, potentially contributing to local and regional stability.

Keywords: “in-limbo”, protracted complex conflict, refugees, displaced, migration, durable/ sustainable solutions, socio-economic self-reliance, social cohesion, stability

Stichworte: in-limbo = in der Schweben, langwieriger komplexer Konflikt, Flüchtlinge, Vertriebene, Migration, nachhaltige Lösungen, sozio-ökonomische Selbstständigkeit, sozialer Zusammenhalt, Stabilität

1. Introduction and Background

With the announcement of the EU Commission’s President to tackle root causes of the heavy refugee influx from Africa and via the Middle and Eastern European routes into EU countries with an EU Trust Fund of Euro 1.8 billion on 13 November 2015¹, many observers still doubt that a sustainable solution to reduce the number of displaced populations has been identified. Many see the expectation of an effectively enforced return of declined asylum-seekers as a transactional exchange for more development cooperation aid, as symptomatic for ineffective North-South engagement.²

Nearly 60 million people are currently displaced globally, due to multiple complex, protracted crises that are competing for international attention and assistance. The number of people forcibly displaced at the end of 2014 with 59.5 million compared to 37.5 million a decade ago, has been abetted by the eruption or re-ignition of conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia.³ Those who flee prolonged conflicts and/or the impact of climate change on their livelihoods, seeking for a better life, are still classified into different categories, either as refugees or internally displaced (IDPs, if they are not leaving their home countries’ borders) or economic migrants. Two-thirds of the global refugee population already reside in urban, non-camp settings, the average refugee is displaced for

17 years according to UNHCR⁴ and in some contexts in East Africa and the Middle East, whole generations have been “in-limbo” in refugee camps due to often limiting legal frameworks, triggering further social tension.

Based on international law, UNHCR still distinguishes different groups of displaced “mixed movements” into migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees, Internally Displaced People (IDPs), and victims of trafficking travel alongside each other. However, this distinction without the creation of enabling conditions for self-sufficiency has become more and more problematic – as diverse migration groups, e.g. fleeing the Syria crises effects – show. Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders (including those supporting the Sustainable Development Goals’ Agenda, and World Humanitarian Summit process⁵) are currently aiming at addressing issues of protracted displacement contexts, working towards improving economic and social context factors for displaced persons (esp. refugees), and thus reducing conflict-related factors among displaced and host communities. The World Bank has identified key components to strengthen coping mechanisms of displaced by facilitating access to land, property, livelihoods, services delivery, and ensuring that other support is based on accountable responsive governance principles,⁶

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- 4 Pakistan is one example, hosting over 67% of Afghan refugees in urban centres, while numbers for other countries vary – in some cases, 6 out of 10 refugees living in urban centres. See UNHCR Global Trends Report, 2014, p.42ff, <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html>, accessed 16 November 2015. See estimates regarding duration of displacement by UNHCR Annual Report on Displacement, 2014, launch press statement, 14 May 2014 <http://www.unhcr.org/537334d0427.html>, accessed 13 November 2015. UNCHR also suggest that in 2013 54 % of displaced refugees were living in protracted context across 27 countries. DomAid, Finding Solutions to Protracted Displacement: The EU’s role and Ways Forward, Discussion Paper, October, 2014, p. 5, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/domaid_discussion_paper-protracted_displacement_7.pdf, accessed 8 November 2015.
- 5 See <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> and <https://www.worldhumanitarianissuemit.org/> for more information regarding mitigation and solution measures for root causes of displacement including mixed migration.
- 6 See a recent comprehensive analysis for East Africa: World Bank/ UNHCR, Eastern Africa HoA Displacement Study: Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa, 2015, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2015/06/30/090224b082fa7f32/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Eastern0Africa0n0the0Horn0of0Africa.pdf, accessed 16 November 2015.

* This article has been double blind peer reviewed. The author would like to thank the reviewers and editors for their constructive comments. This article represents fully the opinion of the author not of the organisation that the author is working for.

1 See Germany’s engagement in the Action Plan, agreed on during the EU-Africa-Summit in Malta, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Reiseberichte/2015-11-09-eu-afrikagipfel.html>, accessed 16 November 2015.

2 See The Parliament Magazine: EU-Africa Emergency Trust Fund Receives Mixed Reaction, <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-africa-emergency-trust-fund-receives-mixed-reaction-meps>, 13 November 2015, accessed 13 November 2015.

3 The UNHCR indicates that the number of refugees stood at 13 million people in mid-2014, with half of this number in Asia, and 28 percent of the affected population in Africa. See, UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c1d.html>, accessed 8 November 2015.

referencing the importance of conflict-analysis and -sensitive approaches that focus on socio-economic contributions towards and gains for all groups affected.

Media attention has increasingly focused on not only effects of a growing and steady stream of people moving to Europe, while experts have emphasized the need for a comprehensive solution to the “*global displacement crisis*”.⁷ And while five countries had more than 50% nationals among the 59.5 million displaced in 2014, Syrian nationals contributed a major share (1 in 5) to these displacement numbers, while again, Syria together with Iraq, Sudan and Columbia also were the “top-ranking” countries hosting IDP communities (with 52%) globally.⁸ Still, for 2016, projections indicate approximately additional three million displaced people seeking refuge and new economic opportunities in EU member states.⁹

The debate often neglects the impact of the original conflict on emanating secondary political and social conflicts in transit contexts among displaced population groups and with their respective host communities.¹⁰ High refugee and host community ratio in Lebanon (number of refugees taken in is 1/4 of its population size in 2015)¹¹ and in Jordan (630,000 Syrian refugees or around 10% of its population)¹² in already volatile contexts can exacerbate heightened social, economic, and religious tension due to competition over scarce resources. The author would also like to highlight that more “real-time” analysis is required regarding the inter-connectedness between impact and “presence” of original conflict among displaced communities in transit/host countries. Research gaps include correlation between locally facilitated socio-economic self-reliance of displaced, opportunities for local integration (if no repatriation/resettlement is feasible or realistic), with promotion of peaceful interaction at micro-levels and social cohesion to contribute overall to regional stability in highly volatile contexts of protracted crisis and displacements, on the other hand. Thus, this article highlights research gaps regarding a) Local solutions “*in-situ*” in transit contexts (1. for displaced due to protracted violence; 2. for displaced as a result of natural disasters (including as secondary result of climate change

impact)) and b) Local solutions to contribute to addressing root causes of displacement.¹³

“Durable solutions” for refugees (and IDPs) traditionally encompass the following:

- Repatriation (IDPs: Return to place of origin)
- Resettlement in third-country (IDPs: permanent settlement in another location *in* their country of origin)
- Local integration.¹⁴

The Syria-crisis affected the neighboring countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey – as did East Africa’s several decades-long conflicts South Sudan and Somalia, that resulted either in massive continuous influx or “transitory” longer-term stay of refugees or IDPs in the same or adjacent countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. These countries are “(...) *unintended “shock absorbers” for the growing conflict, insecurity, and weak governance (...)*” The World Bank also notes: “*Implications of these mass migrations that seem to conclude ‘in-limbo’ in neighboring countries are social unrest (tensions due to competition over resources and opportunities, different cultural or religious preferences or affiliations) among displaced or between displaced and host communities, negative coping mechanisms e.g. illegal trafficking (of goods and people), environmental pressures (erosion due to deforestation, in search of firewood or water – exacerbated by climate change impact).*”¹⁵

2. Refugees, IDPs, “economic migrants” – a reality-check of definitions and implications

As defined by UNHCR, a protracted crisis is a situation where refugees due to fear of persecution and instability (1951 Geneva Convention) lived outside their country for 5 years or more after forceful displacement and with no “*immediate prospects*” of being able to benefit from the implementation of “*durable solutions*”.¹⁶ The inadequacy of the current, globally accepted definitions of refugee categories, has been repeatedly highlighted in ample research¹⁷ with

7 See Betts, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/25/war-on-trafficking-wrong-way-to-tackle-crisis-of-migrant-deaths>, accessed 11 November 2015.

8 And while seven countries – Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine and Jordan – are hosting more than 50% of all refugees. See HPG/ ODI, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths to self-reliance in exile, September 2015, p.1 <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2015/20150930-201509-global-protracted-displacement-odi/201509-global-protracted-displacement-odi-FULL-Report.pdf> Accessed 11 November 2015.

9 See The Parliament Magazine: EU-Africa Emergency Trust Fund Receives Mixed Reaction, <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-africa-emergency-trust-fund-receives-mixed-reaction-meps>, 13 November 2015, accessed 13 November 2015.

10 See most comprehensive study over recent past from University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre, Volume II, Study on Impacts and Cost of Forced Displacement. State of the Art Literature Review, 2011, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1265299960363/VolumellLiterature.pdf>, accessed 16 November 2015.

11 See Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/10/global-refugee-crisis-by-the-numbers/>, accessed 16 November 2015.

12 See, Cali/ Sekkarie, Much ado about nothing? The economic impact of refugee ‘invasions’, 16 September 2015 <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/future-development/posts/2015/09/16-economic-impact-refugees-cali>, accessed 16 November 2015 and UNHCR, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>.

13 Displacement refers to individuals, groups who are “*forcibly displaced, moving or moved to another location, area or country (...)* as a result of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters” – in some cases a combination of these causes may lead to displacement. International law and International Humanitarian Law. See HPG/ ODI, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths to self-reliance in exile, September 2015, 1. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2015/20150930-201509-global-protracted-displacement-odi/201509-global-protracted-displacement-odi-FULL-Report.pdf>, accessed 11 November 2015.

14 See UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps, 22 July 2014, UNHCR/HCP/2014/9, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5423ded84.html> [accessed 8 November 2015], UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/54d9c7686.html>, accessed 8 November 2015.

15 See World Bank, The Peculiar Dynamics of the Kakuma Refugee Camp: An Economic and Social Impact Analysis, June 2015, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22286/Eastern0Africa0n0the0Horn0of0Africa.txt?sequence=2>, No. 11, accessed 13 November 2015.

16 See Milner/ Loescher, Oxford Refugee Studies Centre, Forced Migration Policy Briefing # 6, Responding to protracted refugee situations. Lessons from a decade of discussions. University of Oxford, 2011, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4da83a682.pdf>, accessed 14 November 2015.

17 See for example, UNHCR’s Global Trends Report, 2010, indicating that 80% of the world’s displaced at that time were hosted by developing countries of the global South, and that “*African countries account for 40% of all IDPs. Conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Somalia are crucial factors.*” <http://www.unric.org/en/world-refugee-day/26978-new-report-developing-countries-host-80-of-refugees->, accessed 16 November 2015. In 2015, this number has gone beyond 86%, see Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/10/global-refugee-crisis-by-the-numbers/>, accessed 16 November 2015.

a focus on only one aspect, the ‘socio-economic burden’ for most host-countries (either as “transit” countries or “final destination by default”) that receive refugees in the global South: “There is a fundamental inequality in the existing global refugee regime. It creates an obligation on states to protect those refugees who arrive on the territory of a state (“asylum”), but it provides few clear obligations to support refugees who are on the territory of other states (“burden-sharing”). This means that inevitably states closest to refugee-producing countries take on a disproportionate responsibility for refugees. This inequality is a problem within Europe, but it also exists on a global scale. It is the reason why more than 80% of the world’s refugees are hosted by developing countries.”¹⁸

It is evident that inflexible definitions do not enable a multi-causal conceptualization of solutions. The least developed countries provide hosting support to almost 25 % of the global refugee caseload in 2014. It is a proportionately significant contribution per USD GDP per capita by those hosting countries to continuously support the number of existing and newly arriving refugees.¹⁹ Therefore, while the opportunities and resources to adequately support refugees and communities in transit (for any reason), are especially not (or not sustainably) accessible to those that have hosted “transit” communities in protracted crises contexts (and often from their neighboring countries), a new way of “burden-sharing” and local solutions is paramount.

Root causes for migration, whether forced or voluntary are frequently multifold, but academia as well as policy-makers should consider the following:

1. Policy makers in the Global North and South still lack emphasis in addressing root causes in a sustainable and holistic manner.
2. Local solutions, especially in those countries that are considered longer-term “transit” countries are urgently required – providing those “in-limbo” an effective opportunity to access and create livelihoods to ensure a certain level of self-sufficiency.
3. No one questions the validity of international humanitarian principles and special protection for refugees and IDPs, and – for operational and funding reasons – humanitarian actors will continue to require a focused mandate with key target groups whose needs have to be further addressed. However, in today’s complex and convoluted crises that lead to protracted voluntary migration, semi-voluntary and forced displacements, a broadening of scope, a more cohesive strategic collaboration and programmatic framework is required.
4. International donor agencies with their current short-term funding cycles should implement a long-discussed “paradigm” shift by engaging in new partnerships with business, host governments and more urgently, the actually affected communities in transit contexts.

18 See Betts, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/25/war-on-trafficking-wrong-way-to-tackle-crisis-of-migrant-deaths>, accessed 11 November 2015.

19 See UNHCR, World at War. Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2014, 2014, pp. 2, 15, <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html>, accessed 16 November 2015.

2.1 “Mixed migrations” with diverse effects in fluid contexts

The traditional aid delivery model for protracted humanitarian crisis is to a certain extent outdated and not suited to actively facilitate a strong socio-economic interaction between refugee and host communities, and often other displaced groups do face similar challenges. With the diverse effects of displacement for most of the affected and their surrounding socio-economic context, it is also critical to note that for both, IDPs as well as refugees, conflict, natural disasters and resulting displacement have multiple and often overlapping root causes and impacts. Critical discourse over the years has highlighted that where formal protection and guarantee of asylum do not effectively operate, distinction between forced and voluntary movement is not productive.²⁰ In addition, with ongoing violence followed by frequent cycles of secondary and tertiary displacements, often leads to alternating roles as host and IDP/ refugee communities as in Northern Uganda or South Sudan.²¹

Displaced communities are also frequently characterized by very heterogeneous socio-economic, cultural, religious, and other key identity-related factors, which adds to the complexity of reasons for (en-)forced displacements. Protracted displacement situations in transit- or hosting countries are often perpetuated, as displaced come to equally volatile areas or adjacent countries or transit countries’ contexts. The categorization of “Mixed flow (...) as complex population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants. Unaccompanied minors, environmental migrants, smuggled persons, victims of trafficking and stranded migrants, among others, may also form part of a mixed flow”²² is a very progressive attempt to acknowledge complexity, however, it falls short of offering more content-centered definition.

UNHCR differentiates between (economic) migrants that choose to move to improve their lives, while refugees are forced to move to preserve their freedom.²³ Attempts of linking different strains of motivation conceptually²⁴ are challenged by practical feasibility and implications of the concept.²⁵ Strict distinction between different displaced groups is often artificial,²⁶ when

20 See, Forced Migration Review, Zetter/ Long, Unlocking protracted displacement, 2012, p.2, <http://www.fmreview.org/en/young-and-out-of-place/zetter-long.pdf>, accessed 14 November 2015 and similar the Migration Observatory, University of Oxford – see <http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/about/what-mixed-migration-is/>, accessed 11 November 2015.

21 See University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre, Volume II, Study on Impacts and Cost of Forced Displacement. State of the Art Literature Review, 2011, p.70, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1265299960363/VolumeIILiterature.pdf>, accessed 16 November 2015.

22 See <http://www.mixedmigrationhub.org/about/what-mixed-migration-is/>, accessed 11 November 2015, and the definition of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM).

23 UNHCR launched a 10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration in 2006. See UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16aac66.html>, and <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a1d406060.html>, accessed 11 November 2015.

24 See UNHCR, Global Migration Group, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a16b6a16.html>, accessed 13 November 2015.

25 See Betts, Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, p. 23.

26 See open-source document, The Peculiar Dynamics of the Kakuma Refugee Camp: An Economic and Social Impact Analysis, 2015 with holistic approach to security, shrinking global asylum space “(...) will require the temporary local social and economic integration focused on building host community resilience and refugee community self-reliance, (requiring) buy-in, particularly from regional institutions and national governments, (...)” <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22286/Eastern0Africa0n0the0Horn0of0Africa.txt?sequence=2>, accessed 13 November 2015.

it comes to “*in-limbo*” protracted situations, if local solutions may address a variety of key challenges across these groups.²⁷ The preferred option of the “*durable solution*” concept has not been very successful. UNHCR noted that in 2014, 126,800 people returned to their country of origin (lowest number since 1983).²⁸ A new and unorthodox approach based on new extended definitions is necessary as numbers of displaced communities “*in-limbo*” – with extended transit situations are increasing while the number of actually successful returns to countries and/ or locations of origin are expected to decrease. Some scholars (e.g. Betts) have taken new routes to adapt traditional concepts – defining the “*groups on-the-move*” as “*survival migrants*”: “*persons who are outside their country of origin because of an existential threat for which they have no access to a domestic remedy or resolution.*”²⁹ This definition acknowledges complex new realities and should be the basis for a humanitarian-centered approach, but be extended to include IDPs. This definition would also cover climate-change related displacements. While the majority of medium- and long-term displacements are caused by conflict, the impact of natural disaster is increasingly gaining international attention (e.g. national of the pacific island Kiribati being denied asylum as first officially acknowledged climate change refugee in New Zealand³⁰).

Climate-(change)-induced migration is expected to increase, as since 2008, disaster displacement has affected all 33 countries defined by the World Bank as fragile and conflict-affected; 750,000 people were displaced there in 2014 alone. A report reveals 17.5 million people were forced to flee their homes in 2014 by weather-related hazards such as floods and storms.³¹ While the international community has initiated more efforts to find Climate Change Adaptation solutions for displaced (“*climate refugees and IDPs*”), little progress has been made to acknowledge complexity and possibly inter-related factors – climate change impact exacerbating vulnerabilities.³² The El Niño-phenomenon impacting more than 50 million people in 2015 and 2016, perpetuating erratic weather patterns resulting in prolonged droughts and flooding, will likely affect people in different regions with already displaced populations hampered by food insecurity, erosion of their livelihoods assets.³³

Urban contexts prove to provide more diverse opportunities for livelihood engagement of displaced (depending on context³⁴). However, these contexts also potentially exacerbate existing vulnerabilities (of specific demographic/ age groups,

such as youth)³⁵ of displaced individuals,³⁶ (from economic marginalization, to discrimination by local authorities, host communities, criminal exploitation, to xenophobic attacks, etc.) and often induce displaced households to further “*voluntary*” migration in search of a safer option.

2.2 Are concepts of sustainable solutions, social cohesion or the “right to work” realistic?

The conceptual requirement of elements for “*durable solutions*” for IDPs such as “*Long-term safety, security and freedom of movement; (...) minimum access (...) to employment and livelihoods (...)*” seems to lack implementation across different geographies and contexts.³⁷ Long-term solutions require a minimum of social cohesion, with a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition, legitimacy – based on diversity of ideas, opinions, skills for social integration – and are less destructive when solving colliding interests.³⁸

Implementing legal commitments are challenging, and the inability to do so impacts economic as well as social stabilization.³⁹ In addition, insufficient humanitarian care systems and maintenance approaches⁴⁰ are evidenced, as well as a weak or non-existing connection between humanitarian and developmental intervention strategies. Research suggests that mutual support between displaced communities is based on and reinforced by the importance of socio-economic and social cohesion effects, while access to livelihoods opportunities, e.g. through small and medium size business, can also perpetuate competition over access to resources, markets and customers.

35 See some comprehensive analysis with country examples, e.g. UNEconomic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Refugees and Economic Growth: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/3182370-1164201144397/Forced_Displacement.pdf, accessed 15 November 2015; Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), Somalia: Over a million IDPs need support for local solutions. March 2015, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1164107274725/3182370-1164201144397/Forced_Displacement.pdf, accessed 16 November 2015.

36 See for example ODI, Sanctuary in the City. Urban Displacement and Vulnerability. Final Report, 2013, <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8444.pdf>, accessed 16 November 2015, or Brookings/ International Organisation for Migration (IOM): Supporting Durable Solutions to urban, post-disaster displacement, 2014, <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2014/02/07-haiti-displacement/Supporting-Durable-Solutions-to-DisplacementHaiti-March-4-2014.pdf?la=en>, accessed 16 November 2015 and Campbell, E., Urban refugees in Nairobi: problems of protection, mechanisms for survival and possibilities for integration. Journal of Refugee Studies, 19, 2006, pp. 396-413; IOM, World Migration Report, 2015, <http://publications.iom.int/>, accessed 16 November 2015.

37 See IASC, The Brookings Institution – University of Bern, Project on Internal Displacement, 2010 <http://www.unhcr.org/50f94cd49.pdf>, accessed 11 November 2015.

38 See, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)/ ECOSOC, Social Development and Policy Division, <http://undesadspd.org/socialintegration/definition.aspx>, accessed 15 November 2015. There is a variety of definitions – e.g. UNDP/ USAID/SEED, 2015, The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index as a Tool for Conflict Transformation, http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Predicting%20Peace_SCORE.PDF, accessed 16 November 2015, and REACH, Understanding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities: Assessment Report, 2014, <http://www.alnap.org/resource/19532>, accessed 14 November 2015.

39 See IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs, 2010, p. 7.

40 See World Bank, Global Program on Forced Displacement (GFFD), Annual Progress Report, September 2015, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2015/09/21/090224b0830f3d201_0/Rendered/PDF/Global0Program0ry02014000June020150.pdf, accessed 13 November 2015.

27 See HPG/ ODI, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths, p. 3, *ibid*.

28 See UNHCR, World at War. Global Trends 2014 – Forced Displacement in 2014, p. 20, <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.html>, accessed 16 November 2015.

29 See Betts, Survival Migration: Failed Governance and the Crisis of Displacement, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013, p. 23

30 See, Bloomberg Business News, Islander Seek to become first Climate-Refugee to be deported. 23 September 2015, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-09-23/islander-seeking-to-become-first-climate-refugee-to-be-deported>, accessed 14 November 2015.

31 See IDMC, Global Estimates: People displaced by disasters, Quarterly Update, July-September 2015, 3 November 2015, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2015/IDMC-quarterly-update-2015-QU3.pdf>, accessed 11 November 2015.

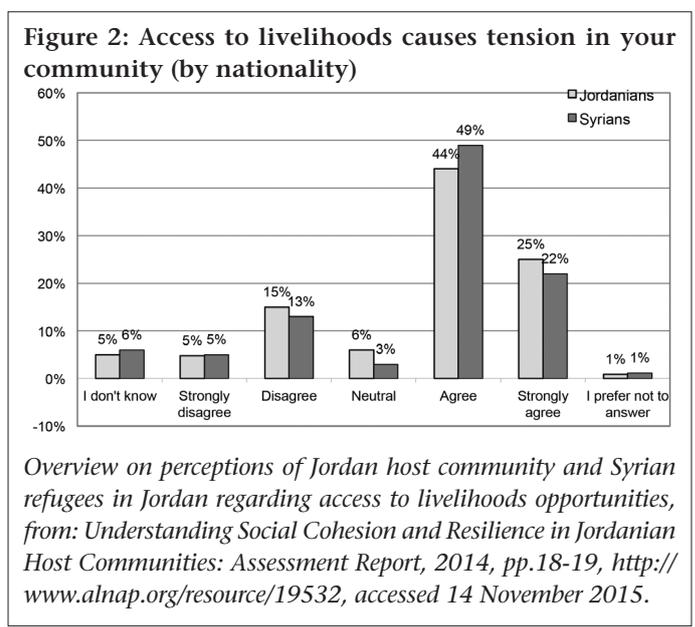
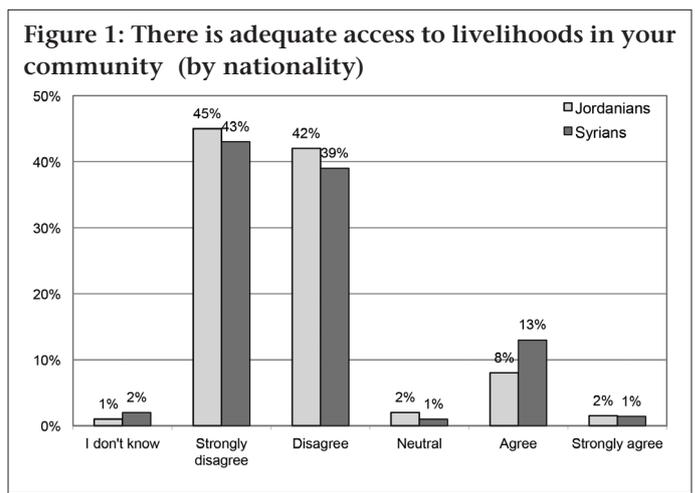
32 See GMG, Statement of the Global Migration Group on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration, 2011, <http://www.unhcr.org/4eca7db72.html>, accessed 13 November 2015.

33 See for example UNOCHA, <http://www.unocha.org/el-nino>, accessed 16 November 2015.

34 See HPG/ ODI, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths p.1.

This possibly contributes to intercommunal tension between displaced population as well as in their relationships with hosts.⁴¹ Many multilateral organisations,⁴² as well as private sector entities are looking for innovation to bridging the still existing humanitarian-development divide, and re-engineering an increasingly deficient humanitarian financing system⁴³ to address forced displacement holistically. While this is a valuable shift in emphasis, it requires further in-depth study on how social interaction and perception plays into stabilization of conflict contexts and what role displaced people can play in local economics for livelihood support.⁴⁴ The theme of social cohesion is not sufficiently examined when applied to fluid and multicultural contexts in highly tense political, religious and economic animosity and competition.

Four countries (Syria, Colombia, Iraq and Sudan) are currently hosting 52% of the global IDP caseload, and seven countries (Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine and Jordan) are hosting 50% of all refugees.⁴⁵ These countries are mostly affected by ongoing or re-erupting internal social, political and religious conflicts, with international and locally displaced populations adding pressures to host/ displaced-community-relationships. The notion of net gains for so-called “refugee (based) economies” emphasizes that host countries have benefitted from large influx of displaced and consecutive international humanitarian assistance funding (such as Lebanon, Jordan, or some years ago, Tanzania, hosting Burundian and Rwandan refugees).⁴⁶ A micro –ecosystem of refugee-entrepreneur-driven economic activity has been examined in other research.⁴⁷ Recently, the link of local economic aspects with livelihoods’ perspectives for refugees and IDPs *and* host communities has been emphasised.⁴⁸ However, in reality, the perception of adequate and sufficient access (Fig.1) and resulting inter-communal tension and competition for resources and opportunities (as per Fig. 2) highlights roadblocks to sustainable solutions that benefit every group.



41 See REACH, Understanding Social Cohesion and Resilience in Jordanian Host Communities: Assessment Report, 2014, pp.18-19, <http://www.alnap.org/resource/19532>, accessed 14 November 2015.

42 See World Bank/ UNHCR, Eastern Africa HoA Displacement Study: Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa, 2015, http://www.wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2015/06/30/090224b082fa7f32/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Eastern0Africa0n0the0Horn0of0Africa.pdf, accessed 16 November 2015.

43 See UNHCR Commissioner, Guterres in The Guardian, UN agencies ‘broke and failing’ in face of ever-growing refugee crisis. 6 September 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/06/refugee-crisis-un-agencies-broke-failing>, accessed 16 November 2015 and World Humanitarian Summit Synthesis Report, https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_Consultation_Reports, October 2015.

44 See World Vision International, Beyond “Gift-In-Kind”, Opportunities for Resource Development through Cross-Sector Collaboration in World Vision’s Disaster Management (DM2020), 2014, <http://www.wvi.org/disaster-management/publication/beyond-gift-kind>.

45 See HPG/ ODI, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths p. 10.

46 See Cali/ Sekkarie, Much ado about nothing? The economic impact of refugee ‘invasions’, 16 September 2015, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/future-development/posts/2015/09/16-economic-impact-refugees-cali>, accessed 16 November 2015.

47 See for example Betts et al., Refugee Economies, Rethinking Popular Assumptions. University of Oxford, Centre for Refugee Studies, 2014, <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/refugee-economies-2014.pdf>, accessed 16 November 2015.

48 See for example, World Vision International, Social Cohesion between Syrian Refugees and Urban Host Communities in Lebanon and Jordan, 2015 <http://www.wvi.org/disaster-management/publication/social-cohesion-between-syrian-refugees-and-urban-host-communities>.

With UNHCR emphasizing the need for refugees to adhere to host country regulations, and while some countries avail this opportunity and right, still, approximately more than 1/3 of surveyed refugee population indicated that access to financial services and ability to legally rent or even own land/ property for agricultural or other income-generating related activities, are seen as major barriers for their self-reliance.⁴⁹ Significant gaps in national and regional legal frameworks lead to restrictions as default-option – and while some hosting countries showcase more flexibility, as well as a pro-active approach to adjust relevant policies (e.g. Kenya), others are more rigorous in their management of offenses. The table below, with some examples from the Horn of Africa, illustrates the incorporation of international/regional legal frameworks into national legislation and policies that help create enabling environments for self-sufficiency of displaced based on rights to property, other assets and ability to move with less restrictions – all factors that are critical for self-supported livelihoods.

49 See UNHCR, Diagnostic Tool For Alternatives to Camps, Global Results 2015, <http://www.unhcr.org/5548c33b6.html>, accessed 8 November 2015.

Table 3. International and Regional Legal and Institutional Frameworks

Country	1951 Convention	1967 Protocol	1969 OAU Convention	Reservations to the 1951 Convention
Djibouti	09.08.1977	09.08.1977	15.11.2015	
Eritrea			25.04.2012	
Ethiopia	10.11.1969	10.11.1969	15.10.1973	Article 17 (2) dealing with wage earning employment
Kenya	16.05.1966	13.11.1981	23.06.1992	Article 22 (1) dealing with the provision of public education to refugees
Somalia	10.10.1978	10.10.1978	10.09.1969	
South Sudan				
Sudan	22.02.1974	23.05.1974	24.12.1972	Article 26 dealing with freedom of movement
Uganda	27.09.1976	27.09.1976	24.07.1987	Article 13 dealing with movable and immovable property Article 17 dealing with wage-earning employment

From: World Bank/ UNHCR, *Eastern Africa HoA Displacement Study: Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa, 2015*, p.24.

ILO highlights that in Jordan, where refugees are not authorized to take up paid work “*Current workforce challenges (high national unemployment, dependency on low wages, low-skilled foreign labour) leave (...) (the country) unable to meet its national economic needs, let alone the needs of over 650,000 Syrian refugees.*”⁵⁰ This is furthermore complicated by a diverging understanding on the application of “refugee-definition” – which is not in alignment with international law or UNHCR’s definitions or their livelihoods’ engagement-potential.⁵¹ However, other research shows that the “right to work” granted for Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has resulted in somewhat better livelihoods conditions than for those in Jordan not having the same legal approval, although the humanitarian system may be more overwhelmed in northern Iraq.⁵² Evidence indicates that their livelihood conditions are less extreme, although more refugees are encamped than in Jordan for example and are thus possibly better able to access humanitarian assistance.⁵³ A recent analysis initiated a broader review of legal policy frameworks for refugees and IDPs.⁵⁴ This shows that multi-faceted responses to complex challenges and preconditions are feasible.

50 See International Labour Organisation, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan: A discussion paper on labour and refugee laws and policies, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>, 2015, p. 5, accessed 16 November 2015.

51 See Werker, 2007, p. 476 cited as per University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre, Volume II, Study on Impacts and Cost of Forced Displacement. State of the Art Literature Review, 2011, p.63, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/Resources/244362-1265299949041/6766328-1265299960363/VolumellLiterature.pdf>, accessed 16 November 2015.

52 See Zetter/ Ruadel, FMR Online, Development and Protection Challenges of Syrian refugee crisis, September 2014, <http://www.fmreview.org/syria/zetter-ruadel%20#sthash.VOzSvTk.dpuf>, accessed 16 November 2015.

53 See Zetter/ Ruadel, *ibid.*

54 See World Bank/ UNHCR, Eastern Africa HoA Displacement Study: Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa, 2015, pp. 74, http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2015/06/30/090224b082fa7f32/1_0/Rendered/PDF/Eastern0Africa0n0the0Horn0of0Africa.pdf, accessed 16 November 2015.

Mixed migration is a challenging reality for “short-term” transit countries (such as the Western Balkans in the 2014/ 2015 European refugee crisis) and in particular for “long-term” transit countries that de-facto become receiving countries (such as Kenya in East Africa for South Sudanese and Somali refugees, Iraq (Kurdistan Region of Iraq) for Iraqi IDPs and Syrian Refugees). The protracted situation for many of these displaced populations requires not only immediate humanitarian assistance, but medium- and long-term access to livelihoods.⁵⁵ There is a need to better understand the link between protracted displacements, potential spillover effects of inter-communal tensions undermining stability, and escalating conflicts with host country communities,⁵⁶ and continuous pressures on displaced to “move-on”, unless each transit/ hosting country resolves key challenges – e.g. the “right to work” for refugee communities (as Turkey recently).⁵⁷

3. Building opportunities of interaction for self-reliance – innovative approaches of addressing potential secondary conflicts linked with displaced from protracted fragile contexts

Governments of host countries that face significant challenges with high unemployment rates of their own population should strengthen their cooperation with the local private sector – via conducting solid market analysis, identifying key sectors that require additional workforce, and entrepreneurs and thus issue sector- restricted permits based on those gaps in their socio-economic landscape through micro-finance loan products, facilitating socio-economic integration – and ensure that livelihoods skills are matching market demands with niche products and services that have proven effective.⁵⁸ Refugees do contribute to and benefit from local and national host economies, as service-clients as well as service providers.⁵⁹ Therefore, a number of practical policy recommendations are urgent building blocks for a paradigm shift in solutions for displaced communities “in-limbo”:

55 See for example, Dialogue on Migration and Asylum in Development (DOMAID), Finding Solutions to Protracted Displacement: The EU’s Role and Ways Forward, 2014, pp.6-8, <http://ecre.org/component/downloads/downloads/930.html>, accessed 16 November 2015.

56 For example Milner/ Loescher, Oxford Refugee Studies Centre, Forced Migration Policy Briefing # 6, Responding to protracted refugee situations. Lessons from a decade of discussions. University of Oxford, 2011, pp. 1 & 4, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4da83a682.pdf>, accessed 14 November 2015.

57 See Guterres referring to Syrian refugees leaving countries of first refuge like Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey; The Guardian, UN agencies ‘broke and failing’ in face of ever-growing refugee crisis. 6 September 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/06/refugee-crisis-un-agencies-broke-failing>, accessed 16 November 2015. See <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/11/eu-seeks-deal-turkey-curb-refugee-crisis-151129152134803.html> on EU/Turkish Government agreement for less restrictions on right to work, 30 November 2015. Changes to then current regulations was agreed – now since 17 January 2016, Syrian refugees are allowed to apply for work permits in Turkey – <http://www.unhcr.org/569ca19c6.html>.

58 See Feinstein International Center/ Tufts University, Refugee Livelihoods in Urban Areas, Identifying Program Opportunities, http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/PRM_report_Egypt_resized.pdf#page=1&zoom=auto,-99,798,October 2012, pp. 13 & 38, accessed 13 November 2015.

59 See Betts et al., Refugee Economies, Rethinking Popular Assumptions. University of Oxford, Centre for Refugee Studies, 2014, pp. 10-15, <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/refugee-economies-2014.pdf>, accessed 16 November 2015; See ODI/ HPG/ OCHA/UKAid et al, Humanitarian crises, emergency preparedness and response: the role of business and the private sector. Final Report, 2014, <http://www.odi.org/publications/8534-private-sector-business-companies-humanitarian-emergencies-disasters-csr>, accessed 10 November 2015.

- a) Enhance peacebuilding, identify and strongly promote factors that contribute to social cohesion,
- b) Provide equal economic access to assets and opportunities, as well as basic service provision and ensure that interaction, inter-community trade is feasible,
- c) Design basic safety nets including focus on education and health,
- d) Assist host and displacement-transit country governments and societies to develop context specific “social contracts” – clearly emphasizing the need to adhere to humanitarian principles and standards but also emphasizing the need to engage, accept and contribute positively to host/ transit countries society & culture (no matter how long the stay will be).

UNHCR’s new ‘Alternatives to Camps’ Policy⁶⁰ for example, aims at ensuring more choice, dignity for refugees in camp-settings (and outside of regular camp settings), supporting links with local economy, infrastructure and service delivery.⁶¹ Around 70% of registered refugees actually are projected to live outside regular camps. Prerequisites have to be met in order for the policy to be effectively implemented, and the policy also still lacks concrete concept recommendations for different contexts to “(...) facilitate the transformation of camps into sustainable settlements that are anchored within the framework of national development planning and housing, land and property laws and linked to host communities and the local economy, infrastructure and service delivery systems.”⁶² Thus, multi-stakeholder agreements have to be reached quicker, accompanied by a highly efficient accountability mechanism, ensuring their effectiveness. Equally, for long-term IDPs early action with national authorities for holistic early recovery is paramount, in interaction with receiving/ host communities.⁶³

However, there is some overarching criticism directed at aid agencies and donors of having a narrow approach regarding self-reliance⁶⁴, focusing on the idealistic perspectives of “refugee/ IDP entrepreneurs” that would simply require freedom of movement and ability to legally work or initial start-up capital and training to interact, integrate or “self-repatriate” in the medium-term. There is skepticism that a call for market-based systems and business actors to come and create a “win-win”-situation for all will change the current status-quo.

A significant percentage among displaced persons have experienced violence, secondary displacements, stigmatisation and may or may not have existing strong social and economic ties within the displacement communities and “across” with host communities. Therefore, the author agrees with Crawford’s notion of a more differentiated analysis, and tailored support through targeted social safety net interventions based on concise government policy provisions, robust tools and processes to

help (self-)identification of youth, women and other neglected groups with entrepreneurial interests and skills that can be mentored, and to include facilitation to easier processes for remittances for example.⁶⁵

4. Local & regional stability

Still, a rights-based approach for refugee communities⁶⁶ in combination with host-community-sensitive programming and intentional engagement represents a key contributing factor to help resolve a major challenge regarding dependency on assistance, perpetuating increasing numbers of socio-economically disenfranchised groups. Literature suggests gaps in social cohesion and prior experience of violence instability possibly lead to further instability based on accumulated tensions. Close to 60% (approximately 35.7 out of a total of 59.5 million) of displaced come from countries that are ranked in the Fragile States Index as “alert” or “high alert” contexts, and that 47.9% among those total numbers of displaced populations are exiled in countries that would match with those categories.⁶⁷ The link between access to and promotion of basic livelihoods’ opportunities for more self-reliance during the “in-limbo”-period is not sufficiently emphasized (whether in research or operational context and policy), as highlighted by Zetter and Long. The direct correlation of displaced populations “in-limbo” and related limited socio-economic opportunities contributing to or undermining intra- and inter-communal social cohesion (and effect towards peacebuilding⁶⁸) on the one hand, and experiences of extreme violence by displaced fleeing prolonged conflict, on the other hand, can contribute to an “explosive mix” if socio-economic opportunities are not even accessible to them over medium- and long-term. A notion of the Special Rapporteur on IDPs’ Rights that also reiterated the need for systematic integration of durable solutions into peacebuilding and stabilization processes, has not been taken sufficiently forward yet.⁶⁹

65 As suggested by Crawford et al and see HPG/ ODI, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths to self-reliance in exile, September 2015, p.31, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2015/20150930-201509-global-protracted-displacement-odi/201509-global-protracted-displacement-odi-FULL-Report.pdf>, Accessed 11 November 2015.

66 The majority of refugee communities rarely plan to leave their countries to work elsewhere – while in recent past the phenomenon of “mixed migration” has emerged further (representing a conglomerate of enforcing and motivating factors to leave their country of origin. However, “it is almost inevitable that remunerated labour becomes essential for both economic survival and psychosocial well-being, particularly in protracted situations. The architects of the 1951 Refugee Convention surely had this in mind when they drafted Articles 17, 18 and 19, all relating to gainful employment.” See International Labour Organisation, Access to work for Syrian refugees in Jordan: A discussion paper on labour and refugee laws and policies, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>, 2015, p. 7, accessed 16 November 2015. Traditional and legal framework requirements however, and their actual implementation have failed to produce results for the adoption of a pragmatic human-rights-principled approach.

67 See HPG/ ODI, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths, p.33.

68 See Forced Migration Review, Zetter/ Long, Unlocking protracted displacement, 2012, <http://www.fmreview.org/en/young-and-out-of-place/zetter-long.pdf>, accessed 14 November 2015.

69 See UN Human Rights Council, Report of Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, A/ HRC/23/44, pp. 3 & 15, 2013 <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report%20of%20the%20Special%20Rapporteur%20on%20the%20human%20rights%20of%20internally%20displaced%20persons%20Chaloka%20Beyani.pdf>, accessed 16 November 2015.

60 See UNHCR, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps*, 22 July 2014, UNHCR/HCP/2014/9, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5423ded84.html>, accessed 8 November 2015.

61 See UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/54d9c7686.html>, accessed 8 November 2015.

62 See UNHCR, Diagnostic Tool For Alternatives to Camps, *ibid.*

63 See IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs, 2010, p.9f, Guidance Note on Early Recovery, Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery, April 2008.

64 See ODI/HPG, Protracted Displacement: Uncertain Paths, p.1.

5. Conclusion

With the increasing multiplicity and complexity of chronic crises in Africa and the Middle East, global inter-connectivity that portrays impressions of safety, economic prosperity to a global audience “*in-limbo*”, regarding access to EU countries, there is no single-solution to sustainably accommodate or reduce the number of migrating/ displaced communities. Addressing root causes as well as ensuring local solutions for those displaced and “*in-limbo*” for decades in secondary/ transit countries to enhance self-reliance becomes *the* key component of an urgently required holistic approach to a humanitarian global displacement crisis. A new and unorthodox approach based on new extended definitions is necessary, as numbers of displaced communities “*in-limbo*” increase, therefore the author would like to emphasise that:

- Research gaps to be urgently addressed: documentation and analysis of ongoing new initiatives, e.g. integrated “right to work” and similar approaches better brought together at global and regional levels. This can provide evidence for policy makers and implementers to either promote better opportunities to move towards integration with host community, or a better springboard for a new start if/ once re-patriated in their country of origin.
- An extended definition of displacement based on threats and limited to no other remedy or means to mitigate the same, requires international entities to acknowledge action for key stakeholders in “protracted” transition or “*in-limbo*” displacement experiences.
- Social cohesion, joint contributions to stabilization of fragile contexts are by and large the task of state actors, but civil society and business need a major role as enabling actors. The potential of displaced communities and their hosts as emphasizing “*connectors*”, rather than “*dividers*”⁷⁰, facilitating strong interaction that is based on and leverages further mutual benefit – socially, economically, culturally – are critical factors to foster socio-economic cohesion, and stability, rather than tense co-existence. As pointed out, “*Refugees (‘) (...) skills (...) are critical to future peacebuilding and development efforts either where they are or in their countries of origin following their return home. Containing refugees in camps prevents them from contributing to regional development and state-building (...)*”⁷¹ but so do even other restrictions that limit their access to basic opportunities – be it work permits, authorization of free movement, access to micro-credits, and information. These are initial concepts proposed by a number of authors. However, linking social cohesion to economic enabling interventions and building a new “social contract” between hosts and hosted communities has not evolved into further academic review and conceptualization for many of the referenced country examples.
- The emphasis of local solutions promoting economic engagement opportunities as, for example, per the German

Government⁷² or other EU member states – for instance for youth in Africa and the Middle East – will be significant. Analysis has shown that multi-sector efforts⁷³ and local *leadership* are especially relevant. Considering local solutions for those displaced “*in-limbo*” is critical – not only to reduce projected influx of displaced populations to countries in the North, but to co-create with civil society, local and multi-national business⁷⁴ and government stakeholders for example Cross-Sector partnership (<http://hpp.online>) long-term solutions *in* countries (often in the “Global South”) that are along old and new main routes of displaced groups “on-the-move” or “*in-limbo*”. These will help build equal access to opportunities, local, productive engagement and stability across community, ethnicity, socio-economic and religious boundaries, good governance and prosperity, founded on a human-rights principled approach that reduces the need for “humanitarian (re-) action”.

- A “(...) significant divide that remains between refugee-hosting states in the global South and the donor and resettlement countries in the global North. As noted above, this divide has been a frequent cause of impasse in the global refugee regime for decades...”⁷⁵ This holds especially true in times where the public opinion seems to shift from a more positive attitude to a sensationalizing of the impending repercussions of a “global displacement crisis”, after the November 2015 terror attacks in Paris by presumably Jihad-fighters – among them at least three suspected to be Syrian refugees that just entered France from the Greek-Island-migration path. It is urgent, to overcome “*the impasse*” quickly – starting from an expanded definition as suggested. Such definition must not automatically exclude particular communities “in transit or in limbo”. Likewise, work is needed on the implementation of new framework policies (e.g. UNHCR’s “Alternative to Camps” Policy) with rigorous academic review and support in evaluation and application in order to address socio-political, religious and cultural tensions among and beyond displaced communities in “transit/ *in-limbo*”.



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70 Anderson, 1999, Do No Harm/ Local Capacities for Peace Project, <http://www.conflictsensitivity.org/node/103>, accessed 16 November 2015.

71 See Milner/ Loescher, Oxford Refugee Studies Centre, Forced Migration Policy Briefing # 6, Responding to protracted refugee situations. Lessons from a decade of discussions. University of Oxford, 2011, p. 4, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4da83a682.pdf>, accessed 14 November 2015.

72 See Germany’s engagement in the Action Plan, agreed on during the EU-Africa-Summit in Malta, <http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Reiseberichte/2015-11-09-eu-afrikagipfel.html>, acc. 16 November 2015.

73 See World Humanitarian Summit, Synthesis Report, https://www.worldhumanitariansummit.org/whs_Consultation_Reports, October 2015.

74 See ODI/ HPG/ OCHA/UKAid et al, Humanitarian crises, emergency preparedness and response: the role of business and the private sector. Final Report, 2014, <http://www.odi.org/publications/8534-private-sector-business-companies-humanitarian-emergencies-disasters-csr>, accessed 10 November 2015.

75 See Milner/ Loescher, Oxford Refugee Studies Centre, Forced Migration Policy Briefing # 6, *ibid* , p.18.