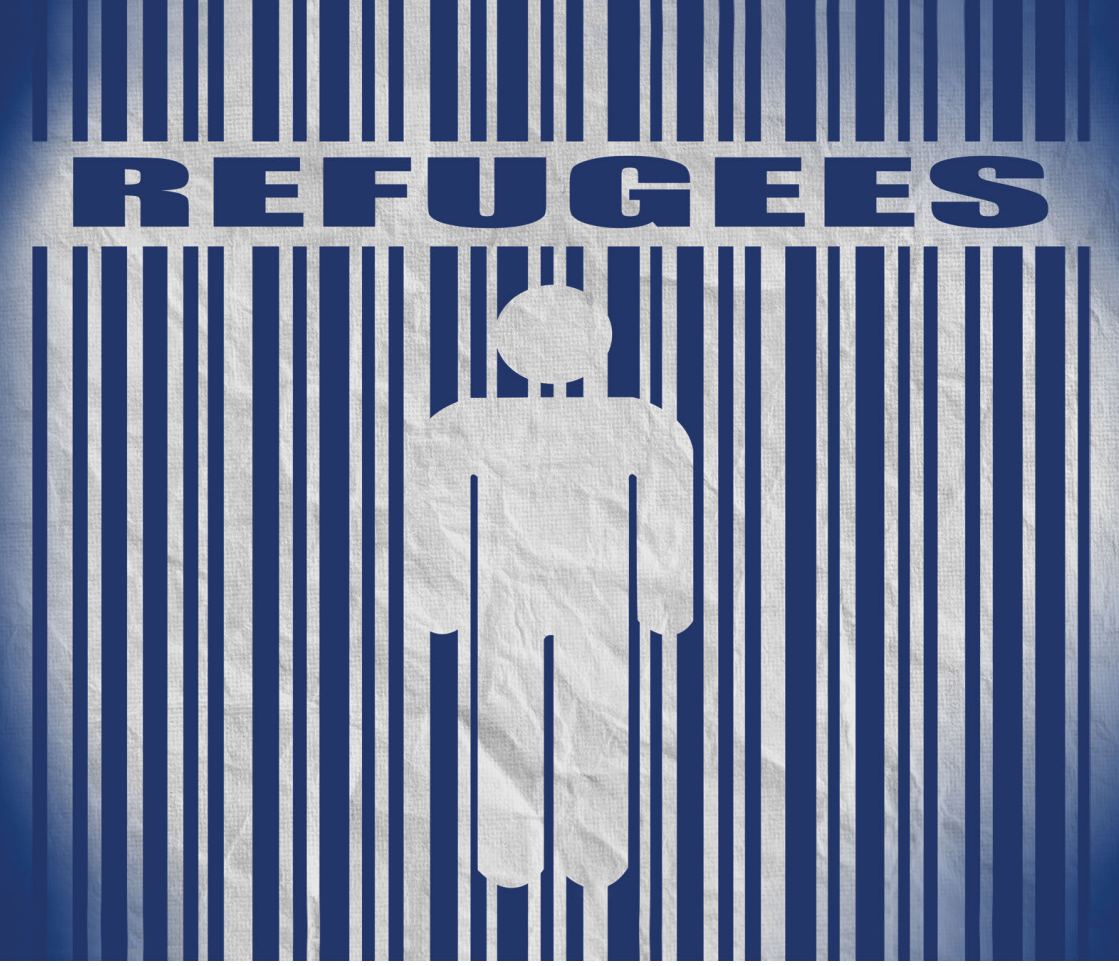

Erlanger Migrations- und Integrationsstudien 6

Janina Stürner / Petra Bendel

Valuing Local Ownership

Refugees and Municipalities as Actors in the Search for Sustainable Solutions to Displacement

FAU UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Erlanger Migrations- und Integrationsstudien

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Valuing Local Ownership

Refugees and Municipalities as Actors in the Search for Sustainable Solutions to Displacement

With the Global Compact on Refugees, the International Community seeks to highlight the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches in the search for sustainable solutions to displacement. However, when it comes to planning and implementing durable solutions, two of the main actors are often absent or even excluded from decision-making – these are refugees and hosting municipalities. The two papers in this publication highlight central bottlenecks for participatory approaches in both resettlement schemes as well as camp accommodation. Based on an analysis of existing good practice and new policy approaches, the first paper develops an innovative proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme while the second paper critically discusses potentials and risks of adapting special zones concepts to displacement contexts. Together, both papers are a call for action to actively engage refugees and communities so as to find answers to the question of "who could thrive where?"

Abbreviations

EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EMN	European Migration Network
EU	European Union
EU-FRANK	EU-Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge
ERN	European Resettlement Network
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MOST	Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees
NORCO	Norwegian Cultural Orientation Programme
SDZ	Sustainable Development Zone
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SMAK	Strengthening the reception of Resettled Refugees
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Tailored to whom?

Rethinking resettlement as a participatory strategy to empower refugees and hosting municipalities

Janina Stürner

Abstract

The Global Compact on Refugees highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches including refugees and hosting communities in the development of durable solutions. Conventional resettlement programmes, however, leave little to no space for refugees and hosting municipalities to develop agency. This paper identifies limited transparency, exclusionary decision-making and narrow spaces for local ownership as the focal challenges in resettlement programmes of EU member states. While the European Migration Network describes national resettlement schemes as "tailor-made" solutions, recent national resettlement debates have focused more on politics of host countries than coherent responses to refugee situations. Therefore, the question arises to whom these programmes are actually tailored. Can resettlement tools sustainably address the needs of refugees and hosting municipalities without offering them options to actively engage in shaping the process? Since well-prepared placement is crucial for the success of refugee resettlement, the paper focuses on the question of how refugees and hosting municipalities can be empowered to play an active role in co-shaping sustainable EU resettlement processes. Good practice examples in different European countries demonstrate that municipalities, refugees, states and international organisations can cooperate to increase transparency, match individual potentials and needs with local offers and strengthen the democratic basis of resettlement through local community ownership. The paper introduces a concrete proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme based on empowerment, agency and ownership of refugees and hosting municipalities, which could provide an approach to actively engage refugees and communities so as to find answers to the question of "who could thrive where?" instead of restricting refugees' choices to "yes vs. no" and municipalities' input to "how many?"

1. Resettlement – tailored to whom?

With the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees, signatory states declare that "[r]esponses are most effective when they actively and meaningfully engage those they are intended to protect and assist" (United Nations 2018: 7). Actors working in the areas of mobility and displacement should therefore "wherever possible, continue to develop and support consultative processes that enable refugees and host community members to assist in designing appropriate, accessible and inclusive responses" (ibid.). Such efforts can yield benefits for both refugees and their hosting communities.[1]

Current refugee resettlement programmes, however, leave little to no space for refugees and hosting municipalities to develop agency. Limited transparency, exclusionary decision-making and narrow space to develop local ownership disempower refugees and hosting municipalities and may even have negative impacts on integration. While the European Migration Network describes European resettlement programmes as "tailor-made" solutions (EMN 2016: 49), recent "resettlement conversations have been more about the politics of the resettlement country than about coherent responses to specific refugee situations" (Betts 2017: 75). Furthermore, apart from private sponsorship solutions in some countries, programmes are normally designed at the state level and not at the level of those communities that actually provide local protection. Therefore, the question arises to whom these programmes are actually tailored. Can resettlement tools sustainably address the needs of refugees and hosting municipalities without offering them options to actively engage in shaping the process?

Well-prepared placement is crucial for the success of refugee resettlement (Bokshi 2013: 41). It therefore appears

[1] I would like to thank Petra Bendel, Christiane Heimann, Hannes Schammann and Marcus Engler for their helpful comments and support in writing this paper.

essential that the agency of refugees and host municipalities plays a central role in current national and European discussions. Literature reflects active resettlement debates within the EU on coherence and solidarity (Perrin and McNamara 2013), policy design, effectiveness and evaluation (Beirens and Fratzke 2017), peer learning (Beirens and Ahad 2018) and integration (Garnier 2016). Private sponsorship ranks equally high on the agenda (ERN 2017, 2018), as does the right balance between integration and vulnerability criteria (Beirens and Fratzke 2017) and the difficult relationship between resettlement and migration management (Welfens 2018). However, the role refugees and hosting communities themselves could play in improving sustainable placement options is mostly discussed with regard to privately sponsored resettlement (Fratzke 2017), but is insufficiently addressed in current political debates on the future of EU and state resettlement programmes.

My research therefore focuses on the question of how refugees and hosting municipalities can be empowered to play an active role in shaping sustainable EU resettlement processes. The seemingly inherent contradiction of vulnerability-based resettlement logics and strength-focused empowerment approaches is resolved by making use of Zimmerman's concept of empowering processes (Zimmerman 1995). Furthermore, ethnographic research addressing resettlement processes from the point of view of displaced persons plays a key role for the following analysis (Thomson 2012, 2018). In this paper, the concept of refugee as it has been adopted in the UN Refugee Convention (UNHCR 2010: 14) is applied since the recognition of a refugee status by UNHCR is a central criterion in most resettlement processes to EU member states (Beirens and Fratzke 2017: 17). In considering agency as refugees' "will and rights to make decisions regarding their present and future", research highlighting the importance of refugee agency in resettlement within and beyond the EU context is taken into account (Garnier, Sandvik and Jubilut 2018, VUB 2019, Lewis and

Young 2018, Jones and Teytelboym 2016, Steimel 2016, Borisenko 1991). The term municipality is understood in a broad form, including local authorities, civil society, the private sector as well as the residents of the various municipalities. In order to highlight the benefits of connecting empowerment of refugees and host municipalities, the paper draws on innovative concepts advanced by Gesine Schwan and Malisa Zobel at the Humboldt Viadrina Governance Platform (HVGP 2018, 2017), the project Refugees' Say by the University of Oxford (Refugees' Say 2018) as well as the idea of municipal visas (Heuser 2019). The development of the Municipal Resettlement Programme benefited highly from research carried out by the Universities of Erlangen-Nürnberg and Hildesheim in the framework of the project "When Mayors make Migration Policy" (University Erlangen-Nürnberg 2018) funded by Stiftung Mercator.

In order to develop recommendations relevant for decision-makers and practitioners, research is based on interviews and exchanges with representatives of EU institutions and local authorities, resettlement practitioners, refugees and academic researchers. These insights were complemented by an analysis of academic research and policy documents examining current trends in resettlement policy development.

Based on this data, I argue that a) refugees' aspirations, needs and experiences and b) hosting municipalities' integration potential and offers need to be taken into consideration when designing and implementing resettlement programmes. Consequently, the point is not to claim that refugees or host municipalities should be left alone with the freedom of making decisions nor with the burden this places upon them. Instead, they should play an active role in developing decisions jointly with UNHCR as well as hosting states. More specifically, three phases have been identified in which refugees' and hosting municipalities' participation in resettlement processes could strengthen sustainable placement:

- **Transparency**: Options to seek safety via legal channels differ between EU member states and many new programmes have been developed over the past five years. In this context, transparency is a key requirement for active participation. Refugees eligible for resettlement need to be made aware of different options as early as possible, receive support during interviews and benefit from location-specific pre-departure orientation. At the same time, hosting municipalities need more transparent information about national and EU resettlement programmes. Tailored pre-arrival orientation for members of hosting municipalities could produce a positive impact for subsequent integration and community development.
- **Matching**: Sustainable placement needs to be built on refugees' needs, potentials and preferences as well as hosting municipalities' local integration conditions. In view of the broad regional variety within the nation states, initial matching should not be limited to the national level but take the potential of local structures for refugee empowerment and integration into account. Innovative cooperation between displacement research, economic theory and AI-technology has entailed the development of matching mechanisms with a potential for individual matching between refugees and hosting municipalities.
- **Ownership**: Enabling the local level to play a more active role – be it in state or private resettlement schemes – can increase ownership and democratic legitimacy of resettlement processes while fully respecting national sovereignty. As local authorities work in closer proximity to the population than national governments, transferring parts of decision-making processes to this level can

also contribute to structural refugee empowerment in political and social dimensions.

This paper introduces a concrete proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme based on empowerment, agency and ownership of refugees and hosting municipalities. In an initial section on empowering processes, the theoretical bases of the proposal are outlined. Subsequently, each of the three bottlenecks identified is discussed: limited transparency, exclusionary decision-making and narrow space to develop local ownership. Based on good practice examples and innovative input from a wide range of actors, seven recommendations are developed to increase transparency, match individual potentials and needs with local offers and strengthen the democratic basis of resettlement through local community ownership. These recommendations form the underlying structure of the Municipal Resettlement Programme presented in the final section. The Municipal Resettlement Programme offers an approach to actively engage refugees and communities so as to find answers to the question of "who could thrive where?" instead of restricting refugees' choices to "yes vs. no" and municipalities' input to "how many?"

2. Empowerment means taking part not taking over

"Empowerment" has become a magic word in social sciences, which may take a hundred different meanings and is captured in a multitude of concepts (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995: 570). In the context of this paper, empowerment shall be understood as an approach focusing on competences and strengths of individuals and as "a process by which people gain control over their lives" (ibid.)

Protracted displacement, however, can be considered a situation in which individuals perceive and experience that they have little or no control over events; the same applies to the

official steps of resettlement procedures. This may be illustrated by a detailed analysis of EU member states' resettlement practices as carried out by the European Migration Network in 2016 (EMN 2016). The only instant of refugee agency mentioned in the study is refugees' opportunity to make a negative choice: The procedure offers the option to decline resettlement and maintain the status quo of protracted displacement. In some cases, this negative choice may seem safer than moving to an unknown third country. Bearing these circumstances in mind, the following question arises: Is an instrument such as resettlement, which is inherently focused on participants' vulnerabilities, able at all to integrate strength-centred empowerment approaches?

This seeming paradox can be addressed by drawing on elements of Zimmerman's empowerment theory (Zimmerman 1995, Perkins and Zimmerman 1995). Zimmerman's theoretical approach is of particular relevance due to his interest in empowering processes as well as the importance attributed to perceived and actual participation in decision-making processes. Zimmerman distinguishes between empowering processes and empowered outcomes. "Empowered outcomes are one consequence of empowering processes" (Zimmerman 1995: 585). They are thus effects of the strategies described in the following sections. In our case, empowered outcomes could mainly be observed in the long-term regarding integration and joint community development. This paper will, however, mainly focus on empowering processes in the resettlement mechanism itself.

Zimmerman differentiates empowering processes at the individual and the community level, which makes it possible to specify actions for refugees as well as the hosting municipalities. At the individual level, empowering processes are characterized by a proactive approach to life as well as efforts to understand the socio-political context, access resources and influence

decisions affecting a person's own life (Zimmerman 1995: 581, 583). For refugees in protracted displacement this could mean acquiring secured knowledge about existing resettlement schemes and actors involved, accessing formal ways to advance their resettlement cases and participating in decision-making and placement. At the community level, empowerment processes can include joint decision-making and access to public and other community resources (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995: 570). For hosting communities, including the public, private and civil society sector, this could mean a more active role in the decision to resettle, the preparations for hosting resettled refugees and long-term integration. By becoming part of the hosting community, former refugees can play a particularly interesting role in consultative municipal bodies or civil society organisations.

With this in mind, empowerment should not be understood to mean forsaking refugees and hosting municipalities to their own devices in the decision-making process. Complete freedom of choice and responsibility for decisions made (whether they are implementable according to places offered or not) would be the other extreme of the current situation. Attention should rather be paid to options enabling an active participation of refugees and hosting municipalities and joint decision-making in cooperation with international actors and states to arrive at sustainable solutions. This is in line with Zimmerman's view that empowerment-oriented initiatives should "engage professionals as collaborators instead of authoritative experts" (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995: 570). Professionals can play an important role in the empowerment of target groups when they choose to involve them in developing, implementing and evaluating interventions (Zimmerman 1995: 584).

As regards participation, Zimmerman distinguishes between the perceived and the actual ability to influence decisions affecting a person's own life. He considers that only if individuals perceive that they can play an active role in a process and that their engagement may lead to desired effects, will they try to acquire the necessary knowledge and resources for participation (ibid.: 589). In her ethnographic research, Thomson shows that even in the absence of formal participation opportunities in decision-making, refugees use a wide range of mostly informal resources to strengthen their resettlement case against rejection (Thomson 2018: 205). Since refugees know that they have little or no opportunity to influence the choice of their resettlement destination (either because there is no variety of programmes or no opportunities of participation), they focus on avoiding the worst-case scenario, which is rejection. Resettlement is thus currently a binary question to refugees. Engaging refugees and hosting municipalities in the choice of destination may make the whole resettlement process more sustainable in the long term (Jones and Teytelboym 2018). Zimmerman considers that structures offering individuals active process involvement foster their decision-making, problem solving and leadership skills, thus moving from perceived to actual participation (Zimmerman 1995: 589). In his empowerment concept, this does not mean that participants take control of the whole process: "Actual power or control is not necessary for empowerment because in some contexts and for some populations real control or power may not be the desired goal. Rather, goals such as being more informed, [...], or more involved in decision making may be the desired outcome" (ibid.: 593). This leads us to the following conclusion: Empowerment means taking part not taking over.

Therefore, a discussion seems timely on how resettlement, as an instrument focused on the vulnerability of persons in need, can be rendered more sustainable through the inclusion

of empowering processes for refugees and hosting municipalities. In the following, questions of transparency, individual matching and local ownership of resettlement procedures will be addressed.

3. Rumours rule refugee world – increasing transparency as a pre-condition for participation

In the EU context, resettlement is considered the "transfer of a third country national or stateless person, on request from UNHCR and based on the need for international protection, from a third country to a Member State where they are permitted to reside with refugee status or a similar status" (EMN 2016: 4). In the wake of increasing arrivals in Europe but also in view of the deaths of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean, resettlement ranks high on the agenda of the European Union and many of its member states. Programmes and networks have been strengthened or newly initiated. These include the European Resettlement Network (ERN) and the EU-Action on Facilitating Resettlement and Refugee Admission through New Knowledge (EU-FRANK) (ERN 2007, EU-FRANK 2017).

However, in practice, resettlement remains an ad hoc, diverse and fragmented "compilation of national or multilateral programmes and procedures" (European Parliament 2016: 5). Neither the proposal for a Joint European Resettlement Programme launched by the Commission in 2009 and its adoption in 2012 (European Commission 2009) nor the Commission's proposal for a Union Resettlement Framework (European Commission 2016) have so far led to an EU-wide sustainable resettlement scheme with joint standards and criteria. Instead, EU states have engaged in two short-term resettlement programmes (2015 – 2017 and 2017 - 2019) and have resettled Syrian refugees under the one-for-one agreement of the EU-Turkey

Statement (European Commission 2018a, European Parliament 2019 a and b). At the national level, new policies have been adopted and many EU member states have created or extended the size and scope of resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes (EMN 2016: 5). In 2017, 20 out of 28 EU member states reported about having been engaged in some form of resettlement activity (Eurostat 2019). Even though this increasing engagement for resettlement at both EU and national levels is in principle a very positive development, available places remain insufficient (Engler 2019) and the enormous variety and differences between the programmes clearly limit the transparency as regards resettlement to the EU.

A study carried out by the European Migration Network in 2016 reveals that the main characteristics of national resettlement programmes and schemes vary substantially regarding the application of quotas, selection criteria and procedures, pre-departure orientation, placement, status granted and integration support (EMN 2016). These factors may also vary over time due to their dependency on political interests (Beirens and Fratzke 2017: 16). Furthermore, municipalities rarely ever play active roles before the actual arrival of refugees in hosting communities (SHARE Network 2018c: 2). For refugees and hosting municipalities, this complex system of programmes and schemes is more than difficult to access or even merely to grasp (Jansen 2008: 574). Being referred to just the right programme and at the right time by UNHCR thus becomes crucial for refugees, and this is without taking into account those national programmes that conduct their selection processes completely independently of UNHCR. If we want to take the idea of rethinking resettlement as a participatory strategy seriously, transparency is a necessary precondition for refugees and hosting municipalities to build up realistic expectations and – based on these – voice needs, potentials and offers. Current resettlement schemes cover three areas in which an increase of transparency could lead to the empowerment of refugees and/or

hosting municipalities: knowledge of resettlement programmes, interviews and pre-departure orientation.

3.1 Information on resettlement programmes

The Syrian founder of the refugee Support Group Network in Sweden once said: "Rumours rule refugee world" (research interview). Information is drawn from family and trusted friends (Kuschminder 2018: 2) but is difficult to verify. However, only if refugees are given both the perceived and actual opportunity to access secured knowledge of resettlement procedures, will they be able to contribute to sustainable placement choices. In the current situation, most refugees may have heard of the resettlement programmes to the US, because these have a long-standing tradition and, until recently, offered a big share of the places worldwide. But how many refugees have had the chance to hear about resettlement programmes to Belgium or Lithuania that have been initiated within the last decade (EMN 2016: 19) or even of these countries at all? Drawing on interviews with more than 500 refugees and other migrants moving to Europe to apply for asylum, Katie Kuschminder shows that knowledge about smaller European countries is less common outside Europe. Therefore, many refugees set out with a big destination country in mind and may adjust their choice after arriving on European territory according to their perception of opportunity, stability and security (Kuschminder 2018: 2, 4). It appears likely that this is also the case for refugees awaiting resettlement in protracted displacement situations. However, they do not have the same access to information as asylum seekers arriving in the EU. This can be considered a problem as Kuschminder highlights that refugees do form strong and stable preferences for certain destinations based on information accessible to them (ibid.: 3). Kuschminder challenges the underlying assumption of national and EU relocation programmes considering that asylum seekers can simply be convinced to abandon their preferences and accept other destinations (ibid.: 1). Completely excluding

discussions on refugees' preferences in decision-making process may thus increase the probability of onward movement post-resettlement. If we think through the idea of refugee participation and joint decision-making for more sustainable placement, as it is shown in the proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme, refugees need better information on resettlement programmes whose criteria make them eligible.

Not only refugees but also hosting municipalities could profit from higher transparency in resettlement programmes. Interviews with researchers and German practitioners reveal that, in some instances, local caseworkers were not aware of the resettlement status of refugees, which led to unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles impeding fast integration. [2] Even though most member states have adopted procedures to inform hosting municipalities in advance (EMN 2016: 35), municipalities criticise that they are frequently informed about placements of refugees and asylum seekers at very short notice, often receiving very scarce information about the people who are going to form part of their communities (EMN 2016: 43, SHARE Network 2018c: 2). Nevertheless, there are also a number of good practice examples. At the European level, the SHARE Network was established in 2012. Led by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC Europe), this network serves as a platform connecting local authorities interested or engaged in resettlement, fostering peer-learning and advocating for more and better resettlement (SHARE Network 2016, 2018a and b). At the national level, the Swedish project SMAK (Strengthening the reception of Resettled Refugees) was launched in 2013 to enhance communication between the national and the local level. The programme contributed to clarifying roles and

[2] The interviews referred to were conducted within the framework of the research project "When Mayors make Migration Policy" of the Universities of Erlangen-Nürnberg and Hildesheim.

responsibilities and fostered improved planning of resettlement procedures (EMN 2016: 44-45).

3.2 Interviews

A rare occasion of refugee agency in the resettlement process is represented by interviews conducted by UNHCR officials, staff of seconding NGOs and national representatives. Refugees have the opportunity to present their cases and tell their stories. However, these interview situations sometimes lack transparency. Garnier, Sandvik and Jubilut criticise the absence of (independent) counsel or sometimes even qualified interpreters during the interviews and the legalistic language used in the resettlement forms (2018: 13). Nevertheless, "[r]efugees act in refusal to wait idly as someone else determines their futures" (Thomson 2018: 205-206). Having limited access to formal supporting resources during the interview phase, some refugees turn to informal options such as telling their stories as convincingly as possible, reporting abuses, lying or paying bribes in the full knowledge that there are no guarantees of success (ibid.: 205-206, 217). Thomson describes these actions as strategies of defence not attack (ibid.: 205-206). She shows that Congolese refugees interviewed do not consider any of these activities particularly immoral; instead, they have accepted them as necessary elements of the resettlement process (ibid.: 215). Opening up formal participation options to refugees may not only make the resettlement process more transparent and sustainable in the long-term, but also protect vulnerable individuals from negative consequences of informal activities.

Representatives of hosting municipalities are not included at all in national selection procedures in the majority of European resettlement programmes. Finland is a noteworthy exception, demonstrating the possibility of an inclusive decision-making process: Interviews are jointly conducted by officials of the Finnish Immigration Office and integration

experts from municipalities and administrative districts (UNHCR 2018a: 5).

3.3 Pre-departure orientation

After the interview phase, it is difficult for refugees to pursue the processing of their case (Garnier, Sandvik and Jubilut 2018: 13). Having accepted a case for resettlement, member states inform UNHCR which, in its turn, notifies the respective refugee. For the most part no formal agreement is signed between hosting states and refugees (EMN 2016: 27) and the latter are provided with information about the hosting country only after the decision-making process has been concluded. Germany and Lithuania report cases in which refugees selected for resettlement rejected the offers at this late stage based on information received during pre-departure orientation (ibid.: 42). This could have been avoided if information had been provided prior to the final decision.

In general, pre-departure orientation is an essential instrument of information and expectation management, which can support refugees in taking pro-active decisions and preparing for their future integration. Research reveals that the better informed refugees and hosting communities are about each other's expectations, the greater is the ability of refugees to maintain their sense of agency post-arrival (Espinoza 2018). Pre-departure orientation offered by EU member states to refugees takes between two hours and one week (Beirens and Fratzke 2017: 23). Even though this seems very short, it is in the interest of refugees that resettlement processes should not be unnecessarily prolonged. It is therefore even more important for pre-departure orientation to be highly transparent and tailored to refugees' information needs as much as possible (Borisenko 1991: 110). Good practice includes cultural orientation based on peer-support: by way of Skype sessions, former refugees living in the Netherlands now contribute to preparing their fellow

countrymen for arrival (EMN 2016: 42). Including refugee voices in the evaluation of information services is equally important. In the framework of the transnational MOST Project (Modelling of Orientation, Services and Training related to the Resettlement and Reception of Refugees), Sweden focused on ways to enhance refugee agency in resettlement by consulting refugee communities on pre-departure, post-arrival and integration tools (ERN 2008: 20-21). Sweden provides, furthermore, an example of good practice regarding the inclusion of municipal representatives in cultural orientation programmes (UNHCR 2018b: 6-7). In this context, the SHARE Network highlights that "pre-departure CO [cultural orientation] should be tailored to the receiving location" (SHARE Network 2018a: 3). Localizing pre-departure orientation requires, however, that intra-national placement decisions be taken at an early stage. This would presuppose the inclusion of local representatives in initial decision-making procedures.

While most EU member states organize some form of pre-departure orientation for refugees, tailored pre-arrival orientation for hosting communities is less common. The 2016 study of the European Migration Network lists different national strategies to inform citizens and local authorities ranging from information provided via websites and in written form to meetings and information sessions. The study does not evaluate these strategies or indicate whether information provided is general or specific to the respective arrivals (EMN 2016: 35). The latter would, however, be crucial when it comes to managing local expectations and providing information on the potentials and needs of resettled refugees (Borisenko 1991: 110) as well as conditions in the countries of origin. A positive example in this regard is offered by Norway. The Norwegian Cultural Orientation Programme NORCO delivered by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides not only pre-departure orientation for refugees but also offers Country

Information Seminars and Country Profiles to inform Norwegian municipalities about arriving refugees and their situation (EMN 2016: 28).

Transparency and reliable information are thus necessary requirements for refugees' and municipalities' participation in decision-making processes. The brief overview shows that challenges still persist but good practice examples are equally available to be built on. However, an important question remains unanswered so far: How can we bridge the gap between a scenario in which refugees and municipalities possess the informational resources to participate and a situation in which participation can actually be operationalized?

4. 1+1=? – Matching local offers with individual needs and potentials

> "Placement that is sensitive to the needs and potential of refugees, as well as those of host communities, can influence future pathways to integration" (SHARE Network 2018c: 1).

In sharp contrast with this conclusion of the SHARE Network, the interests of refugees and hosting municipalities carry only little weight in most of the current two-stage resettlement programmes: During the first stage, refugees are identified by UNHCR and seconding NGOs as eligible candidates and subsequently selected by member states according to national criteria. In a second step, a growing number of EU member states apply intra-national dispersal systems to distribute resettled refugees and relocated asylum seekers across the national territory. Thinking about alternatives to this two-step approach dominated by hosting states' criteria could be interesting for two reasons.

First of all, long-term integration takes place at the local level and many local authorities have elaborated in-depth knowledge on local integration potentials and challenges

(Penninx et al. 2014: 26-27). The fact that national preferences and criteria determine the first matching phase means, however, that interests of local authorities, which do not correspond to the national level, are not taken into account. Focusing merely on national preferences insinuates that uniform criteria are applicable nationwide. However, most EU member states are characterized by a broad intra-national diversity of socio-economic conditions, health infrastructure, availability of housing as well as local integration experience, hence the need for a second stage matching. Refugees matching perfectly with local conditions and offers might, however, already have been rejected during the first stage. In addition, the debate on intra-national dispersal mainly centres on proportionality, focusing on how many persons a certain hosting municipality can receive instead of asking: what kind of person would thrive in this specific community? (Jones and Teytelboym 2018: 153). This can have serious consequences as research proves that initial placement has a lasting impact on refugees' capacities to achieve self-reliance and contribute to community development. Furthermore, misplacement can be a factor in the generation of xenophobic backlash and restrictionist populism in host countries (ibid.: 156). Initial matching should, therefore, not be limited to the national level but equally take local criteria and offers into account.

Secondly, refugees' interests and preferences should play an equally important role in the matching process. As EU member states have learned from the evaluation of the relocation scheme 2015 – 2017, asylum seekers "were not always willing to participate in a scheme that offered them little say over their final destination" (Kuschminder 2018: 1). Some would drop out of the relocation programme or continue their journey irregularly after relocation (ibid.). In 2016, Will Jones and Alexander Teytelboym proposed a refugee matching system based on preferences of refugees and hosting states. Pragmatically acknowledging that "states will contribute towards efforts

to protect refugees when they recognise a relationship between the rights of refugees and their own interests", they advocated for a "system which participants on both sides will want to participate in, which will best satisfy their preferences and desires, and which will do so in a manner that is equitable and transparent" (Jones and Teytelboym 2016: 80, 82). This proposal should be supported and taken one step further by discussing options to directly match refugees and hosting municipalities in a transnational context.

Having said this, an approach that does not match states and resettlement cases but municipalities' integration offers and refugees' needs and potentials would obviously multiply the number of cases to be matched. Cooperation between displacement research, economic theory and AI-technology has brought about innovative tools with the potential of individually matching a great number of refugees and hosting municipalities. An algorithm-based matching tool has already been applied by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in the late phase of the 2015 – 2017 intra-EU relocation programme. The aim of this matching process was to facilitate the integration of asylum seekers and to reduce onward movements, thus addressing the interests of both applicants and member states. EASO underlines that the matching tool increased the transparency of the process and could thus enhance the trust of member states (EASO 2019). While IOM does, in general, support the application of a matching tool, the organisation criticises the late introduction of the tool in the EU relocation scheme and the complexity of the process due to diverse national preferences (IOM 2018: 4).

Various research institutions have also engaged in the development of AI-based matching tools to connect refugees and hosting communities. Of particular interest is a data-driven algorithm developed by the Immigration Policy Lab (IPL) at Stanford University and ETH Zurich, in conjunction with

Dartmouth College (Bansak et al. 2018); as well as the AI-powered software Annie MOORE developed by the University of Oxford in the UK, the University of Lund in Sweden and the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Trapp et al. 2018, Jones and Teytelboym 2018). Annie MOORE is part of the project Refugees' Say introduced at the University of Oxford. The project makes use of machine learning, integer optimization, and matching theory to operationalize the assumption that "refugee resettlement works best when we take into account the outcomes and preferences of refugees as well as the priorities and capacities of communities that host them" (Refugees' Say 2018). Both concepts focus on post-arrival placement. However, their systematic approach to connect synergies between municipalities' local conditions and refugees' individual potentials and needs may also be applicable in a transnational context. Alexander Teytelboym from Oxford's Department of Economics highlights that technological solutions allow resettlement staff to keep control of the process by providing recommendations instead of decisions and enabling professionals to focus especially on particularly vulnerable persons. While Annie MOORE currently evaluates successful matching based on labour market integration, researchers recognize that successful integration has a different meaning to different individuals. The next challenge for Oxford's and Lund's AI-powered software is therefore taking refugees' own preferences into account (University of Oxford 2018).

5. Moving from defensive reaction to proactive engagement – strengthening local ownership

Transparent resettlement processes and direct matching tools might thus contribute to empowering refugees and hosting municipalities by providing them with a better understanding of the socio-political context, specific informational resources and

ways to introduce their potentials and needs into decision-making processes.

However, many European hosting communities strive to go beyond consultation, highlighting that "[c]ities, towns, civil society actors, universities, local citizens and volunteers are the heart of resettlement and private sponsorship. By receiving and welcoming refugees, local communities make solidarity a living reality, at a time where politicians are increasingly calling for borders to be closed" (SHARE Network 2018a: 2). Along these lines, municipalities organized in the European network EUROCITIES are demanding active participation in the planning and design of EU resettlement processes. In 2015, they published a political statement on asylum in cities addressed to the European Commission, UNHCR and EU member states:

> "City authorities should be directly consulted by the European Commission and the UNHCR as frontline operators and places where resettled refugees will need to integrate. City authorities should also be involved in decision making regarding resettlement quotas, financial assistance, integration models and resources. No resettlement scheme can be successful if a reception place is not available at local level, if local civil society organisations are not involved and if awareness raising and consensus building amongst the local population are not properly managed" (EUROCITIES 2015: 3).

The growing interest in privately sponsored resettlement schemes by the European Commission (2018b) and EU member states (ERN 2017) shows that these actors recognize the potential of local communities. While the proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme is not a process of privately sponsored resettlement, it nevertheless includes some advantages of such schemes: Enabling the local level to play a more active role can increase democratic legitimacy of resettlement processes while fully respecting national sovereignty. Sections three and four have already made the case for the inclusion of municipal

representatives in cultural orientation and matching procedures. This fifth section is dedicated to strengthening ownership of hosting municipalities, including local authorities, civil society actors, the private sector and (former) refugees and migrants, in processes taking place in host countries before and after the arrival of refugees.

Private sponsorship schemes show that active local agency for resettlement can create a local sense of ownership and increase public support for refugee protection not only by establishing close ties between resettled refugees and private sponsors but also through information provided to the wider community (ERN 2017: 15). Local agency can thus "help to narrow the cognitive gap between refugees and host communities" (Kumin 2015: 19) and enable communities to move "from defensive reaction to proactive engagement" (Long 2015).

Moreover, as local authorities work in closer proximity to the population than national governments, transferring parts of decision-making processes to this level could contribute to refugee empowerment in a structural way. (Former) refugees possess valuable information and first-hand experience regarding the fit between tools for resettlement and integration on the one hand, and refugees' needs and potentials on the other hand (Lewis and Young 2018: 183-184, Engler 2018, Borisenko 1991: 109). Municipalities should tap into these resources, as is also recommended by the new Global Compact on Refugees (United Nations 2018: 8). This could, for instance, take the form of political refugee agency through consultative municipal resettlement and integration bodies. Additionally, planning and implementation of support programmes for newcomers can be rendered more effective through an active participation of (former) refugees and migrants. Peer support by (former) refugees from the same ethnic or national group was generally identified as a good practice by EU member states (EMN 2016: 9).

The testimony of an Eritrean refugee, now a resettlement ambassador of the SHARE Network in Antwerp, illustrates this point:

> "Cities such as Antwerp play a really important role in welcoming and supporting newcomers, and those of us who were once newcomers are a crucial part of that. For example, I now work for ATLAS, the central integration agency in Antwerp, where I teach the mandatory 2-month integration course that is provided for all refugees and migrants who are new to the city. [...] Newcomers also trust me, because I am one of them and I'm speaking from experience. I can therefore help to quickly dispel myths about - for example jobs being provided immediately, free accommodation being available, or whatever they've heard through the grapevine. If I say it they believe me: I help them understand that they themselves are the biggest resource they have, [...]. At the same time, I can help my Belgian colleagues to manage their expectations about their clients' integration progress" (SHARE Network 2018a: 11).

Considering the empowerment potential of increased transparency, individual to local level matching and local ownership of resettlement processes leads to the following focal recommendations that will be operationalized in the final part.

6. Recommendations in a nutshell

6.1 Transparency

- UNHCR and national authorities should increase their efforts to provide transparent information to refugees on resettlement programmes under whose criteria they would be eligible. If refugees can define realistic expectations, they have a better base for voicing their preferences, needs and potentials in matching procedures.
- Refugees should have secured access to counselling and interpretation services during all resettlement interviews.

- Pre-departure and post-arrival orientation should be tailored to refugees' information needs as much as possible, should involve support provided by former refugees and members of hosting communities and should include refugees' voices in regular evaluations. Localizing cultural orientation can enhance synergies between pre-departure and post-arrival orientation.
- Member states should offer funding to UNHCR, IOM or seconding NGOs to provide tailored pre-arrival information and training for hosting municipalities.

6.2 Matching

- Researchers and practitioners working on AI-based matching mechanisms could think beyond national placement contexts. These mechanisms have the potential to contribute to sustainable integration outcomes in transnational resettlement processes by matching local integration offers with refugees' individual potentials, preferences and needs.

6.3 Local Ownership

- In order to strengthen local ownership and democratic legitimisation of refugee resettlement, EU institutions and member states should actively include local actors (local authorities, civil society, etc.) in the further development of resettlement programmes and evaluation.
- Municipalities should open up participation options to (former) refugees and migrants to jointly shape engagement for resettlement and integration. Structural empowerment could take the form of consultative municipal resettlement and integration bodies as well as peer-learning approaches in the design and implementation of reception and integration strategies.

7. Taking the local turn – a proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme

The proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme was developed building on EUROCITIES' call to include municipalities in resettlement policies and planning (EUROCITIES 2015). The mechanism offers refugees and municipalities an opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process. Moving from the national to the local level means that refugees do not build up preferences for certain destination countries based on a general impression, which may vary profoundly on the local level. Instead, refugees can make active choices regarding the communities they will live in based on up-to-date information. Municipalities, on the other hand, do not receive refugees at short notice, but can actively shape the reception process and prepare for integration.

The concept is inspired by a wide range of ideas forming current debates in politics, civil society and academia. In 2017, the Humboldt Viadrina Governance Platform (HVGP) and its President, Gesine Schwan, called for a more powerful role of municipalities in the reception and integration of asylum seekers (HVGP 2017). Building on the Manifesto "Relaunching Europe bottom-up" (ibid.), the HVGP developed ideas for a proactive engagement of municipalities and refugees in refugee reception and relocation (HVGP 2018). Another innovative proposal can be found in the research on "cities of refuge" by Helene Heuser, who discusses the possibility of municipal visas to strengthen municipal agency in EU migration policies (Heuser 2019). A third inspiration for the Municipal Resettlement Programme is the earlier mentioned research and design of a concrete matching system by Jones and Teytelboym, taking interests and preferences of both hosting communities and refugees into account (Jones and Teytelboym 2018). Finally, discussions and policy papers published by the Universities of Erlangen-Nürnberg and Hildesheim in the framework of our

research on opportunities for municipal engagement in EU migration governance have contributed to shaping the following proposal (Bendel, Schammann, Heimann and Stürner 2019, Stürner and Bendel 2019, Heimann, Müller, Schammann and Stürner 2019).

The project team's previous recommendations as well as the approach of the HVGP are limited to the relocation of asylum seekers. The core suggestions of these publications are taken up to address resettlement of refugees identified by UNHCR. In contrast to the intra-national matching model designed by Jones and Teytelboym, the focus is on transnational matching, which is embedded in a wider context of opportunities to enhance social capital and strenghten refugees' options to participate in future local resettlement and reception engagement after arrival.

Three elements should be considered essential basics for a Municipal Resettlement Programme: coherence, funding and additionality. The Programme should form part of the future Union Resettlement Framework[3]. It should be financed through a special contingent within the Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF), thus offering municipalities direct access to EU funding; furthermore, it should present a resettlement option separate from national quotas and complementing these. Resettlement criteria used during the matching phase should be discussed between a wide range of actors including UNHCR, EASO, the SHARE Network, refugee organisations and EU member states.

[3] While underlining the need for coherence, it is also important to highlight that the current proposal for resettlement criteria under the Union Resettlement Framework surely needs to be discussed further, as it contains problematic elements, such as linking resettlement with migration management.

Step 1: Municipal Resettlement Profiles

In order to ensure local ownership, a whole-of-community dialogue on the options of municipal resettlement should form the basis of this process in every potential hosting municipality. If municipalities are interested, local authorities discuss their interest in voluntary participation in the Municipal Resettlement Programme with their respective national governments and other levels of government, which may have decision-making competencies in relevant areas such as learning languages or education. These consultations should take the form of open two-way dialogues throughout the entire resettlement process. In cooperation with civil society, in particular refugee and migrant organisations, and private sector partners, local authorities subsequently develop resettlement profiles. These profiles are then sent to the coordinating supranational agency for approval. Depending on further EU negotiations on resettlement and asylum policies, this may be EASO in cooperation with UNHCR. Municipal resettlement profiles should consist of the following three elements, which have to be updated on a regular basis:

- A detailed description of the local integration potentials and challenges, a mapping of relevant actors, capacities to welcome persons with particular vulnerabilities, the socio-economic context, the housing market, diaspora communities, etc.;
- A number of places available for resettlement within a certain time-frame;
- Small local support groups for each resettled refugee (family), including actors from the public, private and civil society sectors, to offer integration support and provide social capital. Many communities have already developed vast experience with buddy, peer and mentor programmes for integration and can thus build on

lessons learned. Support groups should have a competent contact point within the local authority. They should benefit from special pre-arrival training and have the opportunity to participate in continued training touching on topics such as intercultural awareness, local access to the labour market and educational system, conflict management, etc.

In contrast to privately sponsored resettlement concepts, there would be no financial commitment by private actors. The proposal recommends that the European Union should provide funding to hosting municipalities similar to the per capita sums that are currently transferred to member states receiving resettled refugees under Union schemes. Additional funds should be made available for municipal participation in pre-arrival orientation of refugees and hosting municipalities and support group trainings.

Step 2: Refugee Resettlement Profiles

As in the current system, UNHCR and seconding NGOs conduct initial assessments of the refugee population in third countries. Upon completion of the process, they inform refugees eligible for resettlement under the future Union Resettlement Framework of the existence and functioning of the Municipal Resettlement Programme. Taking refugee agency seriously presupposes that registration is voluntary. Being registered for municipal resettlement does not reduce a refugee's chances to be resettled under national actions within the Union Resettlement Framework. To ensure municipalities' and refugees' participation and trust in the mechanism, a high level of transparency is indispensable regarding procedures and processing of data. Furthermore, clear and realistic information should be provided on refugees' scope of action to declare potentials, needs and preferences and participate in decision-making. Once refugees have expressed interest in participating in the Municipal Resettlement Programme, they meet with a member of UNHCR

or a seconding NGO to complete their resettlement profile. Coordinating agencies of the scheme (UNHCR, IOM and EASO) should ensure that refugees have access to consultation and adequate translation during each meeting and that information is provided in an accurate yet simple form. Refugees can state needs and potentials such as specific vulnerabilities, family and diaspora ties, education, professional skills, language skills, etc. Furthermore, refugees can express wishes and preferences, e.g. regarding settlement in rural or urban areas, the existence of certain educational institutions or health care infrastructure, etc.

Step 3: Matching local offers with individual potentials and needs

Both the resettlement profiles of municipalities and of refugees are registered in an online database. To avoid any form of cherry-picking, an initial matching is conducted based on an algorithm managed by EASO in cooperation with UNHCR, which focuses on refugees' needs and potentials and the capacities and services offered by the municipalities. An in-depth discussion of strengths, challenges and potentials of AI-based matching is provided by the Refugees' Say project (Refugees' Say 2018, Jones and Teytelboym 2018). Subsequently, refugees receive a shortlist of municipalities, which they can rank according to their preferences. In this step, support from UNHCR, IOM or EASO is crucial to support refugees in their decision-making. According to refugees' expressed preferences and available reception places, a second matching is carried out connecting a refugee and a municipality. Within this system, not every refugee will be assigned to the location that has been his or her top choice. However, every refugee will be allocated to a municipality offering a higher probability that his/her needs are addressed and potentials can unfold (Jones and Teytelboym 2018: 170).

Information on the matching outcome is counter-checked by UNHCR and transferred to the national and municipal level. At the municipal level, the proposal is checked in anonymized form by a committee of representatives from local authorities and civil society similar to the hardship commissions on the level of the German Länder (Ministry of Interior, Digitalization and Migration Baden-Wurttemberg 2018). Another option would be multi-stakeholder advisory councils, which has been proposed by the HVGP (2018: 7). In any case, community members cannot pick and choose profiles freely, but are rather tasked with cross-checking that local hosting conditions have not changed inherently, i.e. that for example a special service for handicapped children is still operating to welcome young refugees with particular needs. This process strengthens local ownership and democratic legitimacy of the resettlement process and ensures that changes in local integration conditions can be taken into account. Based on the assumption that member states will continue to conduct their own pre-resettlement interviews under the Union Resettlement Framework, refugees are subsequently interviewed by national representatives as well as EASO. Ideally, municipal representatives would join the interview on-site or online. During the interview phase, EASO ensures that vulnerability criteria have been adequately taken into account according to the relevant EU legislation (European Union 2013, Article 21 and 22). A preferable alternative to reduce complexity would be to forego the interview part and instead ensure that the national level maintains a veto right based on grounds of national security.

Step 4: Engaging social capital for sustainable integration

After matching decisions have been confirmed by the local and national levels and the refugees themselves, participants of the Municipal Resettlement Programme receive tailored pre-departure and post-arrival orientation organized by IOM or a seconding NGO in cooperation with representatives of local

authorities and members of the support groups. This cooperation can take the form of information material, online exchanges or even the actual presence during the pre-departure training and certainly during the post-arrival training. Including (former) refugees and migrants living in the hosting municipality in pre-departure as well as post-arrival orientation is strongly recommended. Simultaneously, IOM and host country NGOs offer tailored pre-arrival orientation for hosting municipalities and, in particular, the support groups, including information on the countries of origin and the current situation of arriving refugees.

Participating refugees receive the same status as refugees resettled under the national actions of the future Union Resettlement Framework. Upon arrival in the hosting municipalities, refugees are welcomed by their support groups. Benefiting from enhanced social capital, individual refugees or families work together with their support groups to recover from traumatic experiences and shape their personal integration pathways as members of the local community.

8. Conclusion

Empowering refugees and hosting municipalities to play an active part in resettlement programmes offers the potential to increase sustainability of placement and integration. Lewis and Young argue that when academia, political decision-makers and humanitarian actors "clearly hear and respect refugees' voices, we can begin to co-create responses to refugees' needs in collaboration with the refugees who, themselves, hold valuable everyday forms of wisdom" (Lewis and Young 2018: 183). The concept of a Municipal Resettlement Programme presents one possible option for such co-creation in resettlement. The paper opened with the question: resettlement tailored to whom? The issue seems essential since the success of sustainable resettlement is currently restricted by the absence of the leading

characters in decision-making processes, namely the refugees and hosting municipalities. However, is vulnerability-centred resettlement able at all to integrate strength-centred empowerment approaches? Zimmerman's concept of empowering processes shows the benefits of establishing perceived and actual options of joint decision-making. Partnerships between refugees, hosting municipalities and 'resettlement professionals' take centre stage once we realise that empowerment does not signify a takeover of processes by one actor but calls for shaping programmes in cooperation. Currently, three bottlenecks remain for rethinking resettlement as a participatory strategy – limited transparency, exclusionary decision-making and narrow spaces to develop local ownership. However, good practice examples in different European countries demonstrate that municipalities, refugees, states and international organisations can cooperate in order to increase transparency, match individual potentials and needs with local offers and strengthen the democratic basis of resettlement through local community ownership. These good practices served as the basis for seven recommendations operationalized within the structure of a Municipal Resettlement Programme. Resettlement is currently exploring new directions, involving an ever-growing set of different actors (Welfens 2018). The proposal of a Municipal Resettlement Programme presents a new input to the current debate, which should continue to focus on questions such as: How can municipalities willing to host refugees engage reluctant national governments? What if, despite social capital and good integration options, refugees wish to continue their journey? Whatever the answers to these questions may look like, they should ensure that democratic legitimisation based on local community ownership and active refugee agency is at the core of any sustainable resettlement process.

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A refugee tent does not come with canaries included

Janina Stürner and Petra Bendel

Abstract

Protracted displacement is increasingly becoming the rule rather than the exception worldwide. This poses a challenge to humanitarian and development actors in so far as camp solutions are perceived as inadequate for long-term displacement and the adaptation of traditional support strategies for refugees to urban settings proves difficult. Nevertheless, there are interesting approaches to addressing the growing protracted urban displacement, such as the Jordan Compact and Sustainable Development Zones aiming at "turning the refugee crisis into a development opportunity". In this research paper we therefore pose the following questions: (How) can lost agency in displacement be turned into a gain of ownership for inclusive social and economic development? What role can new cooperation models between refugees, migrants, local populations, governments, UN actors and the private sector play? By drawing on focal challenges in bridging the humanitarian-development gap, we summarise lessons learned with a particular focus on creating enabling environments de facto and de jure, building on bottom-up ownership of displaced persons, local authorities and the private sector and strengthening context-specific analysis. Moving beyond traditional humanitarian and development approaches, our contribution critically examines the potentials and risks of adapting special zones concepts to displacement contexts.

1. Introduction

Known as the "Mayor of Za'atari", former UNHCR official Kilian Kleinschmidt once stated that it was the appearance of canary birdcages in the tents of Syrian refugees in Za'atari, Jordan's biggest refugee camp, which was the starkest expression to the realization of the inhabitants that their situation would not change in the near future. According to UNHCR, 13.4 million refugees, representing some two-thirds of all refugees worldwide, were in protracted refugee situations at the end of 2017. Of these, three million people were in a situation lasting 38 years or longer (UNHCR 2018: 22). Logistically, camps provide practical 'solutions' for host countries. However, they also present a major challenge when it comes to overcoming the humanitarian-development divide as they maintain situations of transit. In camps, former entrepreneurs, students, skilled and unskilled workers typically have only limited agency and opportunities to secure a livelihood within the given legal limitations. Even though UN member states highlighted in the 2016 New York Declaration that refugee camps should be the exception and assistance should be adapted to relevant contexts, this aim is still far from being the reality in many countries (United Nations 2016, paragraph 73). Nevertheless, there are approaches to addressing the issue such as the Jordan Compact aiming at "turning the refugee crisis into a development opportunity" (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 2). In this research paper we therefore ask: (How) can lost agency in displacement be turned into a gain of ownership for inclusive social and economic development? What role can new cooperation models assume between refugees, migrants, local populations, governments, UN actors and the private sector? Can displacement be transformed into entrepreneurship, urban infrastructure, and new investment in order to empower displaced and host populations alike? Our paper illustrates focal challenges and lessons learned from self-reliance programming. Furthermore, it reviews different concepts for special zones and urban

approaches in displacement contexts. Subsequently, the paper introduces the new concept of "Sustainable Development Zones (SDZs)", developed by Kilian Kleinschmidt, Dr. Joachim Rücker and Michael Castle Miller (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018). The concluding critical reflection of the SDZs concept is inspired by comprehensive discussions arising during an expert workshop organised by the Centre for Area Studies at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in April 2019[4].

2. Protracted displacement, camps and urban marginalisation

Following the reporting of news agencies, situations of displacement may seem to be temporary emergencies: Media reports usually cover the crisis, the flight and the first couple of months of displacement. However, in reality the majority of refugee crises become protracted situations (five years or longer) and refugees[5] spend an average of 26 years abroad (Easton-Calabria and Omata 2018: 1458, Barbelet and Wake 2017a: 23, Betts et al. 2014: 4). "[B]etween 1978 and 2014 less than one in 40 refugee crises were resolved within three years, and more than 80 percent were unresolved after ten years or more" (Jacobsen and Fratzke 2016: 3). Refugee camps, for all intents and purposes set up as temporary spaces to provide emergency assistance

[4] We would like to thank all workshop participants, but in particular, Dr. Joachim Rücker and Kilian Kleinschmidt for the open and inspiring discussions.

[5] The UN Refugee Convention defines a refugee as any person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (UNHCR 2010: 14). However, the concept of displaced persons we apply in this article goes beyond persons recognised as refugees and also includes unrecognised refugees, stateless persons, IDPs and forced migrants.

actually have an average 'lifespan' of 20 years (Kerber and Poncette 2015: 64).

2.1 Humanitarian aid falls short

The international community as well as academic research have long pointed out that humanitarian aid can only provide a short-term solution for displacement. Nevertheless, relief interventions remain crucial strategies in addressing displacement situations in the medium to long term (Barbelet and Wake 2017a, Angenendt, Koch and Meier 2016, Harild 2016, Zetter 2014, Harell-Bond 1986). This is problematic for two main reasons: limited resources of humanitarian actors and limited middle- to long-term effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

Firstly, even if humanitarian aid were an effective long-term approach, there is simply not enough funding to sustain people in all protracted displacement situations worldwide (Harild 2016: 4). The longer a protracted situation is stretched out, the less funding is provided by international donors who typically shift their attention to newly emerging crises (Easton-Calabria and Omata 2018: 1461). Furthermore, humanitarian funding cycles tend to be short term since they are mostly based on donor funding periods of one year or less. Such short-term funding restricts those efforts of humanitarian actors, which aim to implement innovative development approaches beyond care and maintenance. Even though these have a higher potential of sustainability, results would only show after several years (Grafham, Lahn and Lehne 2016: 47).

This takes us directly to the second issue: Humanitarian assistance is simply not an effective solution for displacement situations in the medium to long term (Kleinschmidt 2018: 39). In 2014, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees recognised:

> "We have created and we maintain a regime, an industry, a culture, of dependency through which humanitarian relief becomes long-term assistance. We know that we do not move quickly enough from relief to development and reconstruction, and that we do not have adequate strategies to foster self-reliance among displaced populations. This needs to change" (Aleinikoff 2014: 10).

Self-reliance is defined by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as "the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner" (UNHCR 2006: 1). For many years, humanitarian and development actors have actively been working towards closing the humanitarian-development gap and promoting refugees' self-reliance and ownership. This has been highlighted in the UNHCR Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018, the UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps, the New York Declaration and recently in the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR 2014a, 2014b, United Nations 2016, United Nations 2018). Nevertheless, a research review realised by the Humanitarian Policy Group shows that the majority of self-reliance and livelihood support programmes analysed remain "small-scale interventions undertaken by humanitarian agencies or dual-mandated agencies working with uncertain and short time horizon humanitarian funding" (Crawford et al. 2015: 28). For a critical discussion of self-reliance programming, we refer to work developed by Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) as well as Krause and Schmidt (2018).

2.2 Barriers to self-reliance persist

Academic literature and policy evaluations document a wide range of challenges for humanitarian and development actors striving to move from care and maintenance to self-reliance strategies (Mallett et al. 2018, Barbelet and Wake 2017a, Beyanie,

Baal Krynsky and Caterina 2016, Jacobsen and Fratzke 2016, Okello 2016, Crawford et al. 2015, Betts et al. 2014). In the following, we will focus on four central obstacles:

- Political preferences of host countries for temporary situations
- Limited effectiveness of livelihood programming in the absence of the right to work
- The struggle of international actors to adapt to displacement situations in a context of increasing urbanisation
- Limited cooperation between international and local actors

National preferences for temporary solutions

Many host countries display clear preferences for humanitarian short-term solutions such as camp settings. This results in keeping displaced persons in transit even after it has turned out that a situation has become protracted and will not be resolved in the near future (Zetter and Ruaudel 2016: xi). A majority of host states also restricts refugees' rights to freedom of movement, work or temporary residency. Furthermore, displacement issues are rarely integrated in national development plans (Harild 2016: 5). If policy changes occur, their implementation is often weak (Crawford et al. 2015: 24). Governmental reasons for rejecting self-reliance and local integration are manifold and context-dependent. Many host countries explain that their preferences for the controlled environment of camps are motivated by both security and economic concerns. Particularly emerging economies and economies with weak labour markets tend to restrict displaced persons' access to the formal sector (Zetter and Ruaudel 2016: viii). However, research conducted by the Humanitarian Policy Group reveals that even when host governments are confronted with displaced persons' potential to contribute to economic and social development, only few

countries actually decide to adjust their restrictive policies (Crawford et al. 2015: 24). Political motivation may therefore be another crucial factor, especially in cases where political decision-makers comply with the demands of public opposition to more liberal refugee policies in order to secure public support (Harild 2016: 5).

Self-reliance without the right to work?!

The Geneva Refugee Convention guarantees refugees relatively strong rights to work, business creation and property (Aleinikoff 2015: 4). Yet, most host countries fail to implement these commitments (Castle Miller 2018: 304). This poses a major challenge to humanitarian and development actors as well as to refugee organisations focusing on self-reliance, training and entrepreneurship. The Ugandan example shows that self-reliance strategies had very limited effects before the option to work and move between camps and urban areas was granted in the 2006 national Refugee Act (Easton-Calabria 2016a: 11, Krause 2013). However, even if legal restrictions of the right to work are loosened, displaced persons often continue to face numerous obstacles on their way into the formal sector. These include high fees for working permits, restrictions for certain professions, limited options to start a business due to difficulties to secure land and financial capital, lack of social capital, limited knowledge about rights to work both on the side of displaced persons and employers as well as discrimination (Zetter and Ruaudel 2016: x, Zetter and Ruaudel 2018: 6, Castle Miller 2018: 307). Regardless of the prevailing legislative and practical hurdles to access the formal sector, most displaced persons in camp and non-camp settings provide or supplement their livelihoods through work, often in the informal sector. Especially displaced persons living in urban areas can often not access humanitarian or development support. Work income is therefore vital for them to make a living (Zetter and Ruaudel 2016: 25).

New challenges in a context of urbanisation

The Syrian emergency illustrates the rising challenge urbanisation poses to humanitarian actors – even though some 80% of refugees in Jordan live in urban contexts, international non-governmental organisations set up their operations primarily in refugee camps and had to work "within strict policy constraints on livelihoods programming" (Barbelet and Wake 2017b: 12, Betts and Collier 2015, Voon 2014). Globally, around half of the refugee population lived and pursued their livelihoods outside of camps in 2016 (Easton-Calabria 2016a: 1). This increasing urbanisation in displacement situations can mainly be observed in middle-income countries in the Middle East and in the Americas. Even though urbanisation of refugee populations is still less common in South Asia and most of Africa, projections suggest that similar trends will develop on these continents (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017: 33). Taking these developments into account, UNHCR adopted a new "policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas" in 2009, thus reforming its former position from 1997 (Crisp 2017, UNHCR 2009). Nevertheless, humanitarian actors are still facing many challenges when it comes to adapting their strategies to non-camp settings (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017: 33, Barbelet and Wake 2017a: 2). An evaluation of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations' (ECHO) response to the Syrian crisis shows how difficult it is to profile needs in urban contexts and to distinguish between displaced populations and the urban poor. The evaluation furthermore highlights the importance of cooperative approaches (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017: 38).

Limited recognition of local expertise

Unfortunately, livelihood programming often faces limitations regarding comprehensive multi-stakeholder cooperation, which

would include the perspectives of displaced and host populations, municipalities and the private sector. However, displaced persons are far from being passive recipients of aid (Krause and Schmidt 2018: 13-20). Refugee-run organisations and refugee entrepreneurs display a high potential to contribute to development; however, their reach remains limited due to a lack of partners, funding and capacities (Easton-Calabria 2016a: 26, 2016b: 72). ECHO furthermore mentions the limited coordination and cooperation with local authorities as a weakness in the urban response to displacement. A representative of a municipal authority in Jordan stated that this created "a sense of disconnect regarding the needs of host communities and limited scope for transition towards community ownership of projects in the future" (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017: 36). This may result in reactive programming with a focus on providing assets instead of addressing livelihood barriers, which could be prevented by a deeper contextual understanding based on market, potential and needs analyses.

International organisations, national and local governments, NGOs, displaced persons, and – to an ever increasing extent - actors from the private sector who address these challenges have provided us with valuable lessons learned, which will be summarised in the following section.

3. From displacement situations to inclusive development?

3.1 Be flexible: Self-reliance and aid need to work hand in hand

> "The first step towards fundamental change would be for all actors to accept that conflict-induced forced displacement is predominantly a development issue with humanitarian elements – and not the other way around" (Harild 2016: 5).

So far, efforts to overcome the humanitarian-development gap are often based on a sequential understanding of this relationship. They focus on relief and assistance during the first phase of the emergency and only shift towards more development centred support after a certain lapse of time (Kerber and Poncette 2015: 67). However, the underlying assumption that displaced persons are most vulnerable in the first phase of displacement and gain capacities for self-reliance as time goes by can simply not be generalised (Barbelet and Wake 2017a: 27). Surely, the experience of displacement traumatises many refugees, IDPs and migrants and the hope of a quick return may discourage livelihood building in the early days of displacement. Nevertheless, it is exactly during this initial period that those displaced persons who have arrived with resources or social capital have not yet exhausted their assets and networks. They may be better positioned to build their livelihoods in the short than in the medium to long term, when their resources are consumed and their coping strategies slowly turn negative. Furthermore, vulnerability varies between individuals and over time, and displaced persons often combine aid, work and other forms of livelihood building in order to make a living. Therefore, development action and humanitarian aid should go hand in hand to provide enabling conditions for self-reliance as well as safety-nets both in the short and long term (Barbelet and Wake 2017a: 23-24, 27).

3.2 Create an enabling environment: De facto and de jure

Livelihood training and self-reliance strategies are far more effective when they prepare displaced persons for actual options to access the formal sector. Therefore, promoting self-reliance should be accompanied by advocacy for the effective realisation of the rights to work, movement and property as well as capacity building of national and local governments to work towards policy change (Morris and Voon 2014: 19, Devictor et al. 2017: 8,

Crisp 2003). A trade-off between advocacy for social and economic rights on the one hand and civil and political rights of refugees on the other hand should thereby be avoided. Furthermore, first evaluations of the Jordan Compact demonstrate that granting work permits is but the first step – practical barriers to the formal sector as described in the previous section have to be tackled in parallel (Kattaa and Byrne 2018: 45, Post 2018: 12, Amjad et al. 2017: 5-6). Cooperation between development and humanitarian actors with national and local governments should, therefore, focus as much on policy change as on multi-stakeholder policy implementation.

3.3 Think big, but stay local: Create multi-stakeholder approaches beyond displacement

However, international aid actors' strategies and host governments' policies risk remaining one-sided: While international actors frequently struggle to work with both local and displaced populations (often due to restrictive funding rules), host governments more often than not exclude displaced populations from their development plans. This disconnect calls for the development and implementation of comprehensive solutions (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017: 55, Harild 2016: 5, Aleinikoff 2015: 9). Persons displaced due to political conflict, natural disasters or economic hardship, migrants, IDPs and local host communities often face at least some similar challenges, in particular in urban settings. ECHO's evaluation of the response to the Syrian crisis found that area-based approaches addressing cross-sectoral needs of both host communities and displaced populations are particularly promising. An interesting concept is the World Bank's "Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)" implemented in Ethiopia, Uganda and Djibouti. In cooperation with IGAD, the World Bank "will help improve access to basic social services, expand economic opportunities, and enhance environmental management for

communities hosting refugees in target areas" (World Bank 2016). Further promising approaches are UNHCR's cash-based programming as well as cooperation with local markets and private-sector initiatives – still a widely undervalued resource (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017: xi, Jacobsen and Fratzke 2016: 24, Zetter 2014: 4).

3.4 Engage the private sector: Move from philanthropy to business partnership models

> "As a developmental actor, the corporate sector has enormous, yet untapped, potential to improve the lives and livelihoods of both the displaced and their hosts" (Zetter 2014: 3).

Over the past few years, the role of (international) private sector actors has been changing slowly: Having been pure donors or service providers, some entrepreneurs started to respond to displacement situations with business partnership models (Solutions Alliance 2015: 1). UNHCR Innovation has increasingly been cooperating with private sector actors,

> "[…] drawing upon their ideas, funding and networks, and appealing for their involvement on the grounds of a combination of philanthropy, corporate social responsibility and the desire to innovate. Its partners have included the UN Foundation, Hewlett Packard, Ashoka, IDEO, Vodafone, IKEA Foundation and the Hunt Foundation" (Betts 2014: 5).

However, even this private sector engagement still focuses mainly on life-saving needs in the short term (Boyer and DuPont 2016: 36, Binder and Witte 2007). The thematic group "Engaging the Private Sector in Finding Solutions for Displacement" of the global "Solutions Alliance" highlights the potential of private sector long-term engagement in displacement situations: Linking SME and local producers with more established companies can connect them to new value chains, access new niche markets and increase volumes of transactions. On-the-job training and apprenticeships can support displaced and local

populations when it comes to acquiring new skills and accessing job opportunities. A responsible cooperation between development and private sector actors could scale up self-reliance strategies and strengthen sustainability (Solutions Alliance 2015: 2, Sutherland 2015, Hemberger, Muench and Purvis 2018). However, to limit the risk of exploitation of vulnerable populations and to engage local, national and international businesses and investors in such a cooperation, (local) environments conducive to stable market activity and the respect of labour rights would have to be created even in fragile national contexts. This issue will be addressed in the fourth section.

3.5 Data is key: Base self-reliance on an analysis of markets, needs and potentials

Displaced populations can have a major impact on a host community, depending on prior developmental challenges or opportunities and on the political, economic and social conditions on the ground. Moreover, changes in demography will affect the labour market, the housing market, property owners and tenants, consumers and producers to different extents (Devictor et al. 2017: 7). Therefore, humanitarian and development actors and governments should strive for an in-depth analysis of direct and indirect impacts. In this way, they can create the necessary evidence base to support possible development gains and aim at reducing the effects of market distortions and distributional imbalances for displaced and host populations (Harild 2016: 6, Zetter 2014: 5). The use of programming tools by humanitarian and development actors should be linked even more strongly to a situational analysis of market conditions, individual livelihood actions in place as well as the needs and potentials of both local and displaced communities (Barbelet and Wake 2017a: 25). A lacking or one-sided analytical approach can lead to suboptimal self-reliance strategies. For example, the Jordan Compact opens labour market access to Syrian refugees in accordance with Jordanian market needs,

which seems reasonable in a context of relatively high unemployment rates. Nevertheless, this approach prevents many highly qualified Syrians from practicing their professions, which is one reason for the limited impact the Compact has shown so far (Crawley 2017, Barbelet and Wake 2017b: 5). Research realised in Kampala presents another example. In the capital of Uganda, local and international organisations providing self-reliance training offer classes in arts and crafts, an area in which they have developed training expertise. These offers are very popular among female refugees and continue even though there is a very limited market for arts and crafts dominated by Ugandans (Easton-Calabria 2016a: 19). In both examples, more comprehensive approaches taking into account refugees' needs and potentials as well as local market conditions may lead to better development outcomes. In this context, collaborations for data gathering and analysis between humanitarian actors, research institutions and development organisations such as the World Bank can prove beneficial to create a holistic picture and develop coordinated strategies for inclusive local development (Essex-Lettierie, Therkelsen and Wirth 2016: 57).

4. Urban approaches and special economic zones

Analysis of economic, social and political conditions can be at the basis of creating environments more conducive to local development. However, even if governmental actors know which policies should be implemented in order to turn displacement situations into inclusive development opportunities, this does not mean that they are actually capable (or willing) to do so on a national scale. "A learning approach – testing innovative programming and bringing successful efforts to scale – may be appropriate" (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017: 53). Therefore, international actors, academic researchers and civil society actors increasingly contemplate options to create urban centres

with a special administrative status and policies. On a small scale this can be seen in cities such as New York, having created local IDs to ensure that vulnerable segments of the population, including immigrants, can access basic services (100 Resilient Cities 2017: 76).

Other proposals relate to concepts of special economic zones (SEZ): "SEZs are designated areas designed to promote economic development through governance and physical infrastructure that is distinct from the typical governance arrangements around them" (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 3). In 2015, Peter Sutherland, then United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for International Migration, claimed:

> "[S]pecial economic zones could be established in frontline countries to attract investment and create jobs for refugees, with the G-20 offering preferential trade status. Tax breaks and other support could be given to companies offering opportunities to refugees" (Sutherland 2015).

Not only at the UN level, but equally within the EU ideas have been voiced to make use of special economic areas to offer refugees an alternative to camps and access to work, as is illustrated by the statement of Emma Bonino, the former EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid:

> "Special economic zones that benefit from preferred trade status with the EU and the United States should be created, in order to generate investment, economic opportunities, and jobs for refugees and locals alike. These zones should be established in both frontline and transit countries" (Bonino 2015).

Such statements from developed countries calling for enhanced opportunities for refugees and migrants in developing countries often face the criticism of being more interested in migration management or control than in local development in countries of first reception. This critique should be taken very seriously. Under no circumstances can such opportunities replace the

right to asylum in Europe or elsewhere in the world. They could, however, present a chance for those not wishing to move any further.

Currently, there are some innovative refugee policy approaches in developing host countries that could serve to inspire the design of special urban areas. The Ugandan refugee policy shows many advantages of fostering refugee economies by granting refugees the right to work, access to land and freedom of movement. Research found that, in comparison to the situation in Kenya, refugees in the research areas in Uganda enjoy on average "greater mobility, lower transaction costs for economic activity, higher incomes, and more sustainable sources of employment" (Betts et al. 2019: 1). Nevertheless, difficulties to provide effective refugee assistance in urban settings and limited educational infrastructure in settlements continue to present substantial challenges (ibid.). Furthermore, the strong focus on agriculture overlooks the diversity of refugees' experience and skills (Krause 2016: 53).

Could these challenges be addressed by creating urban special administrative areas for displaced and local populations? In accordance with the lessons learned and in order to prevent such approaches from simply turning into a new form of camps, these would need to meet certain stringent criteria including:

- **Local ownership and participatory governance**: To respect the interests of inhabitants and create ownership, such special urban areas would need to be constructed over time. Rather than being developed in a top-down way, they should be open for all and be created in a participative bottom-up manner. Governance, too, should build on participatory mechanisms and be based on ongoing analysis of social development, inhabitants' needs and potentials as well as local, national and regional market situations.

- **Human rights**: Human rights and international labour standards would need to be guaranteed and accountability mechanisms established. This last point addresses justified concerns that special economic zones may be misused to exploit labour force (Crawley 2017).
- **Economic opportunities and social services**: Special urban areas should be based on a legal framework that is both conducive to creating jobs, businesses and investment and to promoting rights-based access to an infrastructure with services for all inhabitants and particular protection for the most vulnerable.
- **Potential for up-scaling:** States creating special urban areas should commit themselves to the option of adopting policies that have proven beneficial to local and displaced communities living in a special area on a national level. In this way, such urban areas could create spillover effects regarding rights and opportunities of displaced populations.

Cities have always been destinations of human mobility and have often developed in the wake of migration and displacement (Kleinschmidt 2018: 39). Creating cities instead of refugee camps is therefore not a new idea. Special urban areas are concepts that have been contemplated both inside and outside the displacement context for quite some time. How do these concepts address criteria of ownership, participation, rights, accountability, evidence-based governance and the connection between economic development and social protection?

4.1 Top-down city planning: Charter Cities and New Urban Cities

One may first think of the controversial plan for Charter Cities by Paul Romer (2009). Charter Cities are planned in a top-down manner, established in developing countries and governed by

governments of developed countries (Lutter 2015). While Romer highlights the importance of freedom of movement and equal rights, he is also convinced that democratic structures would overstrain such a new city. Romer tries to counter the criticism of neo-colonialism by insisting that no one will be forced to move to or stay in a Charter City (Starzmann 2018). However, if the choice comes down to staying in a poor area outside a Charter City governed by the own state or moving to a place with job opportunities under the control of a foreign state, the question of choice has to be revisited. The first legislation to establish Charter Cities adopted in Honduras was subsequently ruled out as unconstitutional by the national Supreme Court (Lutter 2019, Lenz and Ruchlak 2016). Other examples for new cities that are planned or realized in a top-down manner include Enterprise Cities (Babson Connect 2015) and the New Urban Cities (NUC) in Egypt, which are criticised for reproducing extremely centralised structures and lacking mechanisms for local participation (Tadamun 2015).

4.2 Compacts as new policy models: Lessons from Ethiopia and Jordan

In the displacement context, the Jordan Compact (2016) and the Ethiopian Jobs Compact (2017) are the most recent examples of adapting special economic zones to displacement situations. Rolled out in 2017, the Ethiopian Jobs Compact is a 500-million-dollar agreement between the Ethiopian government and external donors to create 100,000 new jobs mainly through the establishment of industrial parks as special economic zones. The Ethiopian Jobs Compact is supposed to benefit Ethiopians and refugees alike (Barbelet et al. 2018, Mallet et al. 2018: 53). Since it is a rather new programme, evaluations are still scarce. In this paper, we will therefore focus on lessons learned from the initial phase of the Jordan Compact. Being an agreement between the Jordanian Government, the European Union (EU) and the World Bank, the Jordan Compact represents a new policy model

for "turning the refugee crisis into a development opportunity" (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 2, Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker and Mansour-Ille 2018, Post 2018: 6, Amjad et al. 2017: 15). In the framework of the Compact, the Jordanian government implemented broader regularisation of refugees, agreed to introduce extensive labour market reforms and to provide 200,000 new work permits for Syrian refugees in specific sectors by 2026. In exchange, the EU granted enhanced access to the European Common Market for companies operating within one of the 18 Jordanian industrial zones and employing at least 15 percent of Syrian refugees within their workforce. Furthermore, the Compact includes technical assistance and offers Jordan access to 300 million dollars financial support in low-interest rate loans and grants through the Global Concessional Financing Facility (Post 2018: 6, 9, Castle Miller 2018: 315-316). On a policy level, the Jordan Compact thus represents an innovative shift from providing humanitarian assistance in displacement to creating special environments conducive to job creation, growth and investment for refugees and host communities (Amjad et al. 2017: 4). Nevertheless, first evaluations prove that its impact has remained rather limited so far. In the following, we will focus on critique addressing the policy design rather than the implementation (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker and Mansour-Ille 2018). Central points include the exclusionary design of the Compact, poor communication of new options and rights, a mismatch between accessible economic sectors on the one hand and refugees' qualifications on the other hand, ongoing gender discrimination, limited options for business creation and access to financial services (Post 2018: 6, 11, Amjad et al. 2017: 5, 49, 52, Barbelet and Wake 2017b: 5, Crawley 2017). Evaluation furthermore demonstrates that refugees are in many cases rather reluctant to apply for work permits and that employers have reservations to hire refugees in the formal sector for several reasons. When the Compact was launched, work permits were tied to a single employer, which put refugees in

a potential position of dependency; it was furthermore incongruous with refugees' strategy to combine multiple jobs to make a living (Amjad et al. 2017: 6, Barbelet and Wake 2017b: 5). Due to poor communication strategies refugees also fear that applying for a work permit will reduce their access to UNHCR cash assistance or their chances of being resettled (Amjad et al. 2017: 37, 53). Female refugees have often strong preferences to engage in home-based work citing as the main reasons duties in child care, fear of harassment in factories and a lack of women-only work spaces (ibid.: 6). However, refugees face legal and practical barriers when trying to register small and home-based enterprises in Jordan or when accessing financial services (Post 2018: 7). Furthermore, some Jordanian employers are reluctant to hire Syrian refugees with official work permits due to social security costs and concerns of facing more workplace inspections (Amjad et al. 2017.: 6). Many of these challenges could have been foreseen had a more participatory policy design approach be applied, including voices of male and female Jordanian and Syrian employers, employees and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, issues such as the mismatch between economic sectors open to refugees and refugees' skills and qualifications could have been minimised by basing policies on a thorough analysis of (local) market structures as well as by looking into the potentials and needs of refugees and the local population (Post 2018: 6, Crawley 2017).

4.3 A call for good governance: Sustainable Development Zones

Drawing on lessons from the Jordan Compact, refugee economies in Uganda as well as special economic zones, a new idea is currently under development – Sustainable Development Zones (SDZs). Created from a cooperation between Refugee Cities, Politas Consulting, IPA | switxboard and Dr. Joachim Rücker Consultancy, the SDZs concept aims at kick-starting

economically and socially enabling environments for local population, migrants and refugees.

> "SDZs are designated areas with special administrative frameworks, policies, and services designed to produce inclusive economic development. SDZs serve as islands of good governance. They offer protection as well as humanitarian assistance and social services for refugees and other migrants, but they also leverage mass displacement for the benefit of the local population by encouraging entrepreneurship, self-sufficiency, and new investment in jobs and infrastructure" (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 3).

According to the initiators of the concept, SDZs could operate as social enterprises. Drawing on blended finance (grants and concessional loans as well as private financing with Corporate-Social-Responsibility (CSR), social-impact and market-return private investment), an administrator team would be responsible for leasing land, developing a basic infrastructure and providing services, similar to a UN interim administration. Such an administration should answer to a multi-stakeholder oversight board consisting of representatives of national and local governments, civil society, residents as well as UN organisations (ibid.: 7, Rücker, Kleinschmidt and Castle Miller 2019: 5, 24). In contrast to Romer's Charter Cities or even the Jordan Compact, SDZs are envisaged as locally adaptive tool-kits, which serve as bases for these multi-stakeholder coalitions to create an urban area with a special administrative and economic framework (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 2).

SDZs are envisaged as "SEZs+", combining the potential of SEZs to create jobs and attract foreign and local investment with social safety nets for vulnerable persons and improvements in infrastructure and services (Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 4, Castle Miller 2018: 313). This approach may be illustrated using a recent SDZs proposal study conducted for UN-Habitat in Ethiopia as an example. The legal framework of an SDZ would consist of a combination of "Ethiopia's Industrial Park

Proclamation" and a "Special Administrative Areas Proclamation" ensuring that

> "[…] [i]n particular, low-income residents (including IDPs and others) and small businesses would benefit from formal documentation, legal protection, access to finance ("bankability") and social services. Services would include education, social services, and skill development, including in new technologies, especially for young people and women" (Rücker, Kleinschmidt and Castle Miller 2019: 5).

Instead of adopting sectoral reactive approaches to market distortions caused by displacement, SDZs would ideally provide a comprehensive framework to reduce competition between the local population, migrants and refugees by increasing both economic options available as well as general access to the formal economy (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 5).

SDZs are conceptualised as islands of good governance. This means that "SDZ administrations must include proper checks-and-balances, appeal mechanisms, and legitimacy, based on democratic participation by all stakeholders" (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 7).

SDZs build on bottom-up ownership in a context of urbanisation. SDZs are not envisaged as a one-size-fits-it-all-model. On the contrary, they are designed as locally adaptive, context-sensitive tool kits, which should build on participatory approaches in development and implementation. Therefore, the support of local and displaced populations, the national government as well as of local and national private sector actors is essential. SDZs are thus not exclusively focusing on refugees. During a pre-feasibility study conducted in Ethiopia the initiators quickly realised that a broader approach was necessary and it was this idea of inclusive development that won the support of representatives of local communities and authorities. In general, local authorities can play a particularly important role for SDZs:

> "A precondition is that the local government supports the establishment of an SDZ, maybe in competition with other municipalities. Local actors, like mayors, might also take the initiative for establishing an SDZ, especially in the context of fragile countries" (Castle Miller, Kleinschmidt and Rücker 2018: 14).

Recently, the initiators were exploring options to pilot an SDZ in Libya in cooperation with mayors engaged in the Nicosia Initiative. These local authorities clearly signalled that they were interested in establishing local Sustainable Development Zones not despite of but because of the difficult economic and security conditions surrounding them.

5. A critical reflection on Sustainable Development Zones

SDZs strive to move beyond the market logic of traditional special economic zones by combining economic approaches with a legal framework for good governance, democratic participation and local ownership. Nevertheless, they may spark criticism claiming that they create parallel structures or relieve host states from granting political, social and economic rights at the national level. Recognising potentials and risks, the following discussion uses the concept of SDZs to introduce focal challenges that should be addressed in future debates on inclusive approaches for displaced and local populations.

5.1 SEZ+ : How to combine a profit-oriented market logic with a social dimension?

Would there not be trade-offs in one direction or the other? Due to the multitude of potential conflicts of interest, such trade-offs could never be completely avoided. Finding a good balance would essentially rely on the SDZ's capacity to move towards a rights-based approach. In such a scenario, neither displaced nor local populations are perceived as supplicants depending on the

support of international investors, but rather as SDZ citizens entitled to the right to education, the right to work, access to health care or business registration. A main factor would be inhabitants' transition to the formal sector regarding ID (where applicable), housing, employment, business creation and bankability. The SDZ's internal appeal system should ensure strong employee rights and standards for decent work and be accessible to all inhabitants. Finding a balance between market logic and support for vulnerable persons would, however, not imply complete social equality. As in any other city in the world, some would benefit more from social and economic developments than others. The administrator and the oversight-board in an SDZ would therefore need to ensure adequate safety nets for those temporarily or permanently unable to participate in economic activities due to education, illness or other factors.

5.2 Governance relations: Closed community or environment for new policies with beneficial spillover effects?

The initiators of the SDZs concept highlight that incorporating standards of good governance such as transparency, accountability and inclusive participation into every SDZ framework is crucial. In this context, the question has to be asked what would incentivise a (semi/non-democratic) host state to relinquish control or sovereignty over a territory with its own political and economic rules. Could the state benefit from eventual spillover effects of innovative policy-making and new economic strategies? Such a zonal approach could draw on good practice developed in refugee and migrant hosting cities around the world without requiring immediate changes at the national level. A controversially discussed example is city identification papers as issued by the local authorities of New York and Madrid to those lacking any other kind of identification and thus access to basic services. Would these lead to governments neglecting their duties on granting legal status and rights to

work even further or could it become a local example to serve as good practice for future up-scaling? And what could the relationship between SDZ governance, national governance and international governance look like?

5.3 Good Governance: How to ensure participation and accountability?

In addition to the relation between national and SDZ governance, the internal governance of SDZs raises important questions. In contrast to the Charter Cities, an SDZ administration would consist of local and national governmental actors, civil society and representatives of SDZ residents supported by UN or other intergovernmental organisations. Participatory mechanisms are highlighted as crucial elements of the SDZs framework and the concept mentions options for elements of direct participation such as e-governance and e-participation. However, these concepts need further clarification. Is there a right to participation for all SDZ inhabitants enshrined in the framework? Would participation entail consultation or joint decision-making? Would there be representative organs and elections? Need for further clarification continues to exist regarding accountability and appeal mechanisms within the SDZ. Who would assume responsibility if security issues arose within the SDZ or rules of good governance were broken? Who decides on appeal standards? Does the (fragile) host state remain the guarantor of human rights?

The discussion shows that many questions still remain open, in particular when it comes to local ownership and accountability. Beyond the SDZs context these considerations underline the need for humanitarian and development actors as well as national decision-makers to proactively engage local authorities, displaced and local populations and civil society in the search for sustainable solutions to displacement.

6. Conclusion

In this research paper, we attempt to give impulses for transforming displaced persons' restricted agency into self-determined action through inclusive approaches. Drawing on focal challenges in bridging the humanitarian-development gap, we have summarised lessons learned with a particular focus on creating enabling environments de facto and de jure, building on bottom-up ownership of displaced persons, local authorities and the private sector and strengthening context-specific analysis. Moving beyond traditional humanitarian and development approaches, our contribution has examined the potentials and risks of adapting special zones concepts to displacement contexts. While it is clear that the preferred option in protracted displacement situations would be the inclusion of this matter in national development planning and the granting of rights to displaced persons at the national level, many host states are not willing to do so. Special zones are currently discussed as pragmatic intermediate stages to demonstrate the benefits of good practice. The crucial challenge in this context is to avoid the creation of camps 2.0, ensure rights, ownership and accountability and provide options for up-scaling of policies and practice to the national level. Frameworks such as the Jordan Compact still exhibit a lack of bottom-up approaches in policy design. We have therefore turned to a more detailed analysis of the Sustainable Development Zones concept. Created by Kilian Kleinschmidt, Dr. Joachim Rücker and Michael Castle Miller, it strives to transform displacement crises into development opportunities for displaced and local communities based on local ownership, participation, good governance and a combination of social and market logic. The SDZs concept has indeed incorporated many of the lessons learned from humanitarian and development action, refugee economies as well as special economic zones. Nevertheless, important questions need to be discussed further. In the final section of the paper we have presented a critical analysis of the SDZs concept highlighting

trade-offs between social and economic dimensions, governance relations between SDZs and host states as well as open questions regarding participation and accountability. Special attention is to be paid to these issues, but also to the question of civil and political rights when thinking about inclusive approaches in protracted displacement in order to ensure that refugees, migrants and local populations are all given a chance to shape local development and build a new home for themselves.

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With the Global Compact on Refugees, the International Community seeks to highlight the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches in the search for sustainable solutions to displacement. However, when it comes to planning and implementing durable solutions, two of the main actors are often absent or even excluded from decision-making – these are refugees and hosting municipalities. The two papers in this publication highlight central bottlenecks for participatory approaches in both resettlement schemes as well as camp accommodation. Based on an analysis of existing good practice and new policy approaches, the first paper develops an innovative proposal for a Municipal Resettlement Programme while the second paper critically discusses potentials and risks of adapting special zones concepts to displacement contexts. Together, both papers are a call for action to actively engage refugees and communities so as to find answers to the question of "who could thrive where?"

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