

# Protracted displacement

## Uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile

Annex 8 - Case studies: Colombia, Darfur, Jordan and Uganda

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## Case study: IDPs' livelihoods and self-reliance interventions in Colombia

### Country context

Colombia's five-decade internal armed conflict involves the country's armed forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitary groups and other criminal organisations, including drug traffickers. The conflict has changed over time and the many factors driving it make it particularly complex. In the most general sense, however, its roots lie in a fight for control of land and resources (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2011). Armed groups have taken control of vast swaths of rural land, some of which they use to cultivate coca, opium poppy, oil palm and other cash crops.

Civilians have borne the brunt of the conflict. Huge numbers of Colombians have suffered or been exposed to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including massacres, extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, death threats and child recruitment. As many as 6 million people fled their homes between 1985 and October 2014, according to the Integral Unit for Victims' Reparation and Assistance (UARIV). The average of around 240,000 people were displaced each year between 2008 and 2013, and more than one in ten Colombians have been displaced at least once in their lives (IDMC, 2014). People from the country's many indigenous groups and African-Colombians make up a high percentage of the displaced population. Disasters brought on by natural hazards also force tens of thousands of people to flee each year, many of whom have already been displaced by conflict.

Before the 1990s, the vast majority of displacement took place from rural to urban areas, putting significant demographic and humanitarian pressure on the country's major cities. The capital, Bogotá, hosts the largest population of internally displaced people (IDPs) (Vidal, Atehortúa and Salcedo, 2013). As the security forces' presence in rural areas has grown, displacement from the countryside has decreased and other groups involved in the conflict have become more active in urban areas, often in neighbourhoods where IDPs have sought refuge. The result is that intra-urban displacement and flight from urban to rural areas now also take place.

Displacement has taken place throughout the country: most if not all regions have been affected, either as places of origin, refuge or both. Ninety-three per cent of IDPs have been displaced from rural to urban areas, 98.6% live below the poverty line and 82.6% are classified as extremely poor. These figures are in sharp contrast with those for the general population, which are 29.1% and 8.7% respectively (Albuja and Ceballos, 2010). The unemployment rate among IDPs in 2012 was 35.5%, compared with 10.2% for the general population, which shows the extent to which displaced people struggle to find jobs (*Red de Observatorios Regionales del Mercado de Trabajo*, 2014). Around 51% of IDPs are women, who often shoulder extra burdens as a result of their displacement (UARIV, August 2014). Given that male family members may have been killed, joined armed groups or left to find work, they assume more social and family responsibilities (NRC, 2014). Around 43% of displaced families were headed by women in 2008, according to government figures (Meertens, 2012). They also face the risk of gender-based violence. In 2008, the Constitutional Court recognised displaced women's vulnerability and their specific needs in terms of protection and assistance (NRC, 2014).

There are no displacement camps or collective centres in Colombia, apart from some small-scale sites (Ferris, 2014). Some IDPs in urban areas rent accommodation, but most have had no option but to set up home in informal settlements with poor access to public services and inadequate tenure security (Albuja and Ceballos, 2010). Here they become largely invisible among the poorest and most vulnerable members of the general population, making it difficult to identify them and address needs related to their displacement.

Against this backdrop, the government and the country's main guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC), have been holding peace talks in Havana since 2012. The two sides signed a general agreement at the beginning of the process, which set out a six-point agenda covering complex issues such as land reform, transitional justice, political participation, victims and the drugs trade. Agreement has been reached on political participation, but many Colombians have little enthusiasm or patience for the negotiations, particularly given that they are taking place without a ceasefire. The country's president, Juan Manuel Santos, staked his re-election on the peace process and was returned to office with 51% of the vote in June 2014, but his opponent, Oscar Iván Zuluaga, won 45% based in part on his opposition to the talks.

Impunity is widespread and victims feel their voices are not heard. The implementation of the 2005 Justice and Peace Law included the demobilisation of the United Self-defence Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, AUC), a paramilitary umbrella group responsible for a significant majority of the country's human rights abuses. Many of the AUC's leaders were extradited to the United States on drug-trafficking charges and 30,000 fighters laid down their weapons, but few have been sentenced for their crimes and many have since returned to arms. Local and international human rights advocates deem the legislation to have been a 'law for perpetrators', given that victims' rights were a secondary consideration (Ferris, 2014).

### **IDPs' livelihoods over time**

Continued insecurity has meant that the vast majority of IDPs who fled from rural areas to the country's towns and cities have chosen not to return (Vidal et al., 2013). Given their agricultural backgrounds, many lack the skills to establish new livelihoods and become self-reliant in an urban environment. They struggle to find stable jobs and over time become poorer and more marginalised. Many become street-sellers, and others enter the informal labour market, an important part of the economy, where they work long hours for little pay as labourers, porters, maids and cooks (Cohen, 2008). IDPs' invisibility among the rest of the urban poor, and the fact that many are unaware of their rights, are obstacles to their receiving state assistance.

Displaced women, particularly those who have taken on extra responsibility for the wellbeing of their families, may resort to negative coping mechanisms, including survival sex. Many girls are taken out of education, either to save the money spent on school fees or to help provide for their families. Others face the prospect of early marriage (Guarnieri, 2004). Women also confront prejudice in a patriarchal society that tends to view them as having a 'passive and domestic function', and women have weaker inheritance rights than men (Zuluaga Sanchez, 2011).

IDPs, both male and female, suffer stigmatisation and discrimination (Hill, 2006):

*Often they are seen to bring the problems of the war and the interior into the towns. It is typical for residents of host communities to stereotype IDPs as lazy or prone to criminality, who, instead of being victims of the crisis, unfairly benefit from the government assistance. IDPs also have often faced limited windows of assistance (typically receiving three months of official assistance), and few opportunities to begin earning household income that might speed integration.*

Colombia has an active and well-organised civil society, and there are hundreds of organisations trying to improve IDPs' lives. Many have been set up by IDPs themselves. Limited resources, a lack of coordination between organisations and threats from armed groups all serve to hamper their work, but IDPs say they have contributed to their psycho-social recovery by helping them to meet others in similar situations. They have also raised their awareness of their rights. Women who did not feel adequately represented have set up their own organisations (Cohen, 2008).

A survey carried out in 2006 found that IDPs felt they would benefit from training in vocational skills, and from help in finding work and obtaining credit. The process of registering for assistance is cumbersome, however, and they face bureaucratic obstacles in accessing services and support. This includes income generation projects, which have been identified as a priority in terms of IDPs needs (Cohen, 2008).

According to a 2011 study for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):

*Donors and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have supported income generation in urban areas primarily by making funding available to individual families who are supposed to establish small scale enterprises in their homes and sell the product. For reasons related to skill levels, business inexperience, difficult market access and low income levels among would-be customers, these enterprises are at high risk of failure. If they do fail, the IDPs also risk losing the homes for which they can no longer pay. No need is more critical for the newly urbanized IDPs than income generation opportunities. This goal should be pursued in the broader context of municipal development.*

Colombia has an active private sector with an unmet demand for labour mainly in industries in urban areas (Hill et al., 2006). With the majority of IDPs living in urban areas in Colombia, they represent an untapped source of skilled labour that could meet this demand. However, some employers do not have the capital to hire and train new employees while others are reluctant to hire IDPs, buying into the stereotype that IDPs do not have adequate skills. Some programmes have addressed this and the result has been recognition that the business sector has a critical role to play in the socio-economic stabilisation of IDPs (Brookings-LSE, 2013). Caution is nevertheless needed here since some private sector actors have been known to perpetrate displacement (Centro de Investigacion y Educacion Popular (CINEP), 2012; Fundacion Ideas para la Paz & Universidad de los Andes, 2011).

Given that the conflict is still ongoing, many responders may have been reluctant to engage in longer-term development projects, particularly if they involve the need for military protection (Fagen Weiss, 2014). Despite these challenges, IDPs have benefited from numerous livelihood interventions including with World Bank and USAID support. These interventions would have greater impact if the government invested more in infrastructure, credit facilities, social services, employment opportunities and communications networks (Fagen Weiss, 2014).

## Laws, policies and institutions

### *a. Legal framework on IDPs*

Law 387 of 1997 was the first in Colombia to address internal displacement (Government of Colombia, 1997). It is a comprehensive instrument that provides for IDPs' protection, assistance and socio-economic stability, return and the prevention of new displacement. It recognises displacement as a serious issue, defines IDPs' rights and designates the institutions responsible for assisting them (Vidal, Atehortúa and Salcedo, 2013). It is considered a turning point in the government's approach and a landmark piece of legislation, given that it was finalised before the publication of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

The law's definition of internal displacement is narrower than that of the Guiding Principles, in that it refers only to displacement caused by conflict and violence and not that triggered by disasters. This is despite the fact that the country is prone to natural hazards, particularly annual floods (OCHA, 1998). As part of its implementation, in January 1998 the government adopted decree 173, which set out a national plan for IDPs' 'comprehensive' assistance. It included a focus on their socioeconomic stability, and like Law 387, defined authorities' responsibilities (Government of Colombia, n.d).

In 2004, however, the country's Constitutional Court ruled in decision T-025 that the national response to displacement amounted to an 'unconstitutional state of affairs' because of the gulf between Law 387's provisions and its implementation, as well as the lack of norms on specific issues such as land restitution (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2011). In line with the court's recommendations, Law 1190 of 2008 clearly assigned roles, responsibilities and concrete measures to assist IDPs to various state institutions (Government of Colombia, n.d). Over the years, the Constitutional Court has consistently called on all levels of government to comply with the country's legislation on IDPs and to implement it accordingly (Ferris, 2014).

IDPs have more recently been considered more broadly, along with other groups, as victims of the conflict in the country. Law 1448 of 2011, known widely as the *Ley de Víctimas* or Victims' Law, recognises the existence of the conflict and the government's role in it (Government of Colombia, n.d). It establishes a framework for the provision of assistance and reparations to all victims, including IDPs, more efficient administrative processes and a land restitution mechanism. The previous government, led by Alvaro Uribe, blocked similar legislation because it would have acknowledged the victims of state forces as well.

After the implementation of Law 1448, the presidential agency for social action and internal cooperation, known as *Acción Social*, was transformed into the Department of Social Prosperity (*Departamento Administrativo para la Prosperidad Social*, DPS). The new body was made responsible for the oversight of all

state social welfare agencies and programmes for vulnerable groups, and for all victims' assistance, reparation and social and economic reintegration. Processes for providing collective reparations to ethnic groups were also established in 2011 through decree 4633 for indigenous people, and decree 4635 for African-Colombians. In 2013, the Constitutional Court issued ruling no. 119, ordering the national victims' register to include people forcibly displaced by criminal gangs (Government of Colombia, n.d).

#### ***b. Legislation supporting IDPs' livelihoods and self-reliance***

Article 17 of Law 387 focuses on socioeconomic stabilisation and consolidation, and calls on the government to take medium- and long-term measures to ensure sustainable conditions for IDPs in their pursuit of durable solutions. The article stipulates that IDPs should have access to housing, social services such as health care and education, income-generation projects, micro-enterprise programmes and training. Article 19 determines the institutions responsible for providing such assistance (Government of Colombia, n.d).

Articles 60 to 68 of the Victims' Law are dedicated to IDPs. Given that most have been displaced from rural areas and deprived of their land, restitution is particularly important in supporting their efforts to become self-reliant. The Victims' Law, however, excludes those who do not hold title deeds or have not officially registered their land, which is the case for many IDPs (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2011). Some rural IDPs, particularly women, do not even perceive themselves as having such rights. The restitution process has been extremely slow. The fact that it is being rolled out a few departments at a time, combined with continued conflict and insecurity that has prevented IDPs from returning to many areas, means that it is yet to result in widespread repossession.

Article 60 states that the Victims' Law complements Law 387, while Article 65 establishes three phases of humanitarian assistance for IDPs – immediate, emergency and transition (Government of Colombia, n.d). It also determines the institutions that should provide food and housing assistance and employment programmes. Article 66 obliges the state to provide comprehensive assistance that ensures IDPs who return to their homes or settle elsewhere are able to fully exercise their rights. This includes civil registration, the provision of services such as health care and education, the reunification of families, housing assistance and employment guidance.

Article 130 states that the National Training Service (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje*, SENA) should prioritise victims for technical and vocational training programmes, and circular 138 specifies that 20% of such training should be offered to them (SENA, 2012). Article 130 also commits the government to developing income generation and employment initiatives in both rural and urban areas in order to support victims' efforts to become self-reliant. Articles 134 and 136 stress the need for adequate programmes to help victims to rebuild their lives, and makes provision for psychosocial support (Government of Colombia, n.d).

All of the above shows that 'the country has a strong judicial system, a Constitutional Court that has consistently upheld the rights of IDPs and a committed network of civil society organisations, including hundreds of IDPs' associations' (Ferris, 2010). The legal framework is comprehensive and impressive, but implementation has proved complex and slow. Many IDPs are not aware of their rights, particularly those in

rural areas. The decentralisation of government has also had an impact in terms of coordination between institutions (Ibanez and Velasquez, 2008).

### **Self-reliance interventions**

Over the course of decades of displacement in Colombia, the assistance provided to Colombia's IDPs has tended not to focus on their livelihoods (Fagen, 2014). That said, international organisations such as UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), CHF International (now Global Communities) and Oxfam have all implemented programmes in this area with support from USAID, the World Bank and others.

#### *a. Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI), ongoing since 2012 (UNHCR, 2014; UNHCR, 2015)*

Colombia is currently one of the pilot countries for the Transitional Solutions Initiative, an international initiative agreed by the World Bank, UNHCR and UNDP in 2010. In Colombia the initiative focuses on IDPs and is run by UNHCR and UNDP with the support of the national government and local governments in 17 communities. The TSI is setting a precedent for UNHCR and UNDP co-leadership on IDP programming in Colombia.

The programme has three components: improving living conditions (access to land, housing, basic services and local economic development), institutional and organisational strengthening and protection and rights of victims and their communities. The programme employs a participatory approach that simultaneously engages communities, authorities and institutions. The aim is to strengthen the leadership of the community and to give agency to the community to identify its own solutions on the assumption that stronger communities require less external support.

#### *Favourable environment*

The political context is favourable for TSI implementation in Colombia. In June 2011 the government endorsed the Victims' Law (see above), then in October 2012 it began peace talks with FARC. The Colombian government has in recent years also taken numerous measures to transition from humanitarian aid to solutions for IDPs and the TSI reinforces and continues this work. As such the environment is conducive to the TSI's focus on joint collaboration and coordination with various stakeholders, including the authorities. The initiative is establishing good practices that will eventually feed into a national approach to support IDPs' pursuit of durable solutions should a peace agreement ever be signed.

#### *Community selection*

Communities were chosen in areas of return as well as areas of refuge. Nine communities are pursuing local integration in urban areas, five communities have settled outside of their place of origin in areas to which they were first displaced and three communities have returned to their place of origin. This proportion is in line with integration in urban areas being the settlement preference of the majority of IDPs and that the majority of IDPs live in urban areas. TSI has brought to the public agenda the issues surrounding informal settlements, including lack of formal connections to water, sanitation and electricity and insecure tenure. Communities where UNDP

and/or UNHCR had worked previously were prioritised, as well as areas where the programme could build on previous initiatives.

#### *Economic assistance*

TSI's economic development activities focus on local economic development. First, the socioeconomic baseline is determined, which includes the beneficiaries' profile, vocational opportunities and public and private actors and programmes. Following this, potential activities for the community are identified, and may include entrepreneurship, employment, job training and food security. As of the end of 2014, 1,500 occupational profiles had been elaborated, eight communities had in place local economic development strategies and about 1,000 families had benefited from socio-economic assistance.

The programme includes a monitoring and assessment system to measure the impact of programme components on communities. A profiling exercise with focus groups, participatory assessments and household surveys was conducted in 2014 and the results will be available in early 2015. The Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) provided technical expertise in developing the TSI indicators, including based on a range of variables and existing monitoring tools at UNDP and UNHCR. JIPS also helped establish the larger monitoring and evaluation process, helping to bridge the humanitarian and development divide in terms of systems and processes between UNDP and UNHCR.

#### *Results*

While implementation and monitoring is ongoing, the following are three preliminary examples of socio-economic activities by communities who have benefited from the programme:

- Harvest of 11 tons of gold pineapple per month in El Rodeo and Las Delicias (Puerto Lopez), including technical assistance for eight productive units – including 40 families – and agricultural training. Marketing strategy formulated, and direct contact with companies established, including Wok restaurants and Surtifruver supermarkets.
- Improved mill for the production of panela and a fishing programme in Tanguí (Chocó).
- Improvement of indigenous handicraft production: (a) indigenous jewellery in San José Canelos/Florencia, with 35 women and 34 men from 42 families participating; (b) indigenous traditional bags, for the Pueblo Nasa/Florencia.

#### *Challenges and strengths*

While insecurity and protection in some TSI communities remain a challenge, the TSI programme has numerous strengths. It goes beyond the isolated individual income generation approach and uses the community as the unit that will benefit from economic development activities. These activities are planned and reviewed with authorities and the public and private sector through local leadership committees, which have accountability measures. The programme also goes beyond livelihoods to include housing, land and property and protection, as well as capacity and institutional strengthening. The initiative is an example of fruitful coordination and cooperation between UNHCR and UNDP, as well as dialogue with partners and counterparts. A gender strategy developed in October 2013 cuts across all activities of the programme.

### *b. World Bank, 2004–2012 (World Bank, 2013)*

The Peace and Development Project (PDP) in Colombia was a programme of the Colombian government co-financed by the World Bank. The objective was to assist vulnerable, low income and displaced populations in rural and urban communities in conflict-affected regions in order to reduce their exposure to conflict and mitigate the negative impact of possible derived effects. The project assumes that building assets reduces the risk of displacement, and that restoring a basic safety net to displaced families is a vital first step in their social and economic stabilisation. Beneficiaries were poor and vulnerable families, IDPs who returned or were relocated, community organisations, small producer associations and micro-businesses, municipal governments and partner organisations.

The PDP was a central element in the government's National Development Plan (2002–2006). It aimed to draw upon the lessons from a regional development project in Magdalena Medio and expand the experience to four additional areas affected by conflict: Oriente Antioqueño, Alto Patia-Macizo Colombiano, Norte de Santander and Montes de Maria. These regions were particularly affected by violence, displacement and poverty, and were below the national average for many social outcomes, including access to water, education and other basic needs. Special consideration was given to the needs of indigenous people in the chosen regions, especially those who do not live in legally defined and recognised indigenous territories.

There were three components to the project:

1. Developing social, economic and environmental assets and community support for displaced and vulnerable families in conflict-affected zones.
2. Strengthening institutions and governance at the local level.
3. Project management, monitoring and evaluation.

Grant financing was provided for a wide range of small-scale community projects focusing on food security, income/employment generation, access to health and education, improving housing and sanitary conditions, peace promotion, environmental sustainability and psychosocial assistance. Community-led subprojects included a participatory process for proposal development by a community organisation or association of producers. Projects were to link to the municipal development plan and/or indigenous life plan, include cash or in-kind assistance from the community organisation to co-finance the initiative, a consideration of gender issues in the proposal, and transparent budgeting and accounting.

### *Results*

Social, economic and environmental assets were generated as a result of 718 subprojects for 89,367 beneficiary families, over 25,000 of whom were IDPs. Fifty per cent of the project's beneficiaries were women, including displaced women and female household heads. Around 10% were young people, participating mainly in social, cultural and environmental subprojects. In addition, 16 subprojects involved indigenous and Afro-Colombian populations, benefiting 1,011 and 2,477 families, respectively. The PDP also helped seven out of ten participants to enroll in state social programmes on poverty alleviation and assistance for the displaced.

Of the 14,800 displaced families in the project, 8,000 took part in income generation subprojects, 6,500 in social subprojects and 300 in environmental subprojects. The World Bank concluded there was evidence that beneficiary families had achieved socio-economic stabilisation, consolidated their social organisation and gained influence in public affairs at the local level, though these outcomes cannot be attributed exclusively to the project.

The World Bank concluded that the PDP reduced the risk of displacement and mitigated its effects through the installation of basic assets, strengthened institutions and organisations at the territorial level, prevented violence and reduced vulnerability.

### *Sustainability*

The PDP has been incorporated into three National Development Plans (2002–2006, 2006–2010 and 2010–2014) and the model has inspired several national policy documents. The regional PDPs have continued to operate after the end of the project and several are playing a key role in the formulation and implementation of peace and development-related policies, particularly on victims, rural development and participation. The PDP was being implemented in 19 departments of the country in 2012 and some existing processes continue to be supported by the EU. Many participating families enrolled in subsidiary social programmes.

### *Conclusion*

The PDP demonstrated that it is possible to improve the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people, including IDPs, in the midst of conflict. There are now examples of sustainable businesses led by peasant farmers and indigenous people, partnerships between peasants and business people and more politically adept grassroots organisations.

### *c. USAID, ongoing from 2001 (USAID, 2010)*

USAID Colombia's programme to assist IDPs and other vulnerable groups began in 2001. By 2005, it was present in over 500 municipalities, with activities centred on income generation, food security, housing, education and healthcare. The programme also included initiatives to strengthen public and private sector organisations and to develop and strengthen public policies related to vulnerable groups.

Income generation activities included agricultural production projects, vocational training, job placement and support to existing and new entrepreneurs. An integrated package of assistance was provided to IDPs and other vulnerable groups, and some projects also financed the construction of housing and educational and health centres.

A new grant after 2005 supported strategic interventions on housing and income generation in 170 municipalities where displacement and conflict were most prevalent. Income generation projects were implemented by the Pan American Development Foundation and the International Organisation for Migration.

## *Results*

Vocational training and job placement had the most positive results: the employment level in jobs related to the USAID programme rose from 37% to 72% and income increased by 11%. This was because training was in line with beneficiary profiles and labour market demands, work was paid during training, the long period of training took into account the low educational levels of IDPs, continuing on-the-job support helped IDPs to integrate into the urban market and the subsistence subsidy meant that IDPs did not incur out-of-pocket expenses to attend the training.

An assessment of income generation opportunities in 2007 showed that the incomes of beneficiaries had generally not increased, though extreme poverty and vulnerability had been alleviated. Beneficiaries were content with the psychosocial support, training and other assistance, and participation led to beneficiary empowerment. The programme was restructured after this assessment to increase to focus more on income generation and housing by shifting funds from state-supported social services.

An assessment was carried out in 2010 to inform the 2014–2018 USAID country strategy for Colombia. This showed that, while efforts had been targeted on the socio-economic stabilisation of IDPs and other vulnerable groups, few of the projects had resulted in stabilisation. Households were not fully self-sufficient and could not smooth out income shocks by accumulating savings and acquiring productive and other assets in a sustainable manner. There was no data on how IDPs fared in comparison to other vulnerable groups.

## *Lessons learned*

USAID concluded that the difficulty in producing sustainable income generation opportunities lies in programme design and implementation. Programme design should consider the multiple dimensions that determine a person's ability to generate income, including needs such as food, health, housing, transportation and education. If survival needs are not covered then a beneficiary may use income generation programme resources to cover these needs. Public infrastructure is essential to the success of many income generation endeavours. These links were weak or non-existent in the USAID income generation programme. There is also a need to strengthen links with the private sector to increase the impact of the income generation programme, including inviting the private sector to design and provide technical assistance on the projects. A rigorous market analysis to identify products and services in the highest demand and work with the private sector to insert these products into marketing and distribution chains is needed.

## *Assessment recommendations*

- To facilitate a favourable environment to generate sustainable income, ensure that the household can access health care, transport and utilities, children and youth are attending school, the family lives in housing with secure tenure and enough food to eat, and physical security is guaranteed.
- A psychosocial component should be compulsory in income generation projects since it is essential to recovery from displacement and increases beneficiary empowerment.
- Lengthen the income generation project and increase the capital invested per person.
- Longer period of technical assistance and business advisory services to income generation projects.
- Legal security of access to land for rural projects.

- IOM should review experience in income generation over a period of five years to identify criteria for successful programmes.

**d. Oxfam GB, 2000–2003 (A Hill, 2004)**

The aim of Oxfam’s project, which was set up in early 2000, was to provide IDPs with income generation support using ‘productive packages’ to reduce their need to resort to negative coping mechanisms and help rebuild their lives. The packages consisted of donations of livelihood assets and start-up inputs over a six to 12-month period. IDPs conducted self-assessments that determined the exact make-up of each package on a case-by-case basis, meaning that beneficiaries themselves decided which strategy best suited them, taking their existing knowledge and skills into account. The packages were divided into two main categories, ‘agriculture and livestock’ and ‘other’. The first included a mix of tools, equipment and other assets such as animals, seeds and fertilisers and farm animals. The second focused on petty trading, and included boxes of fruit and vegetables, handicraft materials and pre-prepared food for sale on the street.

From 2002 to 2003, 550 families benefited from 385 productive packages worth an average of 500,000 Colombian pesos (\$225) to each family. The project evaluation showed that the short-term impact on people’s lives was very high, but longer-term impacts were less demonstrable. Beneficiaries who chose a package in accordance with their existing skills and experience did better in maintaining their new or re-established livelihood activities over time. The programme showed that transferable human assets and skills are key to the success of a coping mechanism. Given the lack of an external evaluation, it was difficult to determine value for money.

The programme’s main limitation was that it primarily targeted IDPs in the first year of their displacement rather than those living in protracted displacement, which for the purposes of this study is taken to mean a minimum of three years. Twenty-five per cent of programme funds were allocated to other IDPs who did not meet this criteria, but there is no specific data on its impact on them. Many IDPs in Colombia have fled several times and so may have benefitted from this package during the first year of one of their displacements, only to be forced to move on again. Here again, however, no data was available for review.

Nor was there data to show whether beneficiaries had improved their self-reliance over time as a result of the programme. The only information available is a report written by *Forced Migration Review* in 2004. It was not possible to determine the programme’s geographical coverage, whether it was implemented in rural or urban areas, or whether there were age- or gender-specific outcomes.

**e. CHF international, 2002–2006 (Hill, 2006; CHF International, 2006)**

CHF International developed a programme to support USAID’s strategic objective of assisting IDPs on a medium and long-term basis. It ran in Santa Marta, Barranquilla, Cali, Buenaventura and the country’s coffee belt from July 2002 to September 2006. Multiple programme interventions aimed to provide integrated support to IDPs and other vulnerable populations in host communities. Three of the interventions are detailed below.

### *Emergency short-term employment*

IDPs who had recently arrived in their places of refuge were given up to 59 days of paid work, typically as labourers in the construction or maintenance of public infrastructure, which allowed them to address their immediate needs and reduce immediate vulnerability.

### *Vocational training and permanent job placements*

Given that most IDPs come from rural areas, CHF employed ‘vocational adjustment’ to develop vocational skills tailored to employment in urban labour and entrepreneurial markets. Local businesses were consulted in the design of the vocational training courses to ensure that they addressed the needs of the market. Following vocational training, CHF worked with companies to place the IDPs on its programme in jobs. CHF also trained IDPs in work etiquette and orientation to the workplace, and subsidised social insurance and transportation of IDPs, reducing the cost to the employer. The main skills acquired were in sewing, cleaning, leatherwork, construction work and gardening. Local economies with more sustained economic growth were chosen for this component.

In parallel, beneficiaries were also put on a three to four-month course of therapy, including both individual and group sessions, to help them overcome the trauma associated with the loss of their homes, the death of family members, sexual abuse and other violence they had experienced or witnessed. Orientation in new environments was a key part of the course, including learning about local public transport networks, referrals to social and health services and field trips to explore their new surroundings.

### *Small grants and technical support for micro-entrepreneurs*

IDPs who already had business skills but no start-up capital were offered grants and technical support, while those with a creative idea but no skills received help in developing a business plan. Once their plan was complete and they had acquired some basic skills, they too were given small grants. Some also received home improvement loans and technical housing assistance. The scheme supported micro-businesses including hairdressing, livestock farming, shoemaking, watch repair, the provision of security services and food production.

Other programme intervention areas included temporary shelter, projects to support return and relocation, NGO strengthening and special projects to address emergency or urgent needs. Psychosocial assistance linked each component of the programme.

## *Results*

### Emergency short-term employment

The opportunity to work rather than rely on hand-outs had a significant positive psychological impact on IDPs. Because the public works initiative concentrated on projects that benefited the local community as a whole, such as road-building, the maintenance of waterways and parks and the renovation of schools, it helped to reduce resentment. IDPs were seen as making a contribution to their host communities, reducing negative perceptions on the part of municipal leaders and local people. This in turn helped IDPs to develop relationships with

members of their host communities and form connections with local social networks that provided protection from crime.

#### Vocational training and permanent job placement

This was a 'win-win' situation in which IDPs found work and their employers were able to fill their vacancies. Of those trained, 83% were placed in permanent positions (Hill et al., 2006). The active participation of trade groups in the implementation of an employment model stimulated broader commitment from individual businesses members and yielded better employment results. In a survey following the programme a 'high percentage' of employers said they were happy with their new employees' performance. The parallel psychosocial support IDPs received from the beginning to the end of their participation helped them adjust to their new livelihoods and deal with the stress associated with learning a new trade. Group therapy helped them to build support networks with other IDPs in the local area.

#### Small grants and technical support for micro-entrepreneurs

This part of the programme proved highly sustainable, in part because it dovetailed well and has been integrated with the government's approach. It helped develop more than 9,300 business plans and awarded one-off grants that averaged just over \$500. The success rate of the businesses after six months was 86%. The programme was initially focused on creating sustainable livelihoods for IDPs, but it was extended to include vulnerable members of host communities as well.

#### *Common conclusions*

CHF's approach was comprehensive. The programme supported IDPs in their efforts to establish livelihoods and contributed to improving their self-reliance. It also helped to counter stigmatisation and negative perceptions by building relationships between IDPs and their host community, and by including other vulnerable people. It was tailored to the existing market rather than creating new productive units, and it included the participation of locally recruited African-Colombian staff in Buenaventura. The incorporation of the public and private sector meant more beneficiaries were assisted and there was more logistical, methodological and institutional support. Socio-economic stabilisation projects better guarantee positive results when they are combined with training, assessment, ongoing technical assistance and marketing support, along with the seed capital for equipment and working resources. The programme was monitored and evaluated regularly and refined over time to eliminate weaknesses and reflect lessons learned.

#### *Integration perspective*

The establishment of positive relationships between IDPs and their host communities was a central tenet of the programme. Inevitably, IDPs living with friends or family who supported their transition were able to integrate more quickly and effectively, and CHF designed its initiatives in ways that offered those without such backing in the local area similar levels of support. By making its training and microcredit opportunities available to disadvantaged members of host communities, it helped to reduce potential tensions and resentment. Ten per cent of those who took part in vocational training and 12% of the recipients of microcredits were from host communities.

### Security perspective

CHF's programme helped to improve IDPs' personal security in a number of ways. It provided them with an income and the chance to save money, giving them the possibility to move to more secure neighbourhoods and making them less likely to commit crime and less vulnerable to forced recruitment. It established direct relationships between IDPs and the private sector and enabled IDPs to make positive contributions to the local community, which in turn improved perceptions of them among local opinion formers and residents.

### Gender perspective

Significantly more women than men took part in CHF's intervention, particularly those elements that focused on longer-term employment. Women made up 73% of the beneficiaries on the vocational training programme and 63% on the microenterprise initiative. Thirty-four per cent of participants in the emergency short-term employment programme were women. On the downside, CHF reported an increase in domestic violence associated with women taking the lead in providing for their families.

### Combined humanitarian/development approach

Several years into the project, CHF utilised funding from the US Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration to address the short-term, emergency humanitarian assistance needs of IDPs, and funding from USAID for income generation and housing support. The result was a programme that melded humanitarian and development funding to simultaneously meet humanitarian and development needs. This multi-sectoral assistance approach allowed IDPs to accumulate savings, grow their businesses and otherwise invest in their families, since the income earned did not have to be spent for essential needs.

Overall, the organisation's integrated approach was well received, so much so that *Acción Social* incorporated its initiatives into its national policy and programme, which brings together the government, NGOs, local governments and the private sector (CHF, 2006). The national government's increasing commitment and political will to find solutions for IDPs over the course of the project opened up areas for cooperation to ensure sustainability of the results of CHF's work.

Areas for improvement noted by CHF include the development of differentiated approaches to address specific needs based on age, sex and cultural specificities and additional support for marketing, commercialisation initiatives and specialised training.

### *Limitations*

This analysis of the programme is based on a journal article and the final programme report written by CHF in 2006. It was only possible to assess short-term impacts, because no data was available to show the extent to which IDPs became more self-reliant in the longer term. Nor was it possible to determine how outcomes varied according to sex, age or cultural specificities, or to what extent the most vulnerable IDPs benefited.

## *f. Norwegian Refugee Council*

### *Aim and definition*

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)'s job training programme began in 2012 in Ocaña in the department of Norte de Santander, and the city of Santa Marta in Magdalena. Given that 62% of IDPs in Colombia are under 26 years of age, it was set up to focus on victims and other vulnerable people aged between 18 and 30.

The programme also aimed to mitigate the risk that unemployed young people face of being recruited by armed groups, and the fact that many young IDPs are heads of household, which limits their ability to participate in education and training. The programme began with a selection and sensitisation process for 500 young people, of whom 75% were women. Around 70% of the people selected as beneficiaries were IDPs.

The programme focuses on three areas:

- Job training.
- Cross-cutting training in life skills, rights and democracy
- Improving the technical and operational capacity of SENA, DPS and the National Institute for Secondary Education (*Instituto Nacional de Educación Media* (INEM)'s Simón Bolívar school in Santa Marta.

### *Results and conclusions*

#### Job training

Of the 500 beneficiaries, 462 have enrolled with SENA and 412 have increased their incomes. Training was offered in hairdressing and cosmetics, sewing, business logistics and management, cooking, customer service and administrative health skills. Participants were also assisted with needs such as transport and day-care.

#### Cross-cutting training

By accompanying beneficiaries and encouraging them to make the most of the overall programme, the crosscutting training succeeded in keeping the dropout rate low, at 11% compared with a national average of more than 25%. Individuals and families received orientation visits, advice and follow-up sessions, and those with relatively little education were given supplementary training in areas such as computer skills.

#### Improving institutional capacity

NRC trained 175 staff members. It also carried out two local studies for SENA to help the organisation determine training lines in accordance with market needs and the interests of their target groups. NRC also supported SENA and INEM in their efforts to modernise their infrastructure and learning environments and purchase supplies for their programmes, leading to an improvement in the education and training the agencies offered.

### *Lessons learned*

Regular contact and coordination with national and local authorities was key to the successful implementation of NRC's job training and income generation projects. The fact that beneficiaries participated in all phases of the programme helped to improve their commitment and establish relationships of trust with the team on the ground. This in turn helped those running the programme to better understand the obstacles and difficulties that participants faced, and help in overcoming them.

### *Limitations*

NRC's programme was due to finish at the end of 2014. An impact evaluation will be needed in several years' time to assess whether participants were able to stay in their jobs and become more self-reliant in the longer term. Despite funding having been difficult to secure to continue the project, it appears to have achieved its aim, but without feedback from external stakeholders its value for money is difficult to determine.

### *g. NRC's information counselling and legal assistance programme*

The success or otherwise of livelihood interventions is influenced by the operating environment in which they take place, and this is determined in part by local and national policies, institutions and processes. As such, NRC's information counselling and legal assistance (ICLA) programme is helping communities to reclaim land under the 2011 Victims' Law. The organisation is currently working with 13 communities in the departments of Magdalena, Nariño, Cauca and Norte de Santander to gather data on IDPs' needs in terms of legal assistance. It is also working in close collaboration with local authorities to improve their capacity to deal with restitution claims.

The IDPs are from rural areas and belong to some of the most vulnerable groups. Their literacy level, for example, is very low. The team assesses their needs on a case-by-case basis. One of the 13 communities targeted by the ICLA initiative in the Sierra Nevada has succeeded in reclaiming its land, and the authorities have provided it with equipment that allows them to produce their own coffee rather than simply growing and selling their beans.

### *Limitations*

The programme is relatively recent and legal processes are very slow. Longer-term follow-up will be needed to properly assess its impact.

### *Gaps*

#### Limitations of this case study

This document forms part of a broader study on protracted displacement. Researched, drafted and reviewed in eight working days, it relied on desk research carried out by the research assistants working on the broader study and complemented by the author of this case study. It draws mainly on information from academic journals, research institutes, think tanks and evaluation reports, and to a lesser extent on information gleaned from interviews with NRC and UARIV.

The selection of the livelihood programmes examined was limited by the availability of sufficiently detailed information and the time available to gather it. We were restricted to selecting programmes for which evaluation and impact reports were readily available or easily obtained from the organisations involved. It was not possible to find programmes that had been evaluated externally, or to assess success and sustainability in anything other than the short term.

#### Suggestions for future livelihoods programmes in Colombia

The literature review and the initiatives analysed clearly highlighted a number of issues relevant to future livelihood programmes. They should:

- take the overall context, including security, information on IDPs' current and former livelihood strategies and market analyses, into account;
- develop a partnership between the development and humanitarian sectors. Long-term livelihood programmes for IDPs are essentially development interventions, and as such should be designed jointly;
- take host communities' and gender and ethnic specificities into account;
- include other vulnerable people as well as IDPs;
- foster economic and social interaction between host communities and IDPs;
- create short-term integration opportunities;
- include the private sector; and
- include psychosocial support.

The creation of employment and income generation opportunities in rural areas, and the improvement and expansion of public services and infrastructure, are also vital to the effective implementation of livelihood programmes (Arias, 2012).

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## Case study: IDPs' livelihoods and self-reliance interventions in Darfur 2003-2014

### Country context

#### *Political, economic and social causes of displacement*

Sudan, which ranked 166th out of 187 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index, has a population made up of many religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups (UNDP, 2014). Development has focussed on the central region around the capital Khartoum, to the detriment of peripheral regions such as Darfur, Kordofan and the eastern states (ICG, 2014).

The country has experienced an economic crisis since South Sudan's independence in 2011, as a result of which it lost most of its oil fields, and with them the government's chief source of income. Agriculture, including livestock farming, is now the biggest contributor to the country's gross domestic product (Fitzpatrick & Young, 2013).

There are currently around 3.4 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in Sudan (OCHA, 2014), the result of conflict and violence in various parts of the country. New displacement has taken place in the Darfur region and South Kordofan and Blue Nile states in 2014, and people are thought to be living in protracted displacement in these areas, Khartoum and some eastern states. This case study focuses on the situation of the 2.5 million-plus IDPs in Darfur (OCHA, 2014).

The current conflict in Darfur erupted in 2003, as negotiations took place that would culminate in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 and the end of the second Sudanese civil war between northern and southern Sudan. Tensions were high and violence between herders and farmers was already taking place when, in early 2003, local opposition movements took up arms.

The main groups at the time were the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/SLA), and their stated aim was to fight decades of political, economic and social marginalisation (ICG, 2014). Khartoum responded with airstrikes and ground offensives. It also armed mainly Arab militias, known as Janjaweed, which became infamous for mass killings and scorched earth tactics (ICG, 2014; Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

The conflict since has ebbed and flowed, alternating between periods of heightened violence and relative calm. The dynamic changed in 2006, when one armed faction signed the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) with Khartoum, causing the fragmentation of other groups and waves of violence between them (ICG, 2014). The latest upsurge in violence came in 2013 as government-backed Arab militias slipped gradually out of Khartoum's control and began fighting each other. Communal violence over natural resources has also increased in recent years, with evidence of a move away from the Arab versus non-Arab dichotomy of the conflict (Fitzpatrick & Young, 2013; ICG, 2014).

The conflict has affected every level of Darfur society, which has also suffered the impact of natural hazards including recurrent droughts and severe flooding and associated outbreaks of disease (Young, 2007). A huge humanitarian response was launched in early 2004, followed in 2007 by a joint United Nations and African Union (AU) peacekeeping force (ICG, 2014). Funding shortages, insecurity and access restrictions imposed by the government and armed groups have hampered the response. In 2009, 13 international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were expelled from Darfur and three national NGOs shut down following the International Criminal Court (ICC)'s indictment of President Omar al-Bashir (Pavanello, 2011).

#### *How conflict led to displacement*

Darfur's civilian population has borne the brunt of the conflict, which has had an enormous impact in terms of displacement, physical insecurity, loss of livelihoods and social networks, morbidity, malnutrition and loss of life (Gebru et al., 2013). Civilians have fled their homes to escape dreadful crimes, including targeted and indiscriminate attacks, torture, the destruction of property, sexual violence and forced recruitment by both sides (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Janjaweed militias in particular have been accused of mass killings, rape, the torching and looting of villages and extorting protection payments (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

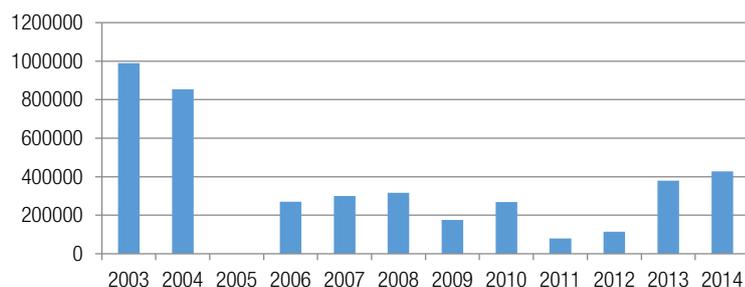
Both government forces and armed groups have restricted the movement of local populations, cutting off access to markets and migration routes (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010). The looting and destruction of agricultural assets and livestock, combined with the impacts of natural hazards, has disrupted livelihoods and led to food insecurity in some areas, forcing more people to flee (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Some population groups, including IDPs, have been forcibly displaced from their land, and the recent upsurge in communal violence among Arab tribes has caused new displacement (ICC, 2008; ICG, 2014).

#### *How displacement has unfolded*

Almost 2m people were internally displaced in 2003 and 2004, the first two years of the conflict, and the number of IDPs continued to grow in the following years, reaching 2.7m by the end of 2009 (IDMC, 2010). The figure currently stands at an estimated 2.5m, representing around 40% of the region's population (OCHA, 2014; UNICEF, 2008). New displacements have generally mirrored conflict dynamics (see Figure 1), with at least 428,000 people forced to flee their homes in 2014.

### **New displacements in Darfur by year**

Source: OCHA



Many IDPs have fled from rural areas to Darfur's towns and cities (Young & Jacobsen, 2013). Most settled in camps, where some have lived for more than ten years. Others sought refuge with host families, while others still have rented or bought their own housing (Young & Jacobsen, 2013). Others have fled to or within rural areas (Lind et al., 2012). They include nomadic pastoralists prevented from migrating with their livestock along their traditional routes. Unlike many villagers they tend not to move to camps, choosing instead to seek refuge with other members of their ethnic groups in safer rural areas (Gebru et al., 2013; Young et al., 2009). Relatively little is known about IDPs living outside camps, whether in urban or rural areas. There are no standard procedures for identifying them or for addressing their protection and assistance needs (Ferris et al., 2011; UN, 2013).

Military operations, attacks against camps, communal violence and general insecurity have caused secondary displacement since 2005. There is, however, no estimate of the number of people repeatedly displaced. Secondary occupation of land has taken place since the beginning of the conflict and some depopulated villages have been burned down, in both cases most likely to prevent the original inhabitants from returning (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). In other areas, accounts of forced return and relocation have been reported (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has also recorded some voluntary returns, mainly in western Darfur in 2011 and 2012 following a slight improvement in the security situation there. IDPs face many obstacles in their pursuit of durable solutions, including persistent insecurity, land tenure disputes, the destruction of crops and agricultural livelihoods, the absence of rule of law and a lack of humanitarian access and basic services (Ferris et al., 2011).

## **Livelihoods**

### *Darfur livelihoods in general*

Livelihood strategies vary significantly across Darfur, influenced by environmental conditions, available infrastructure and other factors (Lind et al., 2012). In the interests of simplicity, however, this section will look at the issue in the region more generally, meaning that some aspects covered may apply to some areas but not others.

Before the current conflict, most rural livelihoods were based on farming and herding, and sometimes a combination of the two, supplemented with other activities such as trade, the extraction of natural resources and economic migration and remittances (Lind et al., 2012). The conflict and violence since 2003, however, have severely affected farmers' and herders' everyday lives, whether they have been displaced or not.

Farms, homes and wells have been destroyed, livestock killed and tools and supplies looted (Young & Jacobsen, 2013). Informal taxes have been levied, and movement restrictions impede transhumance, access to land and markets, economic migration and the transport of goods (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010; Lind et al., 2012; Young & Jacobsen, 2013). Combined with the effects of recurrent floods and drought, and endemic and epidemic livestock diseases, the result has been a 'virtual collapse' of Darfur's traditional livelihood strategies (Young, 2007; Young & Jacobsen, 2013).

In their efforts to adapt, many people have had to change their strategies or take greater risks in trying to maintain their traditional ones. For some, it has meant a change from rural to urban livelihoods such as casual wage labour and petty trade. Others have chosen a combination of the two (Lind et al., 2012).

Some of those who have stayed in rural areas have taken up work as agricultural labourers, or activities such as charcoal-making and firewood collection (Lind et al., 2012). Others have tried to continue farming, but have seen their yields reduced to subsistence levels when previously they had surpluses to sell (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010; Lind et al., 2012). Trade in livestock and the brass alloy *tombac* has suffered as a result of the loss of access to markets, transport and communications infrastructure (Lind et al., 2012). One overall affect has been to change the balance of supply and demand for food in the region, with fewer people cultivating food and a growing urban population dependent on buying, exchanging or receiving it (Lind et al., 2012). Arabs face fewer restrictions on their local movement than their non-Arab counterparts and can access markets and land relatively easily. They face restrictions for long-distance movements, which they undertake mainly as part of their pastoralist lifestyle and for trade purposes. For short-distance travels they face less restrictions, especially compared to non-Arabs.

Increased competition for resources and livelihoods has caused tensions between population groups and fuelled further conflict and violence (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010). The once mutually beneficial relationship between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers had already begun to deteriorate because of pressure on scarce resources before 2003, but the current conflict has made them scarcer still (Young & Jacobsen, 2013). The loss of income from livestock sales has also left some people struggling to pay for health care, education and veterinary services (Fitzpatrick & Young, 2013).

The work of international organisations, which arrived en masse in 2004, also affected local markets and employment opportunities by driving demand for some commodities such as housing and luxury goods, and increasing the supply of others such as grain (Young & Jacobsen, 2013). The distribution of food aid has also relieved the pressure on some populations to maintain livelihood strategies that exposed them to risk or to accept inadequate working conditions to meet their basic needs (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010).

#### *IDPs' livelihoods and coping strategies*

IDPs have been physically separated from their homes and livelihoods and so face greater challenges in adapting and adopting new strategies (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010). The few assets they were able to take with them when they fled may also have been stolen, and livestock may have died en route (Gebru et al., 2013). In some cases, even those who managed to get their animals to their places of refuge found that there was not enough space to keep them in good health, with livestock diseases spreading quickly in overcrowded conditions (Gebru et al., 2013). Secondary displacement only serves to further erode IDPs' coping strategies and increase their vulnerability to shocks.

The options available to IDPs depend among other things on whether they have taken refuge in rural or urban areas, or in or outside camps. Many in and around urban areas, where the range of options is wider, have taken to collecting and selling firewood, brick-making and charcoal production (Lind et al., 2012). Those outside

urban camps have also undertaken casual labour, including as farmhands, while those in camps are more likely to have resorted to petty trade (Buchanan-Smith & Mcelhinney, 2011; Young & Jacobsen, 2013).

In rural areas, farming and herding are still a source of livelihoods for some IDPs, but less so than before their displacement given the persistent insecurity that limits their access to land. That said, some hosts have made land available for IDPs to cultivate in return for rent or a share of their harvest (Buchanan-Smith & Mcelhinney, 2011; CHF International, 2006). Such activities are unlikely to provide IDPs with the income they need, so they often complement them with casual labour, petty trade and charcoal production (Lind et al., 2012).

IDPs tend to adopt less successful livelihood strategies that fail to meet their basic needs, especially in the initial stages of their displacement (Buchanan-Smith & Mcelhinney, 2011; Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010; Young & Jacobsen, 2013). Their activities are often not sustainable because they damage the environment, represent a risk to their safety or are exploitative (Young & Jacobsen, 2013). IDPs who collect and sell firewood are likely to have to venture outside safe areas where they are vulnerable to attack, sexual assault and the imposition of informal taxes (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010). As the collection of wood for fuel and construction depletes local supplies, they are forced to travel further afield, heightening the risks they face (Young & Jacobsen, 2013). Organisations have provided IDPs with fuel-efficient stoves in an effort to reduce their need for firewood (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010; Practical Action, 2010).

Many IDPs, particularly those in camps, have exhausted their own resources and rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs (Hill, Jorgensen Diener, Miller & White, 2006). They also receive education, health care and veterinary services, sometimes free of charge. Humanitarian organisations offer IDPs some employment opportunities, particularly in urban areas. Given, however, that they rarely have a permanent presence in the places where they operate, they generally do not provide a basis for sustainable livelihoods.

Some IDPs, particularly those living in protracted displacement, divide their lives between their places of refuge and origin in order to cultivate and keep control of their land, supplement their income and maintain relations with their communities (Young & Jacobsen, 2013).

Assessments in North Darfur suggest that the incidence of extremely poor families using child labour in an effort to get by increases when they become displaced (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Even families receiving self-reliance assistance have done so (Practical Action, 2010). Other families have split up in an effort to meet their basic needs, increase their livelihood options and reduce their exposure to risks, particularly in the early stages of their displacement (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

Traditional gender roles also change as a result of conflict and displacement, and displaced women often shoulder extra burdens (Ondiak & Ismail, 2009). They assume more social and family responsibilities because male family members have been killed, joined armed groups or left in search of work. They also have to establish alternative livelihood strategies to sustain their families, many of which involve risks to their physical safety, dignity and wellbeing (Young & Jacobsen, 2013).

## Laws, policies and institutions

### *Main laws and policies on IDPs and how they relate to livelihoods*

Sudan has no national law on internal displacement, but it has adopted two national policies that deal specifically with IDPs' needs and rights. In both, the government recognises its primary responsibility to protect and assist the country's displaced population (Ferris et al., 2011; Republic of Sudan, 2009).

The 2009 national policy for IDPs covers all phases of displacement and applies equally to IDPs and returnees. It states that it is based on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, but its definition of an IDP definition is not in keeping with the Principles because it is limited to Sudanese citizens only (Republic of Sudan, 2009).

The policy sets out a number of rights relevant to livelihoods, such as freedom of movement, and access to food, health care, education, personal documents, property and economic and employment opportunities (Republic of Sudan, 2009). It also commits the state to 'support the IDPs and help them earn their living; develop their skills to participate in development, settlement and building of peace. IDPs have the right to work and the state must include them in the productive circle again' (Republic of Sudan, 2009). The policy is forward-looking in that it aims to reduce IDPs' dependence on aid and improve their self-reliance (Republic of Sudan, 2009).

Implementation has been slow, in part because of weak institutional capacity and because security concerns often override the response to IDPs' needs.

In 2008 the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) adopted a land policy for South Darfur through which it distributed plots to IDPs who wished to integrate locally. To be eligible, they had to give up their IDP status and food distribution cards, but they did not receive enough government assistance to make up for the shortfalls this left them with (Buchanan-Smith & Mcelhinney, 2011).

Two Darfur peace agreements have been reached, but neither has been fully implemented. In 2006 the government and a faction of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) signed the DPA, which sets out as a priority to 'address the needs of the war-affected areas, with special attention to displaced persons, to provide the basic services and security needed to enable them to return to their livelihoods in safety and dignity'. The agreement failed to gain traction with the main armed groups or important parts of civil society, including IDPs themselves (Mundt & Ferris, 2008).

In 2010, the government and a number of armed groups signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). Among its provisions it states that 'IDPs shall be provided with humanitarian assistance and means of livelihood before and after their return'. Some of the agreement's political and institutional provisions have been put into effect, but a lack of funding, will and capacity have hampered its broader implementation. Buy-in from stakeholders has also been relatively low. The main armed groups did not join because they wanted a national approach to the issues concerning them.

Sudan is a signatory to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, also known as the Great Lakes Pact, which includes protocols on IDPs' protection and assistance and returnees' property rights. The first recognises IDPs' rights in areas relevant to livelihoods, and establishes IDPs' right to 'seek freely

opportunities for employment and to participate in economic activities'. The second is highly relevant to returnees' self-reliance and livelihoods because it provides for the restitution of property. The restitution of land is given particular significance for communities that rely on it for their livelihoods (International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, 2006). Sudan has not to date signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa, also known as the Kampala Convention.

### *Institutions*

Central, regional and local government authorities and their traditional counterparts influence IDPs' livelihood strategies because they either work to enhance their self-reliance or act as obstacles to it. HAC is the main coordinating body for IDPs' assistance at the national level, and it is also charged with providing technical help and support for the planning, implementation and evaluation of both national and international responses. The government also established a high-level committee on IDPs in 2007, but no information on its activities is available (Ferris et al., 2011).

Sudan's social and cultural affairs ministry provides income-generating opportunities for displaced women in camps in and around Nyala in South Darfur (Bashir, Aletegani & Nour, 2012). The agriculture ministries of some Darfur states are also involved in livestock programmes (Fitzpatrick & Young, 2013). The Darfur Regional Authority (DRA) is responsible for implementing the DPA and DDPD, but it has struggled to support and assist IDPs because of resurgent violence and limited funds and capacity.

Traditional authorities that govern customary and statutory law are also relevant to IDPs' livelihoods because they can, in theory at least, determine their access to land. There has, however, been a deterioration in customary governance in recent decades which, combined with the effects of the conflict, has led to weaker land tenure security (Lind et al., 2012; Young & Jacobsen, 2013). Land seizures have been cited as one of the reasons IDPs are no longer able to cultivate their land (Young & Jacobsen, 2013).

### *Political attitudes to displacement*

Khartoum has said publicly that it is committed to resolving the displacement crisis in Darfur, but in reality it has done little and in some cases its actions have undermined its stated goal (Ferris et al., 2011). The government's priority is for IDPs to return home without necessarily taking the security situation in their areas of origin into account. Armed groups, on the other hand, have an interest in preventing returns and keeping the number of IDPs high in order to maintain or attract international attention to the situation in the region (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

Either way, it is unclear how many IDPs living in protracted displacement, often in or near urban areas, would be willing to return to the countryside (Buchanan-Smith & Jaspars, 2007). Focus group discussions suggest that young IDPs in particular would prefer to stay in urban areas, where they have become adapted and education and livelihood opportunities are better (Buchanan-Smith & Mcelhinney, 2011). Many IDPs have also insisted on compensation for their losses as a prerequisite for their return (IDMC, 2010).

## Self-reliance interventions

### *General trends*

In the early stages of the current conflict in Darfur relatively few programmes were established to support IDPs' self-reliance or livelihood strategies (Young, 2007). In 2005, however, some organisations began to implement small-scale livelihood programmes, including the distribution of seeds, tools and fodder and the provision of veterinary services (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Such interventions increased in 2006 and 2007 following the signing of the DPA and the establishment of the Darfur joint assessment mission, and expanded to include income-generation projects in camps. The overall focus of assistance, however, continued to be meeting beneficiaries' immediate needs and protecting their livelihood assets (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

In 2008 the UN included early recovery in its work plan, and initiatives were developed to link the humanitarian response to peace-building and expand assistance to rural areas (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Humanitarian assistance continued despite the expulsion of many NGOs in 2009, and livelihood interventions based on livestock have increasingly formed part of the response (Fitzpatrick & Young, 2013).

Self-reliance programmes have taken various forms and approaches over the years. Some aimed to make people less vulnerable by supporting their protection and increasing their livelihood assets. Interventions such as replenishing livestock, and the provision of food aid, fuel-efficient stoves, seeds, tools and veterinary services, were intended to reduce IDPs' exposure to the risk of attacks and exploitation in their search for food and livelihoods (Gebru et al., 2013; Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008, 2010).

Other interventions aimed to reduce the amount of money IDPs spent on basic services by providing free health care and education, while the provision of additional food rations for them to sell, and vocational training in skills such as carpentry and tailoring, were intended to boost their ability to generate an income (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2010; Young, 2007). Some education, health, human rights and income generating interventions have specifically been designed to respond to women's livelihood and protection needs, both in camps and in host communities (Bashir et al., 2012).

Livelihoods interventions in Darfur have faced a number of challenges. The volatile security situation has restricted humanitarian access and beneficiaries' freedom of movement and access to markets. Competition for resources between farmers and herders has also undermined outcomes, and some interventions have fuelled such competition (Gebru et al., 2013). Funding and supply shortages have proved further obstacles (Gebru et al., 2013; Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Relatively few organisations have tried to address the structural challenges in policies and institutions that hamper successful livelihood strategies. Initiatives could focus on challenges in accessing land, the demarcation of migratory routes and dealing with secondary occupation (Fitzpatrick & Young, 2013). It is also often unclear whether interventions have had positive impacts in the longer term, because assessments and evaluations are not always carried out (Gebru et al., 2013).

The following section examines three livelihood and self-reliance programmes undertaken by international organisations that have exclusively or partially targeted IDPs.

CHF International began to work in camps in North and South Darfur in mid-2004, towards the end of the first period of widespread violence, and was among the first organisations to make livelihood interventions as part of its relief work in the region. Its aim was to ‘save lives, reduce human suffering and increase the coping capacity and restore livelihoods’ of IDPs (CHF International, 2005). The programme identified three objectives relating to food security, shelter and livelihoods and income, with the overall aim of achieving a mid-term impact at the same time as addressing IDPs’ immediate needs.

CHF employed a community-driven approach, in which IDPs and members of their host communities were involved in the day-to-day implementation of the programme and the revision of operations (CHF International, 2006). Its relief interventions in areas such as food security, shelter, income generation and community mobilisation aimed to preserve and reinforce traditional livelihood strategies in camps (Hill et al., 2006).

Part of the programme focused on displaced and host community farmers, and included an initiative under which hosts gave IDPs access to land to cultivate in return for rent or a share of their harvest (CHF International, 2006). It also provided seeds, tools, communal mills, egg-laying chickens and veterinary services, and gave vocational training in weaving, livestock skills and the production of goods ranging from pasta to clothing (Hill et al., 2006). The training was particularly intended for IDPs living close to urban markets and who would be able to use their new skills to participate in the local economy.

The milling initiative was a particular success. Communal equipment allowed IDPs and their hosts to mill their own grain, which meant they no longer had to pay for external milling services with a percentage of their grain, but could rather eat or trade any surplus (Hill et al., 2006). The upshot was that families had more food and income, which helped them to become more self-reliant and in some cases to pay for basic services. The introduction of egg-laying chickens was a similar success. It gave IDPs both in and outside camps immediate access to high-quality protein and an opportunity to generate income by trading surplus eggs. Chickens are also easy to transport, so IDPs were able to take them with them when they returned to their homes, and militias were far less likely to steal them than sheep, cattle or goats, which contributed to reducing raids on camps (Hill et al., 2006).

The distribution of chickens and other initiatives such as training in weaving specifically targeted displaced women (CHF International, 2005). They contributed to women’s protection because they strengthened ties between those taking part in the activities, which took place within the NGO compound. The additional income meant they did not have to undertake riskier activities such as firewood collection, and it helped to mitigate financial problems as a cause of domestic violence (Hill et al., 2006). Most of CHF’s interventions were designed to be ‘portable’, meaning that IDPs could take them with them when they returned to their homes or settled elsewhere. As such they also helped to reduce IDPs’ dependence on aid (Hill et al., 2006). There is, however, no information on how the beneficiaries have fared since.

Both the government and armed groups were appreciative of CHF’s work, which created a channel for dialogue on other problems affecting IDPs’ livelihoods. Inevitably, however, its interventions did not address all of the

challenges IDPs faced. Women sometimes felt safer as a result of them but men did not, because their personal security had not been taken properly into account and they remained vulnerable to attacks. Neither was the programme able to address the political, economic and social factors that contributed to insecurity outside camps, which meant that IDPs' efforts to use their new skills to participate in the local economy were still at risk of being undermined (Hill et al., 2006).

The cultural appropriateness of CHF's interventions was not evaluated, but its community-driven approach certainly helped to ensure that they were sensitive to local norms and customs. Overall, the programme succeeded in at least partially achieving its aim of saving lives, restoring IDPs' livelihoods and increasing their coping capacity.

#### *Danish Refugee Council, 2006–2007*

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) expanded its activities in Darfur in 2005 with the launch of a rural protection and livelihoods initiative in Zalingei. From 2006 it ran the same programme in northern Wadi Salih, with the overall aim of contributing to the achievement of durable solutions for the people affected by conflict in West Darfur. The recovery and protection of livelihoods was one of three DRC programme objectives in Darfur for 2006 and 2007. Making livelihoods sustainable became the overall objective in 2008 as its focus shifted from emergency response to recovery (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008; Gad, 2014).

The programme's target group was rural populations outside camps. Given that most humanitarian assistance had focused on camps in or near urban areas, DRC's choice of location was intended to help fill the gap in rural areas (Gad, 2014; Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). The programme intentionally did not focus on IDPs, so as not to reinforce the imbalance between the provision of assistance to displaced people and their counterparts in the general population (Gad, 2014). Given the number of people displaced in rural Darfur at the time, however, the programme's beneficiaries inevitably included IDPs and returnees as well as others affected by the conflict (Gad, 2014).

DRC's approach was to combine the distribution of food aid and non-food items with agricultural and livestock support and income generation initiatives, including skills training. Beneficiaries in areas that were difficult to access mainly received help in meeting their immediate needs, while those in areas where access was easier also benefitted from the programme's longer-term interventions (Gad, 2014). Rehabilitation initiatives such as recreational and social activities were designed to help communities become more self-reliant (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). DRC also had a support project for 'extremely vulnerable individuals' that provided them with non-food items and agricultural assets including livestock (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Some of its initiatives specifically targeted either women or men.

DRC often ran its projects directly, but it also had local partnerships with grassroots organisations, particularly in the water, hygiene and sanitation sector, and worked with community area councils (CACs) that it asked both non-Arab groups and their Arab counterparts to set up (Gad, 2014; Jaspars, Jabbar & Fuddle, 2010). The councils were intended to help facilitate dialogue, identify common interests and implement interventions that contributed to the 'peaceful handling of the conflict' (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). At the time they were

established, displacement camps had been up and running for several years and had become increasingly volatile and violent.

DRC's provision of food aid to people in and outside camps was justified because both groups were facing food insecurity and their livelihood opportunities were limited (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). In terms of income generation, the distribution of fuel-efficient stoves and food processing equipment in urban areas, and the provision of training in carpentry and tailoring in rural areas were potentially its most effective initiatives. It was not clear, however, if households were able to access the raw materials for such activities.

The project evaluation also found that interventions focused on developing skills for the future without immediate outcomes were inappropriate given persistent insecurity and the fact that livelihoods continued to be disrupted, human rights violations were still taking place, institutions were not functioning and access to basic services was limited (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). The provision of communal grain mills and irrigation pumps was judged to be the least effective intervention, because quarrels between groups meant they were not put to good use. Little was done in the way of needs assessment ahead of the vocational training sessions, which were generally taken up by people who were relatively well off and had time to attend, while the most vulnerable were unable to because they were under pressure to meet their basic needs (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

DRC's approach failed to address major policy and governance constraints on people's livelihood strategies. Using interventions to facilitate dialogue created a good entry point for such discussions, but its potential was not well exploited (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008). Without addressing the difficulties its beneficiaries faced in accessing markets, for example, the organisation's work on livelihoods was only ever going to have a limited impact (Jaspars & O'Callaghan, 2008).

The programme went some way to achieving its objective of protecting livelihoods, contributing to the prevention of displacement in rural areas and helping IDPs recover their livelihoods. There was no information, however, on how the programme's impacts varied between men and women. Its overall aims of making them sustainable and contributing to the achievement of durable solutions were, however, premature given the context. There was little information on the cultural appropriateness of DRC's interventions, but its use of CACs is likely to have helped ensure its work was sensitive to local norms and customs.

#### *Practical Action, 2006–2007*

Practical Action's programme in North Darfur, which it ran from April 2006 until March 2007, aimed to contribute to sustainable livelihoods for returnees and host communities by improving IDPs' skills and capacities and so make it easier for them to integrate smoothly when they returned to their homes. It was subsequently expanded to respond to the immediate needs of people affected by the conflict and to help rebuild their livelihoods.

The programme was based on the assumption that poor people needed better food security and alternative income sources, for which the processing and preservation of agricultural produce was chosen (Practical Action,

2007). The target group was more than 13,600 displaced families living in Abu Shouk, Zam-Zam and Dar El Salam camps and Um Shigaira village, the majority of whom had lost most of their livelihood assets during sudden attacks on their villages. By the time the programme began, they had exhausted the little they were able to salvage.

Practical Action's approach was to empower women, pastoralists and small-scale farmers. At least half of the beneficiaries of some interventions were women, and others, such as training in the processing of agricultural produce, were exclusively focused on them. The organisation implemented its programme in collaboration with community leaders, village development committees and women's development associations, which were involved at all stages (Practical Action, 2007). The unrest and the increasing politicisation of displacement camps, which started after the signing of the DPA in 2006, and the subsequent violence in camps and against aid workers, did not affect the programme, because those involved in its implementation met regularly to discuss activities and achievements (Practical Action, 2007).

Overall, Practical Action's interventions achieved results it believed contributed to its goal of establishing sustainable livelihoods for returnees and host communities. Thirteen per cent of the families targeted found new sources of income by processing agricultural produce and manufacturing improved stoves. Other beneficiaries were trained in masonry skills and were able to find jobs and increase their revenue, while those who were trained in food security were able to apply their new skills when they returned to their homes (Practical Action, 2007). It also encouraged IDPs to work together, enabling them to reach joint decisions, assess their needs collectively and approach NGOs, UN agencies and government institutions as a united group.

The programme appears to have contributed to improving food security and providing IDPs with alternative sources of income, but at a time when violence and new displacement was increasing and few returns were taking place, its aim of establishing sustainable livelihoods for returnees was premature. No evaluation of its cultural appropriateness was available.

There is no up-to-date information on how the programme's beneficiaries have fared since, but some reported in 2007 that the vocational training they received had enabled them to find work or become self-employed. Some were also able to employ and train other IDPs. In some cases, they said they were able to earn enough to sustain their household, pay school fees and support members of their wider family (Practical Action, 2007).

### *Conclusion*

The three programmes above show that humanitarian programming focused on livelihoods in a protracted displacement situation can be beneficial to IDPs. They reveal that mixed programmes that provide both assets and skills are the most useful approach, and that, for livelihood interventions to be successful in a context such as Darfur, where opportunities tend to be limited and are often disrupted by persistent conflict and violence, it is important that they are combined with initiatives that help IDPs meet their immediate food needs.

The programmes also demonstrate that making basic services more readily available helps IDPs concentrate on other aspects of their livelihoods and relieves the pressure on them to try to meet their needs by engaging in

dangerous activities. They show that, to make interventions sustainable and useful in the longer term, the assets and skills provided should be transferable to IDPs' areas of origin or settlement elsewhere, helping them to choose their settlement option freely and without putting their livelihoods at risk.

The three programmes involved a number of similar interventions, such as the manufacture or provision of energy-efficient stoves, training in the processing of agricultural produce and the distribution of farming assets such as seeds and tools. Other initiatives, such as CHF's introduction of egg-laying chickens, were more innovative.

All three organisations had to work in a context of limited resources, continued insecurity, increasing politicisation and movement restrictions. Practical Action's programme demonstrated the importance of continuous dialogue in mitigating local tensions and facilitating implementation. In all three cases, engagement in policy and governance issues that influence livelihood strategies was limited. As such, the programmes' impact in terms of improving IDPs' self-reliance and livelihood opportunities was also limited.

## **Gaps**

### *Limitations in the case study*

This case study focuses on the livelihoods of IDPs living in protracted displacement in Darfur. Given limitations in terms of its length and the time available to conduct it, it was not possible to differentiate further between the particularities of the five states that make up this vast region.

This document forms part of a broader study on protracted displacement. Researched, drafted and reviewed in eight working days, it relied on desk research carried out by the research assistants working on the broader study, complemented by the author of this case study. It draws mainly on information from academic journals, research institutes, think tanks, NGOs and evaluation reports, and to a lesser extent on information gleaned from an interview with DRC. The evaluation of DRC's programme was an independent review, but CHF and Practical Action evaluated their programmes internally.

The selection of the livelihood programmes examined was limited by the availability of sufficiently detailed information and the time available to gather it. As such, the three examples are from roughly the same period in the conflict. It was not possible to identify detailed reviews or assessments of more recent programmes.

### *Missing evidence*

In-depth literature on livelihoods in Darfur in the context of current conflict is limited, particularly from 2009 onwards. The field research for the few detailed studies that have been carried out was often restricted by both access and time constraints. The result is a shortage of high-quality data and analysis, not only on livelihoods programmes but also on the current situation in Darfur as a whole (Ferris et al., 2011; Gebru et al., 2013; Lind et al., 2012). Recent information on secondary displacement and on IDPs outside camps, especially those in urban areas, is all but non-existent.

The security situation in Darfur makes effective monitoring and evaluation difficult, with international organisations making only essential and relatively short field visits (Young, 2007). Given that the funding

available for impact assessments is also limited, there is little information on how humanitarian and development initiatives affect IDPs' overall situation, particularly in the medium and long term.

It was not possible with the literature available to draw up a comprehensive chronology and analysis of IDPs' livelihoods and interventions to support them over the course of protracted displacement in Darfur. Neither are IDPs' own efforts to become more self-reliant documented. Those programme reports that do exist tend to be authored by the implementing agency for donor purposes, and there are very few independent or alternative views of such projects, including their cultural appropriateness.

### *Suggestions for further research*

Based on the literature that the authors reviewed for this case study, further in-depth research on the following topics is recommended:

- the current livelihood options available to IDPs in Darfur, their effectiveness and how to access them;
- the needs and livelihoods of IDPs outside camps, especially in urban settings;
- IDPs' intentions in terms of return, local integration and settlement elsewhere;
- the long-term effectiveness of self-reliance and livelihood interventions;
- government efforts to improve IDPs' self-reliance;
- the evaluation of policy implementation;
- development initiatives aimed at improving IDPs' self-reliance;
- IDPs' own efforts to improve their self-reliance;
- best practices for improving IDPs' self-reliance in insecure settings; and
- the allocation of humanitarian and development funding and its effect on the availability of support for IDPs' self-reliance.

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## Protracted refugees and livelihoods in Jordan

### Introduction

Jordan was selected as a case study for this project both because it is a major host of refugees in protracted displacement, and also because these refugees' livelihood outcomes contain many instructive lessons about the relationship between legal frameworks, political attitudes and the ability to be self-reliant. The case study shows how different legal regimes (and political attitudes) have affected the nature of protracted displacement for Jordan's three main caseloads: Palestinians, Iraqis and Syrians. The Syrian example is touched on very briefly, as Syrians have not officially entered protracted displacement, though they will almost certainly do so in the future. Each section first sets out the legal framework and livelihood outcome pertaining to that refugee group, and then highlights projects which are or have been implemented to support their livelihoods.

### History of displacement and prospects for durable solutions

Since the middle of the twentieth century Jordanian society has been repeatedly transformed by waves of displacement from neighboring countries. In 1948 the Arab–Israeli war displaced some 900,000 Palestinians. Many came to Jordan, which also formally annexed the West Bank in 1950. The 1967 war triggered another wave of displacement, and many Palestinians from Gaza and some from the West Bank also sought refuge in Jordan. Today, there are officially almost two million registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan, and Jordanians of Palestinian descent may make up half or more of the total population. Most refugees have full citizenship rights, and while they retain their refugee status and the right to return there is little hope of a political settlement in the near future that would allow them to relocate to Palestine.

Iraqis have sought refuge in Jordan repeatedly over the last several decades, as professionals and opponents of the Ba'ath regime fled in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and the Gulf War and economic sanctions imposed in the 1990s led to an exodus of middle-class Iraqis (Chatelard, 2009). The bulk of the current caseload is related to the 2003 Anglo-American invasion, or more specifically to the ethno-sectarian violence that followed in its wake. While the numbers are disputed, a FAFO study conducted in 2007 concluded that there were between 450,000 and 500,000 Iraqi refugees in the country at the peak of the violence in 2005–2006 (FAFO, 2007). Although many Iraqi refugees secured resettlement places in the West and some have since returned to Iraq, the situation there remains volatile and many do not feel able to return permanently. The majority of Iraqi refugees are in Amman, Zarqa and Irbid. There has also been an upswing in new Iraqi refugee registrations, due to or out of fear of attacks by Islamic State (ISIS) in northern Iraq (UNHCR, 2014a).

There is also a large Syrian refugee crisis underway in Jordan, with 620,000 refugees registered with UNHCR as of August 2014 (UNHCR, 2014a). The vast majority (82%) are self-settled in urban settings, though over 80,000 are hosted in Za'atari camp and over 13,000 in Azraq camp (UNHCR, 2014a). These refugees are fleeing civil war, sectarian conflict and a public service breakdown in most areas of Syria, as well as rising food and fuel prices (UNHCR, 2014). Their displacement is likely to become protracted, with no prospect of a durable solution in the near future.

An additional 1,700 people from Sudan and other countries have been registered as refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2014). Due to the lack of information and small size of these caseloads they will not be discussed in this study.

These displaced populations are making their way in an economy that already faces several challenges. Unemployment is high, particularly among young Jordanians, and almost half of all jobs are in the informal sector (NEF/WRC, 2014). The economy is small, does not possess valuable natural resources like oil, has insufficient water resources and is highly reliant on foreign assistance (CIA Factbook, 2014).

## **Law and policy framework**

### *International framework and institutions*

While Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR considers the ‘protection space’ for refugees and asylum-seekers to be ‘favourable’ (UNHCR, 2014). UNHCR operates on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the government in 1998. This ‘establishes the parameters for cooperation on providing protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers, and allows mandate refugees a maximum stay of six months after recognition, during which a durable solution should be found’ (UNHCR, 2014).

The main international agency with responsibility for Palestinian refugees, who are specifically excluded from the 1951 Convention, is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). UNRWA provides basic services for registered Palestinian refugees, including education, health care and relief and social services. In 2000 the agency announced a shift towards initiatives emphasising developmental social welfare and self-reliance to complement direct relief (Al Abed, 2004; see also Takkenberg et al., 2014). This was probably prompted in part by a chronic funding crisis facing the agency as funding has not kept pace with the growing population of Palestinian refugees (UNRWA, 2010a).

### *Palestinians: legal frameworks and livelihoods outcomes*

As full Jordanian citizens there are no restrictions on the employment of 1948 Palestinian refugees and their descendants, or on their ability to join professional associations. However, there is a ‘Jordanisation’ policy that effectively reserves government posts for the ‘transJordanian’ population, de facto delimiting Palestinians from the main source of formal sector jobs. As public sector jobs also come with significant non-monetary benefits this is a significant act of discrimination and a point of tension (Al Abed, 2004).

Employment for these Palestinians is therefore concentrated in the private sector. Their livelihood outcomes vary greatly, though levels of poverty and unemployment are comparable to the host population (Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen, 2007). Pavanello (2012: 11) describes their employment conditions as follows: ‘[Their employment ranges from] wealthy entrepreneurs and corporate executives to middle-class employees and small business owners and unskilled workers in the informal sector. In refugee camps and informal settlements residents work in a variety of informal occupations, including stall holders or employees, street hawkers, mechanics and bakers. The great majority survive with informal, low-paid, casual jobs’.

The situation is different again for the ‘Gazans’ who arrived in 1967, and for other Palestinians who migrated from the West Bank<sup>1</sup> after 1983. These individuals are not accorded full citizenship rights, and they must apply for work permits in order to secure formal employment. These permits are difficult to get. They are given temporary passports from the authorities, unless they already have a travel document from the Palestinian Authority. While Palestinians may get work permits more easily than other foreigners, this different legal framework does seem to have had an impact on their livelihood outcomes. Employers are reportedly ‘reluctant to hire ex-Gazans, even if candidates possess the required qualifications and skills. Since ex-Gazans do not have a “national number”, employers are faced with administrative hurdles, such as processing basic paperwork including registration of the employee, and payment of salaries’ (Pavanello, 2012 :12). The UNRWA camp which hosts the highest proportion of ’67 refugees – Jerash camp – also has the highest unemployment and poverty rates of all the camps – though it is also located in a remote, poor area. ‘Gazans’ are in general disproportionately represented in the UNRWA camps (Pavanello, 2012). However, there are also ‘67 refugees who have ‘made it’ and become economically successful.

The mobility given to Palestinians by their Jordanian passports has been significant. At one point Palestinians (and the Jordanian economy as a whole) relied heavily on remittances from the Gulf, whose economies boomed from the 1970s (Al Quds, 2009). But in 1990 Kuwait expelled almost its entire Palestinian migrant population as collective punishment for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation’s support for Iraq’s invasion (Badil, 2009). Over 250,000 Palestinians returned to Jordan en masse with a consequent huge rise in unemployment in Jordan and loss of remittances (Minority Report, 2011; Badil, 2009). Today, Palestinian Jordanians continue to work abroad in large numbers (Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen, 2007).

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s FAFO conducted large quantitative surveys of the living conditions of Palestinians in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Gaza. Drawing on this, in 2007 Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen concluded that, after three generations, their livelihoods and living conditions had stabilised and largely resembled those of the host population in most sites. This has undoubtedly depended to a large degree on the fact that Palestinian refugees have been granted the right to work in all fields bar Lebanon (where rates of poverty are highest and least comparable to the host population), and also because of the role played by UNRWA.

This is worth dwelling on briefly. In Jordan, only 26% of the Palestinian refugee population uses UNRWA’s health services, and only 2% of those that live outside camps do so. In general, it is the poor and those with low education levels who are most likely to use UNRWA’s services. The camp population is also clearly poorer and more vulnerable than the non-camp population. For camp refugees, the poverty rate is nearly 31%, while it is 13.5% for refugees living outside camps (Tiltnes and Zhang, 2013). Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen attribute this to ‘a selection effect’: ‘As the situation in the camps becomes more stable and comparable to host populations, because of the higher presence of UNRWA and other service deliverers than in other poor areas, refugees tend to move to the camps when in need of those services and the protection by UNRWA. They move out if they can afford to do so’ (Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> In 1983 the Jordanian authorities introduced a system of travel cards for Jordanians of Palestinian origin who had roots and business ties in the West Bank for more info (HRW, 2010).

UNRWA therefore serves a social protection function for refugees who are otherwise largely self-reliant, if not always thriving: '[UNRWA supports] those who are not able to stabilize their livelihoods – or make their livelihood comparable to that of the host country population – by their own means and their own labour force. Should UNRWA discontinue its assistance, the picture of a stabilized and comparable livelihood situation would be severely changed into one of clearly unsatisfied basic needs that often characterize a provisional presence' (Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen, 2007).

### **UNRWA's livelihoods projects**

UNRWA's impact on Palestinian livelihoods in Jordan can be linked to the provision of free and high-quality education to Palestinian refugees as well as the reliable provision of a range of basic services and a social safety net. While only a minority of Palestinians rely on these today, in the early years of displacement reliance was much more intensive. It is also notable that UNRWA employs over 7,000 staff in Jordan, as well as around 500 consultants per year. UNRWA also provides programmes with a direct link to employment and income generation. Information about these projects was gathered through a key-informant interview with an UNRWA staff member, as well as from publicly available information.

#### *Aims and design*

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme began in 1960. Two centres in Amman provide trade, semi-professional and specialist courses tailored to the local market, producing about 300 graduates a year. UNRWA also provides professional and career guidance for students, and helps with placements for its graduates.<sup>2</sup>

A more recent intervention is the microfinance (MF) programme. This was first implemented by UNRWA in Gaza in 1990, and was introduced to Jordan in 2003. There are numerous microfinance service providers in Jordan, and UNRWA has only about 4% of the market, though it professes to have a niche in 'support to education, housing and larger-scale businesses'. The programme has also led targeted drives to reach certain sectors of the population, including women and youth. In 2010 the MF programme introduced a small loan targeted specifically at women's home-based enterprises. In 2012 it financed 2,756 of these loans, valued at \$1.44 million. Overall, 36% of the programme's clients are women.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Context and assumptions*

The two projects are emblematic of how UNRWA has shifted from being a humanitarian relief organisation to increasingly taking on a social development role (though it continues to perform many strictly humanitarian functions in some fields, such as Gaza, and in its response to Palestinian refugees who have been forced to flee Syria). The microfinance programme supports small entrepreneurs and is valuable as an intervention that is self-sustaining in the context of UNRWA's ongoing fiscal crisis.

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<sup>2</sup> See the website: <http://www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/vocational-training>

<sup>3</sup> These figures taken from the Microfinance website: <http://www.unrwa.org/activity/microfinance-jordan>

## *Results*

The TVET is amongst the top ten vocational training institutes in Jordan and between 90% and 100% of its graduates enter the labour market after completing their courses.<sup>4</sup> The number of graduates is however small relative to the size of the population entering the job market each year. The programme is under pressure to accept non-Palestinians from the local community as well as from the Jordanian government. At present, non-Palestinians account for only 10% of participants, and in the ‘parallel course’, for which students have to pay a contribution. Eight places are reserved for non-refugees in the regular courses, which are provided for free.

The microfinance programme is also considered to be highly successful. While no data is available on its impact on income or business survival, it has a repayment rate high enough for it to be self-sustaining and to allow it to expand. It has grown rapidly in the last few years, expanding by over 38% in 2012 without ever having directly received donor funding.<sup>5</sup> In the context of UNRWA’s stagnating budget and the generally poor record that the humanitarian sector has had with microfinance projects, this is a rare achievement. However, continued expansion has become difficult under the framework of UNRWA and additional government requirements about legal registration might see the programme launched as a separate entity to be governed by a Foundation. Just over a quarter of loans are accessed by non-refugees.

## **East Wahdat World Bank Upgrading Project**

Another example of a project with impact on Palestinian refugee livelihoods is an intervention funded by the World Bank in the 1980s, implemented in partnership with the Jordanian government’s Housing Corporation.

## *Aims and design*

East Wahdat was an informal settlement with poor living conditions adjacent to the overcrowded Wahdat Camp in Amman. The core of the programme involved buying the land from the private owner, dividing it into plots and then selling the plots back to local households, whilst also upgrading individual buildings and infrastructure in the neighbourhood. The project was multifaceted and contained many components, including a community centre, vocational training and access to credit for women. It involved a high degree of local participation throughout the project lifecycle (Oesch, 2010; Ababsa, 2010).

## *Results*

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of the project was how it made landowners of the beneficiaries in a cost-effective way, while also increasing their long-term employment prospects. According to Cintron and Wendell (2013: 7–8):

*Tenure was secured for the refugees through a buyout program funded by the World Bank, the Jordanian government and HUDC. Through the program, the land was bought from the original owner of the property on which the informal settlement formed. Refugees were then able to pay back the loan through monthly payments equal to 33% of their income. The sustainability of the program allowed for the model to be applied to 13 additional informal communities over the course of the next 10 years.*

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<sup>4</sup> 1967 Palestinian refugees have full access to all these programmes, but will still have to apply for a work permit in order to enter the labour market.

<sup>5</sup> See their website: <http://www.unrwa.org/activity/microfinance-jordan>

*The East Wabdat upgrading program's greatest success was its ability to recover costs through repayment that was secured via the employment programs provided in the community centers.*

The authors also argue that the project could be replicated to upgrade the informal settlements receiving (or being created by) the current influx of Syrians, 'which could be particularly important considering the current gap in humanitarian funding needed to sustain the Syrian camps in Jordan' (p. 8).

### **Iraqis: legal frameworks and livelihoods outcomes**

At the outset of the most recent Iraqi refugee crisis, the Jordanian government did not itself define the displaced as 'refugees' but admitted Iraqis into the country as temporary 'guests', emphasising that they were accepted under principles of pan-Arab brotherhood (Zaotti, 2006). However, the entry requirements for Iraqis became much stricter between 2006 and 2008. Iraqis were given access to public services, with UNHCR supplementing some of these services. However, they were not given legal entitlement to work.

Many of the initial wave of post-2003 Iraqi refugees were from the Iraqi upper and middle classes, and some brought significant savings with them, allowing them to buy property in Amman and earning them a reputation as rich refugees. This group was certainly more skilled than many refugee populations: in 2009 a third of registered Iraqi refugee adults in Jordan had a university degree; 38% had been in professional occupations in Iraq, and only 13% had worked as manual labourers (UNHCR, 2009). However, as they were banned from joining professional associations only a few were able to put their qualifications to use in the formal sector. Most had to work 'under the radar' or rely on assistance and savings. This was tolerated by the government, and in 2010 40% to 60% of Iraqi men made a living in the informal sector (UN, 2010; Van Bruaene and Deboutte, 2010). This work was often exploitative: '[they work] for instance as bakers, blacksmiths, carpenters and travel agents. These jobs are poorly paid, [and] irregular ... Iraqi refugees are in most cases unable to seek redress and abuses in the workplace often go unreported' (Pavanello, 2012).

There is little evidence that livelihoods- or self-reliance-focused work was done with Iraqis. The government opposed developmental initiatives being explicitly applied to this caseload and the focus of the humanitarian system was on classic forms of support, with cash assistance delivered through ATMs being seen as the response's largest innovation (Nyce, 2010). A study of the humanitarian response in Amman made the following assessment of the priorities of the time: 'Many respondents agreed that, with high levels of funding and short time cycles, the main preoccupation became demonstrating an ability to reach the highest number of beneficiaries in the shortest possible time. In the words of one key informant, "Iraqi beneficiaries merely represented a target to reach". There was little attempt to develop a coherent strategy or appropriate programmes that could more adequately support Iraqis in exile' (Pavanello, 2012: 19). Several vocational training courses seem to have been run, but a NEF/WRC assessment in 2014 revealed a high degree of cynicism about these from former beneficiaries in Zarqa, who said they were unable to put the skills to use and attended primarily for the transportation allowance provided by the NGOs.

Many of the refugees have been resettled, have returned or have moved on to exile elsewhere. A small number remains stuck in Jordan. Some are still resettled each year, but this will not be a solution for the entire

population and most of those who are suitable for resettlement countries have already left. Some who have tried to return to Iraq have found it unsustainable and have re-emigrated or come back to Jordan. UNHCR (2014) states that the residual population ‘continues to need high levels of support’, but they have been sidelined by the larger and more acute Syrian crisis.

### **NEF project to support resilience amongst Iraqi refugees**

This project demonstrates several laudable features, particularly in its use of quality evidence in the design phase, its links to the private sector and its attention to GBV concerns. It was also the only comprehensive example of a refugee-focused initiative in Jordan that went beyond very basic inputs into Iraqi refugee livelihoods. The following information comes primarily from three interviews conducted with two NEF staff members and one WRC staff member,<sup>6</sup> as well project documentation. Unless referenced to a document it can be assumed the information comes from interviews or personal communication. As this project was initiated only recently no independent sources were available.

#### *Aims and design*

Research and analysis work began on NEF’s programme for ‘Enhancing the Resilience of Vulnerable Jordanians and Iraqis’ in 2013, and implementation of the capacity-building and grants phase of the project began in January 2014. The project is based in the northern industrial city of Zarqa and aims to provide training, mentoring, networking space and finance to support the establishment of home-based enterprises amongst needy Iraqis and Jordanians. Its target group is primarily women (70%), but it also targets young men (30%). The beneficiaries are split 50/50 between Jordanians and Iraqis and the programme currently has just over 700 beneficiaries. The programme is designed and run by the Near East Foundation, which contracts local CBOs for aspects of the implementation.<sup>7</sup>

Implementation was preceded by an assessment in late 2013. The report identified several constraints and risks associated with livelihoods for the target groups. Iraqis’ employment opportunities are of course limited by the lack of a legal right to work, though a large proportion of jobs in Jordan are in the informal sector. Both Jordanian and Iraqi women reported that they must pursue economic activities whilst also looking after children and other family members, and performing housework. There is also stigma attached to women who pursue livelihoods, and in general they may be harassed if they move around in public without a male chaperone. This limits their engagement with suppliers and their ability to market products. Even though men do not face these restrictions, young Iraqi men are reportedly ‘unable to find work, except for casual labor, and report being under paid or having pay withheld. [For this reason] [m]any preferred to run small businesses’ (NEF/WRC, 2014). Women also reported being overcharged by wholesalers and underpaid by factory owners.

Protection risks also included increased risks of domestic violence, particularly amongst Iraqi households, where women do not benefit from the same community protection networks that Jordanian women enjoy (NEF/WRC, 2014). This echoes other studies on gender and livelihoods (see WRC, 2011 for example). Women may face a

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<sup>6</sup> Specifically, the NEF’s Senior Technical Specialist for Livelihoods, Gender and Displacement, NEF’s Country Director and Regional Advisor for Jordan and Lebanon, and the Senior Director for Programmes at the Women’s Refugee Council.

<sup>7</sup> These were the Bani Hassan Islamic Charitable Organization, Welfare Society for Family Affairs, Khawla Bint Al-Azwar Charitable Association for Women’s Empowerment, and the Youth Society for Self Development.

backlash at home for earning an income, even if it is sorely needed in the household: ‘While many of their husbands do not work, they blame their wives for working instead of caring for their children. Iraqi women face high levels of domestic violence, as men are frustrated they are unable to fulfill their traditional breadwinning roles’ (NEF/WRC, 2014).

#### Economic Opportunities

The most feasible home-based enterprises were found to be:

1. **Food production:** cheese, mushrooms, vinegar, pickles, chili sauce, sweets
2. **Trade/re-sale:** clothes, blankets, cosmetics, cleaning supplies
3. **Non-food production:** perfume
4. **Outsourcing:** garment industry/clothes finishing, packaging of paper products
5. **Products whose availability has been disrupted by the conflict in Syria:** dried fruit, hair removal paste, Halkaoum (Turkish delight), Malban (squeezed apricot and grape paste)
6. **Products available in Amman that are not available in Zarqa:** fruit smoothies, sweet corn snacks

Table 1 indicate the kind of practical advice this initial research generated about market ‘gaps’ (NEF/WRC, 2014).

This research also assessed the market for goods and labour, particularly exploring home-based enterprises on the assumption that these would be best suited to women’s mobility constraints. The results were surprisingly optimistic about the potential markets available due to a cultural preference for homemade products.<sup>8</sup> Such businesses are not uncommon, and supermarkets recognise this preference by stocking small-scale production goods. It also highlighted that it had in the past proven lucrative for women to work out of their homes mixing and selling perfume, reselling cosmetics and cleaning products, as well as running childcare nurseries (NEF/WRC, 2014).

As a result of this research, home-based businesses were selected as the focus of the project as they were deemed to be ‘the most practical economic opportunities available to Iraqi and Jordanian women because of cultural restrictions on mobility, lack of the right to work for Iraqi refugees, and women’s preference to stay close to home’ (NEF/WRC, 2014). NEF’s role would focus on addressing the limitations they faced: their lack of resources for initial investment, their limited knowledge about marketing and branding and their restricted market access.

The project combines several complementary components to try to achieve these aims. Beneficiaries were solicited by a door-to-door information campaign in areas where it was known that vulnerable Jordanian and Iraqis lived. This was considered crucial to reach the most vulnerable, and not merely those with the best networks within assistance-providing organisations. These visits provided information about the programme and invited people to attend information meetings, and after this to take part in short vocational training courses which focused on providing practical business skills.

Potential beneficiaries were encouraged to bring family members to these initial meetings in order to address any queries or concerns that, in particular, male partners might have. To reduce the risk of harm and violence in the home, NEF solicits the support of male family members throughout the project, from the project launch and during canvassing, when volunteers speak to everyone in the household to introduce the project and ensure transparency. One outreach event is also conducted each quarter through the life of the project for participants and their families. Outreach events do not address domestic violence directly. Instead they address issues that are

<sup>8</sup> The research also highlighted other avenues for income generation. It highlighted the number of factories and volume of work that could be outsourced to women using a piece-rate system, something that already occurs. However, NEF has not been successful in encouraging factory to take on Iraqi refugees as piece-workers. The trade and re-sale of clothes and blankets purchased from wholesalers and from the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) was also considered viable as some wholesalers allow women to purchase on credit for re-sale with a mark-up outside of the commercial districts.

triggers for violence, for example around roles and responsibilities, and the control of household spending.

Short training courses, mainly held at CBO offices, followed these initial community information meetings. While information was gathered on existing skills the courses focused on diversifying participants' skill sets, as the research indicated that their existing skills were inappropriate to the Jordanian market or, for Iraqis, could not be put to use given the legal framework. The courses covered business management, marketing and production, and a second course focused on how to conduct a simple feasibility study to assess the viability of a business plan.

Once proposals were submitted, follow-up interviews were conducted to assess potential beneficiaries' willingness and capacity to use cash or grants for business activities. This was considered important as only Jordanians were given 'grants', about which NEF and the CBOs could make explicit the terms of the agreement and monitor how the money was used. In order to allow them choice about how to use it, Iraqis were given 'cash assistance' without these terms or explicit monitoring.

Female beneficiaries were encouraged to attend business network meetings, which are held in CBO 'safe spaces'. Beneficiaries are also matched to 'mentors' (a pool comprising 20 successful entrepreneurs) who provide one-on-one and group advice sessions. Twelve networks have been set up, with ongoing experimentation in terms of separating them by sector.

NEF sought to achieve several aims with these networks. Most directly, business trainers would facilitate conversations about the progress or setbacks that beneficiaries' projects were facing, while a GBV expert was also in the room to flag any emerging domestic violence concerns that arose out of the conversation. These meetings also aimed to deepen participants' social networks in two respects: firstly, by encouraging connection and collaboration between the participants, which was considered important for the women as they had fewer and less deep social connections than men (it is envisaged that at a later stage they will be expanded to cover male beneficiaries); and secondly, Iraqi and Jordanian beneficiaries were mixed in these sessions with the aim of fostering 'greater understanding and harmony' (as 'integration' is another politically sensitive word).

All 700 beneficiaries also receive home visits to monitor how they have utilized the grants (for Jordanians) and cash assistance (for Iraqis), as well as providing GBV monitoring. Each CBO partner has undergone training on GBV, the output of which was a written protection protocol that operationalised the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's six core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as referral mechanisms to existing GBV services. Once a case is identified the protocol kicks in to ensure women are informed about how to access the proper services (psychosocial, health, legal).

### *Context*

The project was designed in the context of a marked decline in attention and support for Iraqi refugees due to the massive influx of Syrians, many of whom had acute needs. The residual Iraqi population nonetheless still contained many vulnerable members. Most of the highly skilled and educated Iraqis had been resettled or had managed to secure work permits. Those who were not highly skilled were left to compete in the informal

economy. With the pressure put on the humanitarian system by the Syrian crisis, many had been moved off cash assistance by UNHCR.

The Jordanian government is highly sensitive to developmental approaches being applied to Iraqi ‘guests’, though a blind eye is turned to their informal work and businesses. Toeing a fine line between what the government will not explicitly approve and what will still be tolerated is crucial. Approval by MOPIC (the Ministry of Planning and Communication) for aid projects<sup>9</sup> would require considerable time and many organisations have waited months for approval for their projects. Certain types of assistance are highly likely to require strong justification and rational to be given approval – especially those that involve psychosocial activities, work with adolescents, or livelihoods-related work.

NEF judged that a developmental approach would be tolerated as it emphasizes skills building and peer networks to help refugees make more informed choices about investing their savings and cash assistance in productive activities. Government’s policies do not require home-based businesses to register legally. NEF recipients are viewed by the organization and partners as ‘NEF beneficiaries’ with no discrimination based on nationality. Partnership with Jordanian CBOs, whose main focus is on the local community, offers an opportunity to expand the definition of local community to include refugees. CBOs also serve as a platform to build trust between and within refugee and hosting communities. NEF is able to rely on its record of investing in Jordanian communities with the government because it has an unusually long history in the country.

The organisation therefore does not hide its resilience work; it emphasizes that the project is a ‘community project’ for the ‘vulnerable beneficiaries’ but offers similar but not the same services to the different populations: ‘grants’ for Jordanians, but ‘cash assistance’ for Iraqis; ‘business training’ for Jordanians, ‘life skills’ for Iraqis.

### *Assumptions*

The project was begun on the assumption that the informal sector was dynamic and could absorb more enterprises, and that home-based enterprises and home-based work could be viable. The project also drew on several years of research by the Women’s Refugee Council into livelihoods in urban areas (see WRC, 2011, WRC, 2013). It proceeds on the assumption that some of the benefits of the work NEF is doing will become sustainable through:

- enterprises which succeed and continue to provide income;
- by linking the beneficiaries to CBOs that have a longer-term presence in these communities; and
- in turn, through supporting capacity-building within these.

### *Results*

The project has only recently completed its first cycle or the results of its first evaluation are not yet available. It is also too soon to tell how many of the projects it has funded are successful. As such, a conclusive assessment cannot be made of its final outcomes or impact, how initial indication reported by NEF are that around 75-80% of Jordanians and Iraqis who received grants and cash assistance have started home-based businesses, and those

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<sup>9</sup> All aid agencies must submit their assistance proposals to MOPIC for approval, in order to operate legally. MOPIC sits once a month with a committee that include the Department for Social Development and Labour.

which had done so reported significant increases as high as 45% in the income as a result. Project staff also comment on the significance of the ‘business networks’. These have helped women to overcome domestic resistance to their business ventures, and have also led to interaction between Jordanian and Iraqi women, who have been willing to support each other, for example by marketing each other’s products. They have also facilitated sharing practical information such as which vendors give the best rates or will let women buy on credit. Although this does not speak to long-term success, they also have evidence that the businesses have been established and are functioning through home visits, which record evidence of material and equipment which has been bought, as well as book keeping, and monitors have reportedly noticed improvements in beneficiaries ‘household structure and situation’.

NEF has established links with the IRADA (Enhanced Productivity Programme) funded by MOPIC. IRADA was established around ten years ago to provide Jordanians with skills and knowledge to start small businesses. The project has been slowly expanded to provide capacity-building for CBOs in general. These links open up the possibility of integrating their project with a government-run development initiative.

The design of the project can also be lauded for incorporating several aspects that are rare in livelihoods programming for the displaced. Firstly, it was underpinned by an extensive study of the local economy and the market, as well as the challenges facing existing entrepreneurs. A high degree of effort was put into finding the most vulnerable in the community and inviting them to apply; at the same time, the project does not emphasise vulnerability or victimhood, but rather seeks to build capacity and skill. Attention is paid to gender throughout the project, and safety mechanisms are put in place to prevent and address increased domestic violence arising from women’s economic activities. The project attempts to become sustainable by building the capacity of the CBOs to undertake these projects independently (including through training-of-trainers courses). Sustainability is also encouraged through growing engagement with governmental development actors. The project is furthermore unusual in its willingness to work creatively in compliance with existing laws and regulations set by government and by cultural practices. Lastly, the project is not particularly resource intensive: NEF employs three full-time field coordinators to liaise with the four CBOs in Zarqa, a project coordinator and a project manager, and time is put in by the Country Director in Amman. Volunteers are drawn from the CBOs for tasks such as the door-to-door monitoring visits.

NEF staff are confident that the project they are running could be used as a model by other organisations and could be applied to other caseloads. However, while many aspects of the project could be replicated in other settings, including the overall design of matching grants to mentors and ‘business networks’, a crucial dimension of the project has been its ability to operate ‘in the margins’.

The approval that NEF received to go ahead with the project rested at least partially on the reputation that the organisation enjoyed with the government, which staff attribute to their long history in the country. This considerably predates current crises. This long history has also allowed the organisation to familiarise itself with the local CBO landscape and pick reliable partners – it is notable that they are not using any of the CBOs they partnered with at the start of the last Iraqi crisis. This raises questions about how viable it is for organisations unfamiliar with the context to pursue such an approach or pick reliable local partners.

The question of scale also requires more investigation. While the organisation maintains they have been able to reach 700 beneficiaries with a small staff, plus some staff seconded from the CBOs, this is nonetheless a project that is process- rather than output-oriented. Process-oriented projects put as much focus on making sure the methods of delivering assistance develop the capacities, skills and social connections of beneficiaries as they do on the material assistance itself. These may be the most likely to make a significant impact on beneficiaries livelihoods prospects, but they are also likely to be more staff-intensive and more expensive in the short term than the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The degree to which this will be more ‘cost effective’ than simple cash or food assistance will rest on whether these enterprises do in fact become self-sustaining, and generate enough income to reduce vulnerability.

### **Syrians: legal frameworks and livelihoods outcomes**

Syrian refugees are hosted under similar, but not entirely congruent, terms as Iraqi refugees. Syrians are not referred to as ‘guests’ by the government but as refugees. The establishment of Zaatari, and then Azraq, were considerable departures from a previous stand against the establishment of camps for refugees. Like Iraqis, Syrians are not granted legal permission to work, but they have been given access to public services such as health and education in host communities (and these are provided by international agencies in the camps). Over 150,000 Syrians receive cash assistance from UNHCR, and many adult males work in the informal sector which supplements or provides all household income (HPCR, 2014). NGO reports highlight many harmful survival strategies, such as child labour, trafficking and unsafe sex work. ACTED (2013) reports that an estimated 30,000 children (16% of Syrian refugee children in Jordan) are currently engaged in child labour, which is a four-fold increase on rates of child labour in Syria before the crisis.

The Jordanian government is also ostensibly far stricter in controlling the livelihoods support that Syrian can get, which must be strictly humanitarian – e.g. cash and food. Unlike with ’67 Palestinians and Iraqis, Syrians cannot be beneficiaries of cash-for-work programmes, let alone any skills training. Programming for women and youth was at one point tolerated, but even this is becoming more difficult. Control over this programming is through the MOPIC project approval committee mentioned above.

This stricter attitude no doubt stems in part from the sheer number of Syrians who have settled in Jordan in a short space of time. Their entry into rental markets and informal labour markets has had an impact on host communities. The exact dynamics of this are debated – for example, according to key informants the evidence suggests that Syrians have not really crowded out Jordanians in the labour market, but are rather in competition with other migrants. Nonetheless, the perception remains that Jordanian unemployment is related to Syrian asylum in Jordan and this has become a sensitive political issue.

Aside from the government’s attitude, there are also fears that this will lead to conflict between host communities and Syrian refugees. A recent study confirms that the key drivers of tension at the local level are ‘safeguarding livelihoods and completion for income-generating opportunities; the struggle to find adequate, affordable housing; and challenges in the education sector such as difficulty in accessing education and deteriorating quality of education’ (REACH, 2014).

## The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with Ruwwad Micro-Venture Fund (RMVF)

UNDP's work in North Jordan is targeted at host communities in places where there are a high number of Syrian refugees. While neither dealing with protracted displacement nor a displaced group directly, the project is still of relevance in a context, as in Jordan, where the real and perceived burden of hosting refugees leads to host state policies which restrict the scope for livelihoods. Such projects may go some way to convincing communities and their representatives that refugee presence is not just challenging, but also beneficial – they could also be expanded at a later date to include refugees. Information about these projects was gathered through an interview with a UNDP staff member, as well as from publicly available information.

### *Aims and design*

At the beginning of 2013 UNDP launched an income support programme in northern Jordan. At the time there was very little support for the host community. The programme has two pillars: one supporting local government (e.g. strengthening the capacity of local waste management units) and the second supporting livelihoods, which targets vulnerable Jordanian households. This has entailed some classic short-term employment creation through cash for work, but these have been linked to the refugee situation by, for example, rehabilitating schools that are overcrowded at least in part because of the Syrian influx. This ties into one of the major objectives of the programme: to release tension and enhance social cohesion.

The current phase of the project aims to consolidate micro business and more closely tie to local economic development approaches. This work is undertaken in partnership with a private organisation, the Ruwwad Micro Venture Fund. Beneficiaries receive business training (building their capacities in the fields of financial planning, marketing, product sales, environmental sustainability and social impact)<sup>10</sup> and then must pitch their ideas to a council of business experts. If successful they receive 6,000JD–10,000JD from the Micro Venture Fund (which then owns shares of the enterprise), which is matched by a 5,000JD grant from UNDP over a period of two years.

An interesting aspect of the design is that beneficiaries are encouraged to hire at least three Jordanians, and encouraged to buy back shares from the Micro Venture Fund at the market price. The private sector is therefore engaged from the beginning of the project.

### *Context and assumptions*

The project was designed with cognisance of the role that the public perception of the Syrian programme was having on the operating environment – particularly the perception that Syrians were pushing Jordanians out of jobs and overburdening services. This was confirmed in a 2014 study by REACH that concluded that almost 70% of Jordanians believe that livelihoods are a flashpoint of social tensions around the Syrian crisis (REACH, 2014)

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<sup>10</sup> See the UNDP website: <http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2014/02/16/undp-and-ruwwad-micro-venture-fund-select-10-participants-from-irbid-ramtha-district-to-fund-their-microbusinesses/>

The project comes out of a 2013 agreement among UN agencies to have a more coordinated response to humanitarian support to host communities affected by the presence of Syrian refugees. This led to several joint mechanisms to align activities, the latest being the National Resilience Plan (NRP), which has been designed with government involvement and approval.

No further details were available on the specific assumptions that fed into programme design.

### *Results*

The business development component is relatively new and there has not yet been an evaluation of the project. By February 2014, 176 individuals had gone through the training and 80 microbusinesses were being funded.<sup>11</sup>

### **Limitation of the study and gaps in the evidence**

The short timeframe (eight days in total), limited word count and primarily desk-based nature of the work were all tangible constraints on this case study. Given the large timeframe covered and the rich histories of both Iraqi and Palestinian protracted displacement in Jordan, the short case-study could not go into great depth on the issues it covered. The literature concerning these populations has many positive features, including a profusion of reports on Iraqis between 2006 and 2010, and the Palestinian population has been covered by several comprehensive quantitative studies into living conditions, access to services and livelihoods. Many of these studies discuss differentiated gender outcomes, and the cultural attitudes to gender which affect livelihood strategies.

Nonetheless, there are few easily accessible studies that cover the early period of Palestinians' arrival in Jordan or trace how they rebuilt their livelihoods after their initial displacement in 1948 and 1967, nor which explain the impact of remittances from the Gulf prior to the 1990s and the consequences of their loss.

Information about Iraqi *livelihoods* was also not abundant, despite Iraqis' long presence in the country. The research produced in the early years of the Iraqi crisis is incredibly valuable in sketching out descriptions of donor relations, and the challenges of the humanitarian response, but the author was not able to find evidence about the nature of Iraqi livelihoods. In particular, while many studies mention that Iraqis have set up businesses, employ other Iraqis and engage in cross-border livelihoods, there did not appear to be studies which spell out how these work and what their impact has or has not been.

In general, livelihoods are rarely approached from a historical perspective that could draw together the broader economic and political context with the livelihoods strategies that people actually employ. Such studies, in a country like Jordan which has provided a relatively favourable legal and political environment for refugees for several decades, could provide valuable insight – and evidence for advocacy in other contexts which are wary about the consequences of granting refugees the right to work, or are intent on curtailing their informal economic activity.

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

If time had allowed, a thorough investigation conducted through following up with individual NGOs and agencies about their programming in Jordan may have yielded more examples. However, the few key informants that the author consulted confirmed that there was very little livelihood programming being undertaken for refugees beyond the projects listed here. This no doubt stems from the difficulty that NGOs have in getting such projects approved.

As two of the projects were initiated relatively recently there were no independent evaluations, and it is hoped that these will be produced at some point in the future.

Over the last few decades FAFO has undertaken a considerable amount of quantitative survey work, particularly with Palestinian refugees. This provides some hard numbers to contextualise more qualitative information – this case study references only two of the many surveys which are available. However, such reports often struggle to win government sign-off, and may take many years to be released. Given the length of UNRWA's project it is likely that more internal evaluations exist, but time constraints prevented the author from accessing them.

### **Suggestion for further research**

- The fortunes of Palestinian refugees, perhaps because they fall under their own particular mandate, are infrequently examined in the literature on humanitarian assistance or refugee livelihoods. Yet the examples in this paper show that UNRWA has implemented two highly successful livelihoods interventions, potentially yielding decades of lessons in refining the Vocational Training Program. A review of policies and projects to promote self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods enacted by UNRWA, particularly after the 2000 decision to focus on social development activities, might provide valuable lessons for other protracted populations.
- Hanssen-Bauer and Jacobsen's work (2007) contains the valuable insight that poor Palestinian refugees move in and out of UNRWA's camps as their level of vulnerability – and ability to provide for their own needs – fluctuates. This resonates with findings in other contexts that camps serve a valuable social protection function for refugees who are attempting to be self-reliant. An investigation into the relationship between humanitarian assistance, systems of social protection and perhaps the role of UNRWA's camps in this regard would complement research into promoting self-reliance.
- More detailed analysis about refugees' cross-border livelihood strategies would infuse the debate on mobility, livelihoods and durable solutions with some practical examples of activities that could be supported by a more enabling policy environment or by targeted assistance projects.
- An independent post-project analysis of NEF's work and UNDP's projects could provide valuable lessons about how to implement such projects and how sustainable their impact is.

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## Case study: Protracted refugees and self-reliance in Uganda

### Background and regional context

Uganda is a major refugee-hosting state in the midst of a highly conflict-prone region. Long-term instability in the region means that Uganda has hosted high numbers of refugees for several decades, many of them in protracted displacement. Its own history of displacement includes generating refugee in the 1970s, and almost 2 million IDPs in the 1990s as fighting raged between the government's armed forces and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army.

This case study will concern itself with refugees who have arrived in the country since the 1980s. Currently there are 346,710 registered refugees and asylum-seekers in Uganda, the majority from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia, but with other significant populations from Rwanda and Burundi, as well as other countries. Perhaps only 100,000 are actually in protracted displacement (interview with UNHCR consultant). Many of the settlement populations contain a mixture of old and new arrivals.

Refugees from Sudan have been fleeing Uganda for decades, with large numbers arriving since the late 1980s. Refugees arriving in the 1980s and through the 1990s were fleeing the long-running conflict between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), as well as clashes between southern rebel groups. These refugees were in protracted displacement for over a decade, but after the signing of the CPA many went home (interview with UNHCR). Recent arrivals from South Sudan are mostly fleeing 'local clashes and inter-tribal violence' according to UNHCR (2014).

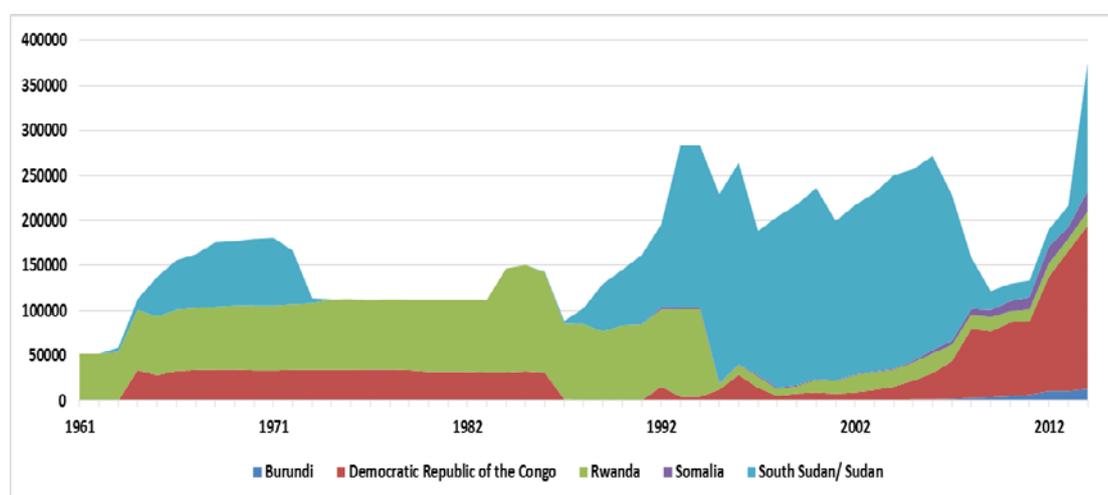


Figure 1: Refugee flows over time, using UNHCR data. Graph supplied by UNHCR consultant.

The majority of current Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers have predominantly fled insecure areas of North Kivu province, but over the last two decades Uganda has received Congolese refugees from various parts of Eastern DRC. Somali refugees and asylum-seekers have fled persistent and repeated insecurity, predominantly in the central and southern regions of the country, over the course of several decades of civil war and political instability, as well as environmental shocks.

## Settlement patterns

Registered refugees are concentrated in 'Settlements' in the north and south-west of the country. There they are provided land on which to construct a shelter and to farm. The government strategy of providing land to refugees has always been generous compared to neighbouring countries. Land use and allocation, however, takes a slightly different form across the country. In the west and south, the Settlements are on land gazetted by the government for use by refugees, and refugees are generally allocated a 100 by 150m plot of land. While these plots are generally larger than those in the north, there is some uncertainty in farmers' land use rights and the government can choose to reallocate land at will. UNHCR has constructed infrastructure in these areas, and in the last few years new construction was transferred to state management. UNHCR is also subsidising existing government facilities that have absorbed refugees.

Large Settlements will hold several refugee villages. For example, one of the oldest refugee 'camps' in Africa is Nakivale Settlement, which was established in 1960 to accommodate Rwandan refugees fleeing ethnic violence. It is estimated to be much more than 100km<sup>2</sup> in size and houses 74 villages in three administrative zones. The population of the Settlement is now predominantly Congolese refugees. Kyangwali, also in the south-west, is estimated to be around 90km<sup>2</sup> and houses 14 villages – its population is also predominantly Congolese, but it also houses Somalians, Rwandans and others.

In the north-west of the country three districts contain seven refugee settlements that hold ten villages in total. This is where the old South Sudanese caseload is predominantly sheltered, and where new arrivals are accommodated, though some new settlements have also been created to house them (OCHA, 2014). In this part of the country local communities own all the land, and the government must negotiate with the communities to obtain land for refugees (interview with UNHCR). Consequently, the Settlements are smaller and host community villages are dispersed within them. Most services are shared 60% host community/40% refugees, or 70%/30% (*ibid.*). UNHCR supplements the Uganda district administration to absorb these populations.

Self-settled refugees are dispersed in rural, peri-urban and urban settings. Kampala is the largest known site outside of Settlements. The capital is the second largest refugee location in the country, with almost 50,000 refugees, many of them unregistered.

## Law and policy framework

Uganda has signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1976 Protocol and the 1969 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on Refugees, and as such has numerous legal responsibilities under international law. The government plays a large role in the response to refugee crises, as per its international responsibilities, and over the last several decades has progressively transformed its policies, laws and structures to facilitate this. Governance of the refugee population is located in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Refugee Department, headed by the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees. UNHCR is the lead international agency for the planning, delivery and coordination of refugee operations and the main interlocutor with OPM.

The OPM Refugee Department has the primary responsibility for providing protection and security for asylum-seekers and refugees. The department operates under the guidance of the Refugee Act of 2006 and the Refugee

Regulations of 2010, which both filled a long-standing gap in legislation to guide domestic implementation of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Prior to this, the primary piece of refugee legislation was the Ugandan Control of Alien Refugees Act (CARA), which required all refugees to reside in settlements and restricted their ability to move around and work. The 2006 law allows refugees to choose whether to live in Settlements or to self-settle, though refugees who live outside the Settlements must forego material assistance in the form of shelter, food rations and psycho-social counselling related to GBV and HIV/AIDS, and facilitated access to UNHCR-supported health clinics and schools. It also allows for freedom of movement (Buscher, 2011).

While the Act recognises refugees' right to work, this right is not interpreted in the same way by all departments of government. According to Buscher (2011):

*The Refugee Act of 2006 states that refugees have the right to work just like 'aliens in similar circumstances'. The Immigration Department interprets this to mean that refugees require work permits, as aliens require work permits to enter the country. The Office of the Prime Minister asserts that once a refugee is in the country she/he is allowed de facto to work. The lack of clarity and varied enforcement of the regulations guiding employment mean that local government officials, employers and refugees are left confused. As a result, employers are wary of hiring refugees; and refugees who do work formally are harassed by local government and immigration officials.*

#### **From emergency to long-term assistance, and opportunities for durable solutions**

Due to its Settlement policy Uganda is frequently held up as a 'generous' host, especially when compared with countries which confine refugees to camps with no land for agriculture. Upon arrival refugees are registered by the government and issued with documentation at a Transit or Reception Centre, where they receive emergency aid for up to two weeks, or longer in times of large refugee flows. After this refugees are allocated land in Settlements for housing and agriculture, which may be farmed to meet their own needs and generate a surplus for sale (OCHA, 2014). Refugees can choose to live in Kampala or other urban areas. These refugees do not receive material assistance and are in theory allowed to use public services.

The international community provides some livelihoods activities in the Settlements and in Kampala. Some of these are discussed below, but in general no significant assistance is provided for non-agricultural livelihood activities, and income-generating projects in the Settlements and in urban areas have been ad hoc, poorly linked to the market, unsustainable, executed by NGOs without significant livelihoods expertise and small in scale (interview with UNHCR consultant). While the legal framework for displacement in Uganda is more favourable than in many of its neighbours, displacement is still considerably 'sticky' as there are few opportunities for refugees in Uganda to achieve one of the classic forms of durable solution.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> In line with the global trend, few resettlement places are open to refugees in Uganda. While many refugees have repatriated over the years many within the residual caseloads of Rwandans and Burundian still do not feel safe returning, and for the largest caseloads – South Sudanese, DRC, and Somalians – peace, stability and the opportunity for sustainable livelihoods in their country of origin are at best distant possibilities. There are few routes open to refugees to attain legal residency status in Uganda, and therefore de jure local integration is ruled out. Despite a generous attitude to land and legal rights, the GoU is extremely stringent about naturalisation. While UNHCR has attempted to open up the debate on naturalisation of long-term refugees it is so far a political nonstarter. UNHCR does, however, indicate that the Government is making efforts 'to explore an alternative residency status as a potential solution to long-term displacement' (UNHCR, 2014; IRIN, 2012).

## Self-reliance interventions

This case study builds up a historical picture of how approaches to livelihoods and refugee self-reliance have evolved. To the extent possible, interventions are described in chronological order, though they are also overlapping. Comprehensive, historical evaluations of these approaches and what they have and have not achieved have not been undertaken. The degree to which they can be seen as successes or failures largely depends on which caseload one looks at which point in time, as conditions in the Settlements, as well as caseloads, have changed several times in the last few decades.

## The Settlements Strategy

The Settlement Strategy can be boiled down to an approach which allocates land to refugees which they can use for agricultural activities. Many subsequent livelihoods approaches have been implemented concurrently with this strategy. While a Settlement Policy was drawn up in the 1970s or 1980s, it is not publicly available – not even UNHCR has a copy. As such many of the details of the policy and assumptions policy makers made when it was first designed must be inferred implicitly from how it has been implemented and how it has been interpreted in other official documents.

### *Aim and design*

The Settlement policy was introduced in the 1960s, when Nakivale was created for Rwandan refugees. It was implemented again in the 1980s as refugees began to pour into Uganda from the conflict in Sudan, and has become the main *modus operandi* for the Ugandan refugee response.

The policy has several aims, including allowing for investment in permanent infrastructure which could be used by the host population once the refugee crisis was over, and to allow for the development of more organic social and political structures for refugee administration. A significant component has always been its approach to refugee livelihoods: each refugee household is allocated land and given basic tools for farming it. This sought to avoid a camp model where refugees are not given land and rely on the provision of food aid and non-food items by relief agencies and/or the government.

### *Assumptions*

The Settlement policy rests on several assumptions about the characteristics of the displaced, the nature of their displacement and the results the policy could achieve. Firstly, it was initiated on the understanding that the Rwandan, and then Sudanese, refugee crisis would be short-lived (Pinctway, 1998, cited in Sebba, 2006). In terms of the actual workings of agriculture as a livelihood for refugees, it was assumed that the land provided to refugees would be reliably fertile and adequate for their food needs, and that there would be limited need for non-food consumption or cash beyond what could be made from selling surpluses, which in turn implicitly expected that markets would sell excess crops and that certain services would continue to be provided through UNHCR.

The policy also implied a number of generalisations about the refugee populations, for instance that they would have the agricultural skills to produce crops, itself underpinned by a related assumption that refugees were fleeing from rural areas and had previously had agricultural livelihoods (Machiavello, 2003).

### *Results and positive aspects*

There is a noticeable disjuncture between official comments about the Settlement policy by UNHCR and the government and the critiques put forward by academics and rights-based organisations. UNHCR sees the Settlements as the result of ‘generous’ asylum policies, and as successful at ‘reducing’ refugees’ reliance on material assistance (UNHCR, 2014). It is indisputable that allowing refugees access to land gave them the opportunity to contribute to their own food security – one that many took up and were skilled at exploiting. It is likewise important to note that many refugees were and still are able to supplement their incomes and meet their food needs with the crops they produce in Settlements. In Settlements where refugees were given access to very fertile land, such as in Kwanyali, some were able to produce a surplus and access markets where it could be sold. The literature review has however not found a quantitative or qualitative description of the results of refugees’ agricultural labour.

### *Shortcomings and negative consequences*

The academic literature and the reports of rights-based organisations are much more critical of the Settlements policy than UNHCR and government statements. The Settlements policy is accused of failing on its own grounds: while they may have been able to supplement their diets, refugees have largely not been able to achieve self-reliance through their agricultural labour alone. In part this is related to their ability to access and use land, and its quality. A Refugee Law Project report into the Settlements policy in 2005 found that:

*for many refugees, the agricultural land allocated to them was either too little or too poor in quality to allow them to achieve self-sufficiency. Environmental problems, soil exhaustion, and increases in family size were represented as some of the most important reasons for its inadequacy. While some refugees are able to access additional land from hosts, they have no security of tenure or use over such holdings. In an important minority of cases, land officially allocated to refugees is even reported to have been ‘grabbed’ back by nationals, with little evidence that such incidents have been systematically followed up by the authorities (RLP, 2005b).*

Studies also criticised the assumption that Settlements could provide dynamic economic possibilities for their inhabitants. Restrictions on freedom of movement were presented as critical to limiting the options for refugees to generate income, though the effects of these restrictions were not uniform. According to the same 2005 RLP report: ‘Many more refugees in Moyo than in Arua complained bitterly about restrictions on their freedom of movement and negative consequences for their livelihoods’. ‘Refugees in Arua contrastingly often reported that they were largely unable to move due to a lack of financial resources that would allow them to do so’ (2005). The inability to generate income and the constraints on refugees’ movement were therefore intertwined.

Ultimately the inability to be ‘self-reliant’ in the Settlements was belied by the fact that most refugees who had access to outside resources relocated to urban, peri-urban or other rural areas when they were able to (RLP, 2005), and almost always cited better access to livelihoods (and to some extent services) as a motivation for

doing so (Dryden Peterson, 2006). A report on urban refugees in Kampala from 2003 captures some of the judgments of these defectors:

*Kampala is particularly attractive to the young people who lived most of their life in settlements and who, during interviews, repeated that things ‘move and happen’ here, whereas in a settlement people sit waiting for a change that hardly comes by. Life in the settlement is described not only as more difficult than urban life, but also as dull, boring, depressing and passive ... Many of those who lived in a settlement before moving to Kampala report having felt like trapped animals and to have left because of the very limited possibilities of improving their quality of life (Machiavello, 2003).*

## **Self Reliance Strategy**

### *Design and aims*

The Self Reliance Strategy (SRS) originated out of the OPM in partnership with UNHCR. Work officially began on designing the policy in 1998 and it was implemented the following year. The target locations were Sudanese refugee camps in the West Nile region, including Arua, Moyo, Nebbi and Adjumani Settlements, and later the Yumbe (established in 2002) and Koboko (established in 2005) Settlements (Meyer, 2006). At that stage Sudanese refugees were Uganda’s largest protracted refugee population.

The SRS aimed to ‘improve the standard of living of the people of refugee hosting districts, including the refugees’ (UNHCR/GoU, 2004: 42) in West Nile. Its primary objectives were the ‘[e]mpowerment of refugees and nationals in the area to the extent that they would be able to support themselves’, and to ‘establish mechanisms that will ensure integration of services for the refugees with those of nationals’ – in other words to promote self-reliance and remove parallel service provision (UNHCR/GoU, 2004: 42).

Self-reliance was defined as:

- ‘the ability to grow or produce their own food;
- access to and ability to pay for the cost of the health and educational services provided to refugees by themselves (at the same level as the nationals) and take care of the vulnerable within the community;
- ability to take part in socio-economic activities, particularly income generation activities; and
- ability to maintain self-sustaining community structures by providing opportunities for better organising and responding to issues concerning them by themselves’ (UNHCR/GOU, 2004:42).

Services would be integrated through removing the model of UNHCR funding an independent partner to provide healthcare services within the settlements, and would instead directly fund the West Nile District Health Service to provide health care for refugees.

Central to the rationale for making these the core measures of the strategy was a broader objective for the impact of the project to be developmental for both refugees and the host community, giving refugees skills and knowledge to ‘take back to their home countries’, creating sustainable structures rather than the continual provision of emergency relief, and reducing dependency by giving refugees the ability ‘to stand on their own and

build their self-esteem'. By 2003, its architects projected, refugees would be able to 'grow or buy their own food, access and pay for basic services, and maintain self-sustaining community structures' (Dryden-Petersen and Hovil, 2003).

As far as livelihoods are concerned it is unclear what extra resources, training or strategy were involved in the SRS, except that refugees were integrated into government-run agricultural extension programmes (though it is unclear whether they received these previously from UNHCR implementing partners or not). What is clear is that it involved the introduction of a form of self-reliance 'deadline' – currently, refugees who are given settlement land have five years in which to become food self-sufficient, after which point, barring exceptional circumstances, refugees are phased off food assistance (HIP, 2014).

It should be noted that, in 2003, the SRS was nominally replaced by the UNHCR Development Assistance for Refugees Strategy (DAR), but it is not clear how these differed.

#### *Context at the time of implementation*

The impetus for a new approach to refugee crises in Uganda came out of the malaise of the late 1990s, when donor support for long-running care and maintenance regimes was waning and policymakers were searching for more sustainable means of supporting refugees. It was also clear that the Sudanese refugee population would remain in protected displacement for years. Integration with the national service delivery structure of Uganda was seen as a way to use resources most efficiently (Dryden-Petersen and Hovil, 2003). Lastly, West Nile, where most Sudanese refugee settlements were, was one of Uganda's most underdeveloped and insecure districts. The Strategy therefore was also seen as a way to reduce resentment of the refugees' presence and provide a boon for the local population: 'A number of national and district officials framed the introduction of the SRS as an overall development strategy and means to mitigate not only the impact of refugees on the West Nile region, but also address broader post-conflict development needs' (Meyer, 2006: 19).

#### *Assumptions*

The Strategy was underpinned by the assumption that three external developments would take place: 1) that the Strategy would be met by significant development funding to promote economic development in the area; 2) that the government of Uganda would pass a new Refugee Bill that would address issues such as freedom of movement, taxation, trade and employment opportunities, and temporary access to land; and 3) that the areas it operated in would be free from armed conflict.

These assumptions were regrettably not borne out, at least not quickly. It was only in 2010, nearly 11 years later, that the Ugandan government released new refugee legislation (and this did not entirely resolve issues of freedom of movement and access to employment). The Lord's Resistance Army waged a brutal insurgency in the north, which affected the host community and refugees alike. Military action and a truce removed Uganda as a base of operations for the LRA and largely contained it outside of the country, but only by around 2006.<sup>13</sup> West Nile continues to be marginalised in the distribution of state resources, and development actors did not provide

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<sup>13</sup> Though it continues to attack, kidnap, displace and kill civilians in DR Congo, Central African Republic and South Sudan.

the desired financial support for the programme (Dryden-Petersen and Hovil, 2003; Meyer, 2006).

Critical commentators reviewing the results of the project several years into its implementation also challenged its more conceptual assumptions. For Meyer (2006), a central flaw was defining self-reliance in relation to a reduction in external support for refugees. This denied that self-reliance might itself require extra inputs, albeit in a different form to food and other humanitarian aid: 'For example, the definition of self-reliance in the SRS includes access to income generating activities. In the context of refugee settlements in Uganda, this would presuppose at least some initial input from external agencies, and possibly a continuing role in supporting businesses through small loans or finding markets for goods' (2006: 25).

Meyer was also critical of the assumption inherent in trying to enable refugees to 'provide for themselves', and questioned whether this was achievable even for non-refugees in marginalised parts of the country: 'Assuming that refugees can "provide for themselves" in areas as diverse as food, water and health ... ignores that in most contexts, not even host communities are expected to achieve this. This definition does not address the fact that local host community members may access services such as health through provision of external inputs, including international donors' (2006: 26).

#### *Results and positive aspects*

Like the Settlements policy, the SRS was heralded by some commentators (e.g. see Fielden, 2008) as a success and a model for both refugee self-reliance and local integration. This study has not however found supporting figures (which is not to say they do not exist). A mid-term review of SRS conducted in 2004 highlighted several shortcomings, but the strategy was nonetheless framed as a success due to its achievement in terms of moving refugees towards food self-sufficiency (including increased crop production), the integration of public service systems into those in the Settlements, and greater levels of dialogue between refugees and host communities (see UNHCR, 2006).

Ultimately the livelihoods results of the SRS cannot be easily separated from those of the Settlements policy itself, which this strategy overlay – assessments of the results therefore depend on how stringent your criteria are. Certainly, the integration of service delivery in various sectors (including agricultural production, income generation, community services, health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, the environment and infrastructure development) did go a long way to addressing the parallel service delivery systems that had been established with Settlements (Dryden-Petersen and Hovil, 2003). This integration, however, was often accompanied by a decline in quality, as the services provided by UNHCR's IP were often of higher quality than Ugandan public services (Meyer, 2006).

#### *Challenges and negative consequences*

Where the Strategy was less successful was in fostering the ability of refugees to become truly economically self-reliant. UNHCR's own Mid Term Review showed that the problems which had beset refugee livelihoods in the Settlements prior to the implementation of the SRS still pertained. It highlighted the lack of a clear Refugee Law on the part of the government and the consequences that had for refugees' economic activities: '[w]ithout an established legal framework, important issues relating to self-reliance of refugees such as freedom of movement,

employment and taxation will remain unresolved and/or left to arbitrary interpretations' (UNHCR/GoU, 2004: 9).

The Mid Term Review also critiqued conceptual issues such as the definition of self-reliance and inadequate consideration of the effects of climatic and other shocks. It attempted to lower expectations of what self-sufficiency might mean for the refugee populations of West Nile: '[t]he SRS should set realistic goals as to the level of self-sufficiency that it is reasonable to expect under the present arrangements and conditions, and not assume that 100% self-sufficiency is always attainable. This is particularly true of refugee hosting areas with poorer land quality and/or less favourable climatic conditions' (UNHCR/GoU, 2004).

Meyer's study argued that refugees had bitterly resisted the implementation of the SRS on the grounds that the environment within the Settlements did not provide an adequate basis for self-reliance, and that the SRS had in fact been harmful to refugees' ability to meet their needs: 'refugees in Imvepi explained that they had stopped receiving non-food items and other essentials, due to the implementation of the SRS, and were therefore forced to sell food rations for soap, medicine and school supplies' (Meyer, 2006). In Meyer's view refugees' conceptualisation of self-reliance was at odds with that in the SRS: 'Refugees continually referred to education and other basic needs, including non-food items, as basic necessities for self-reliance. As one female refugee stated, self-reliance means you "have enough food to eat and sell, to buy things World Food Programme doesn't give, like salt and soap"' (Meyer, 2006).

The impact of shocks and stresses was indeed a significant determinant of success in the programme – not only climate shocks but those caused by insecurity too. Violence in the district overturned success in the fields on more than one occasion. Dryden-Petersen and Hovil (2003) quote a UNHCR official noting that 'while refugees in Adjumani, for example, had become self-sufficient in terms of food production, the upheavals of recent attacks and violence have caused refugees to flee their fields and become once again dependent on direct assistance'. Tensions between host communities and refugees over access to land also continued to be a problem (Sebba, 2006).

Numerous studies argued that the Settlements policy and the SRS that accompanied it was inadequate, and instead emphasised the ways it curtailed refugees' rights and prevented them from integrating with the community and from being truly economically self-sufficient. Rather, the policy was portrayed as a way to cut UNHCR budgets, irrespective of the degree to which refugees were truly independent of its aid (Meyer, 2006; Kaiser, 2006; RLP, 2005b).

### **The DAR and support to host communities**

The Self-Reliance Strategy was followed by the Development Assistance for Refugees Strategy implemented by UNHCR with the US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration. This aimed to transition from humanitarian and development assistance in five years. It did not attract much donor interest and enjoyed mixed success (interview with UNHCR).

The next major strategy with implications for livelihoods was implemented for host communities in Northern Uganda in recognition that UNHCR would be drawing down its presence after South Sudanese refugees returned en masse. This would have a serious impact on the local community as UNHCR had functioned almost as a development actor in the region. It focused on livelihoods support and environmental rehabilitation. This policy attracted very little funding and is considered to have been a failure. It suffered in part through coinciding with the government IDP return strategy in the north – the Peace Recovery and Development Plan – which aimed to provide development assistance in previously LRA-held areas (interview with UNHCR).

### **The Settlements today**

UNHCR feels that the basic policy of providing land to refugees and some of the strategies implemented over the last few decades have made agricultural livelihoods a viable prospect in many locations (interview with UNHCR). However, it is acknowledged that success has been mixed, particularly because not all refugees can or want to farm. Many Somali refugees have sold or rented out their plots to Congolese, Burundians or Rwandans and engage in non-agricultural livelihoods inside and out of the Settlements (interview with UNHCR). The 2006 Refugee Act is acknowledged to have ‘opened up many doors’ for legal livelihoods that did not exist before.

Measuring the success of agricultural endeavours is not entirely straightforward. Currently there is no ongoing measurement of crop yields, in part because it is not possible to track all the maize coming out of the Settlement. Even if these measurements did exist they would have to be adjusted to actual population figures, which are very imprecise, and to account for food aid that is entering and also being sold on.

Harsh judgements of the policy, based on research in (predominantly northern) Settlements in the mid-2000s, is somewhat at odds with more recent evaluations of livelihoods in the Settlements. The Oxford Humanitarian Innovation Project’s study of livelihoods in Kyangwali and Nakivale Settlements paints a picture of a relatively dynamic local economy (see HIP, 2014; Omata, 2012). While noting the favourable agricultural or pasturage conditions in these Settlements, the study points to the range of crops and livestock that are farmed and highlights that sorghum farmers are productive enough to become major suppliers of a local beer company (HIP, 2014). The study also draws attention to a range of non-agricultural livelihoods in the Settlements and the many informal economies at play (such as those around land, as described above). However, even though HIP (2014) points out that livelihoods opportunities in Settlements are more varied than is often assumed, it still finds that agriculture alone is insufficient to generate adequate household income even in Settlements where conditions have been favourable:

*Even in the settlements where refugees have been deemed to be self-reliant with their agricultural subsistence, farming alone seems to be insufficient to enable refugees to achieve economic sustainability. In Kyangwali settlement, often portrayed and praised as the ‘food basket of Hoima’, refugees nonetheless emphasised the limited income-generating capacity of their farming activities. They instead highlighted the centrality of non-farming livelihoods and of linkages with the Ugandan private sector as a key differentiating factor in improving their economic status (HIP, 2014).*

After several decades of implementing agriculture-based self-reliance programmes across the country, UNHCR appears to have narrowed its problem analysis around livelihoods as such: in the south, where plots are big enough for subsistence but difficult to achieve surplus on, the emphasis will be on increasing productivity (e.g. through credit, inputs, extension services and the like) as well as supporting market access and behaviour.

In the north, where plots are really only big enough for kitchen gardens, agriculture alone cannot be the answer unless refugees have access to land to rent. Skills training in non-farm activities may play a much larger role here, though at present refugee households appear to be relying to a significant extent on remittances from breadwinners in South Sudan (interviews with UNHCR consultant).

UNHCR is currently involved in the research and strategy design phase of a move to reengineer its approach to refugee livelihoods away from the care and maintenance aspects of the Settlements towards self-reliance. The three major obstacles this faces are 1) refugees' inability to own land (and some insecurity in their usage rights); 2) the difficulties they face in accessing some government services; and 3) legal obstacles to them transferring their credentials (interview with UNHCR consultant).

Currently a long-term livelihoods strategy is being developed and designed in such a way that it can be connected to the National Development Plan for 2015–2020, and the UN country strategy. The government is also working to include refugee settlements in its master development strategy 'Vision 2040'. The strategy applies to all government departments including the Refugee Department, and aims to transform Uganda's economy with a focus on making agriculture more productive, implementing a universal secondary school strategy and increasing capacity through vocational skills training (interview with UNHCR). These sorts of links are seen as more important to actually achieving self-reliance than income generating projects, as they change the structural conditions under which refugees live and links them up to development financing.

### **JICA–UNHCR Promotion of Rice Production Initiative (PRiDe) rice farming project**

The JICA–UNHCR PRiDe partnership is a simple but effective livelihoods project that has reached refugees through expanding an existing development programme that JICA was funding for Ugandan farmers.

#### *Aims and design*

The broad aim of the UNHCR and JICA partnership has been to enhance economic development in refugee and host communities, as well as refugee youth engagement and empowerment (not covered here). Building on an existing multiyear development programme targeted at Ugandan small farmers and involving collaboration between development partners, humanitarian partners and local district governance, it was rolled out in the refugee-hosting districts of Kyangwali, Rwamwanja and Adjumani. The project trained refugees and host communities on rice cultivation and value chain development, and supported graduates of the training with seeds, equipment and other inputs.

#### *Context and assumptions*

According to the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, 'Rice is rather a new crop in East Africa in general and in Uganda in particular ... extension workers do not have enough knowledge and experience on rice

cultivation. In areas where rice is a new crop, it is essential to conduct proper training and capacity building on rice cultivation for researchers and extension workers' (EIAR-JICA, 2012). While seeds and tools programmes have a mixed, if not lacklustre, record as humanitarian livelihoods interventions, this project played a valuable role by introducing a new, environmentally appropriate crop (non-irrigated rice) in a very simple package of inputs and training (interview with UNHCR consultant).

### *Assumptions*

The project assumed that a one-off package of training and seeds would be sufficient to launch farmers in this new crop, and that the crop would be suitable to the region. These assumptions appear to be based on a body of agronomic research across East Africa, and anecdotally appear to have been borne out (EIAR-JICA, 2012; interview with UNHCR consultant). No independent evaluation is publicly available. According to a JICA project document, the non-irrigated rice harvest has so far been very successful for small farmers, reportedly increasing income three- or four-fold. The project itself has reached 360 refugee and host community farmers trained in rice cultivation in 2014 (JICA-UNHCR, 2014).

### **WFP interventions to increase market information and leverage**

#### *Aims and design*

A recent joint evaluation by UNHCR, WFP and the Ugandan government indicates a shift towards 'upgrading' Uganda's livelihoods programme to decrease the strong focus on short-term food security interventions, primarily in Settlements. This entails expanding 'long-term development practices' such as training on post-harvest handling and storage and collective bulking, storage and marketing at the community level to enhance sales of surplus agricultural commodities (UNHCR, 2014). In essence, the intervention aggregates farm produce so it can be sold in bulk at a better price later.

Another WFP intervention that seeks to increase refugees' bargaining power at the market are village savings and loans associations (VSLAs). The aim of these associations is to provide credit through farmers' associations so that farmers do not have to sell their produce at a below-market rate because they need immediate cash. VSLAs loan members money at reasonable interest rates. A local NGO runs training to strengthen VSLAs. This has reached 747 VSLAs and between 2010 and 2013 'a total cumulative capital of UGS2.3 billion (US\$ 866,000) was directly mobilized by farmers'.

A case study of one such VSLA posted on the WFP website describes its operations as follows:

*Loans must be repaid within three months or a fine is levied. There is also a welfare fund, to which members contribute a mandatory UGS1,000 (US\$0.40) every month, which can be accessed in case of an emergency. Every member has a book in which their transactions are recorded and stamped by a committee member to ensure accountability. This year the group [with 26 members] has saved more than UGS7.2 million (US\$2,700) and earned over UGS3.2 million (US\$1,200) in interest payments (WFP, 2014).*

No independent evaluation was found to put this outcome into perspective, or to allow comment as to whether the intervention achieved its aims.

Some of these WFP projects fall under the Purchase for Progress (P4P) pilot programme that WFP is running in 20 contexts. P4P takes many forms, but essentially aims to include more local, smallholder and low-income farmers in WFP's food supply chain, with the objective of giving these marginalised producers reliable markets to sell surplus crops at competitive prices (WFP, 2011). In Uganda, a number of interventions have been included under this banner, including those listed above, and a warehousing receipt system has been a core element of innovation (WFP, 2011).

### *Context and assumptions*

The creation of the global P4P project stemmed from criticism of WFP's own value chain: two decades ago it sourced the vast majority of its food from developed countries. Critics argued that it should play a more progressive development role and source more from developing countries. More than simply buying food from developing-country traders, some critics argued that WFP should do more to empower smallholder farmers in countries where it operated.

In Uganda the project takes the form it does because WFP identified a lack of modern stores and, partly because of that, poor-quality grain, low productivity and limited access to credit as the major constraints facing smallholder farmers.

### *Results*

Only one, mid-term, evaluation has been published of the global P4P project, with another slated to be completed in 2014 and presumably released in 2015. The Mid Term Evaluation offered cautious praise for the programme at large, though it also noted a number of risks to both smallholder farmers and WFP itself (WFP, 2011). Amongst specific points of praise for the programme in Uganda was the degree to which WFP commodities have been contracted through new market institutions that the project had funded, such as the warehouse receipts system. It was also commended for attempting to strengthen engagement between smallholders and commercial markets, outside WFP's own procurement demand (WFP, 2011).

### **Spontaneous self-reliance activities**

In any discussion of refugee livelihoods in Uganda it is necessary to also point out the wide range of economic activities that self-settled urban refugees are involved in. Kampala hosts an estimated 50,000 registered and unregistered refugees and asylum-seekers, and as such is the second-largest location for refugees in the country. The predominant reason refugees cite for moving to Kampala is to access a wide variety of employment and business opportunities in the informal and formal sector, though this motivation was often accompanied by the desire to access better services, and some refugees reported leaving the Settlements to escape insecurity (including direct experiences of discrimination, abuse or sexual assault) (see Machiavello, 2003; Buscher, 2011; Omata, 2012; HIP, 2014). As this is not an external intervention per se, this section does not talk separately about assumptions and design, but rather talks about what helps and hinders self-settled refugees in urban areas in establishing sustainable livelihoods. There do not appear to be any significant urban livelihoods programmes

ongoing in Kampala, or at least this research did not mention any, though mention is made of one primary form of intervention: English lesson and schools fees sponsorship.

It should also be noted that many refugees have self-settled in small towns and in rural areas, but there was not enough up-to-date information about their livelihood strategies to cover them in this case study.

### *Context of urban settlement*

Historically, refugees were permitted to settle in urban areas only if they could prove outside means of financial support. Since the passing of the Refugee Act in 2006 this requirement has changed only slightly: refugees do not need to demonstrate financial independence but must forego the assistance available to Settlement refugees. Activists argue that there is however no ‘basis in law for either UNHCR’s protection mandate or Uganda’s obligations to refugees to be restricted to refugees who agree to live in settlements’ (RLP, 2005). Yet the political reality is that the government has reservations about helping refugees in urban areas – though what these are is not clear – and UNHCR remains oriented to providing assistance in Settlements. There have however been signs of growing engagement from UNHCR with urban refugees in Kampala, including a roundtable held there in 2012 to discuss how to engage with urban displacement in the capital.

Although registered refugees have the right to access public services and to work in Kampala, public officials interpret these laws differently and refugees often face discrimination. Refugees receive some international assistance in the form of legal aid, health care support, language classes, psychosocial counselling and ‘minimal’ livelihood interventions, such as micro-credit and vocational training (Buscher, 2011). In general, however, they often struggle to access services which are crucial to livelihoods and to their ability to equip their children for a future in the labour market, such as health and education services.

Refugees in Kampala tend to be better educated than refugees in the agricultural settlements, and have more often pursued non-agricultural livelihoods in their countries of origin (Machiavello, 2003). Nonetheless they join an urban economy with high levels of unemployment, and where 38% of the population lives below the poverty line and only 13% of jobs are found in the private or public sector (Buscher, 2011). As a result, most jobs are irregular, informal and poorly paid.

### *Enabling factors for sustainable urban livelihoods*

Several core studies over the past 11 years have revealed that the majority of refugees in Kampala are able to generate income from work (Machiavello, 2003; RLP, 2005; Buscher, 2011; HIP, 2014). Refugees often engage in many simultaneous livelihood strategies, and many also receive income from remittances or other sources of support. Closer examination of these livelihood strategies reveals the importance of self-settled refugees’ social networks, and the links they form with the private sector and other, often foreign, markets.

Ethnic connections are often central to refugees’ ability to access employment – for instance when co-nationals own businesses and target their own nationalities as employees – this was observed in Eritrean, Ethiopian, Congolese and Somali communities in Kampala (Buscher, 2011; HIP, 2014). The phenomenon of refugees concentrating in particular industries and markets has long been observed, for instance Congolese refugees

concentrate in petty trade and selling cloth, Rwandans are involved in retail trading, running bars and brokering, while Somalis have larger-scale businesses such as restaurants and supermarkets (HIP, 2014). Refugees are also often physically concentrated in particular neighbourhoods.

Social networks also give refugees opportunities to support their own enterprises and diminish risks. For example, Buscher (2011) describes how refugees in Kampala use social networks to ‘access credit, create savings groups to pay for emergency costs and organize their own non-formal education programs’. Collective action helps them to undertake their own protection activities, for example refugee women who organise themselves so that they sell in groups. These mitigate the risks they face from the police and criminals, and from discrimination and harassment.

Studies have also highlighted the ways in which refugees have become more self-reliant through livelihood activities made possible through forming trade connections with neighbouring countries, importing products from further afield or trading with the Settlements themselves. There is significant trade between refugee communities in Kampala and those in the Settlements, for example Somalis who export products such as canned food, milk, clothing and medicine to the Settlements, and also sell on WFP rations such as digir, maize and cooking oil (HIP, 2014). Even amongst refugees who are not engaged in trade with the Settlements per se, many households adopt a livelihoods strategy that diversifies their income by having some members in the Settlements (where they receive food rations) and others outside involved in Ugandan labour markets (RLP, 2005b).

#### *Challenges and shortcomings*

Many urban refugees still struggle to meet their basic needs, and many end up relying on support from churches, religious leaders and private charity (RLP, 2005; Buscher, 2011). According to Buscher:

*Many vulnerable refugees live in extreme poverty. When they are unable to pay for their needs, they are evicted, double up in crowded rooms, sleep on the street, eat less frequently and engage in negative economic strategies. These strategies tend to increase their risk to gender-based violence, and can adversely affect their children, who may be sent to live with a relative or pulled out of school and expected to work (Buscher, 2011).*

Several challenges are repeatedly brought up in the literature. Certain groups of refugees are seen to have weak social capital, which puts them at a disadvantage compared to more densely knit communities. Unregistered refugees also live in fear of detection and harassment by the police. Lack of English or Luganda skills is seen as a major impediment to accessing services and dealing with employers and customers (RLP, 2005). Refugees who have the capital and skills to start their own businesses face the same challenges as locals do around the cost and bureaucracy involved, and in the informal sector they are vulnerable to having their stock confiscated or being harassed by the authorities (Buscher, 2011).

Surprisingly little livelihoods work is going on with this large population of refugees, many of whom clearly cannot access the full range of services. UNHCR is currently looking at supporting refugees by expanding their social networks and providing protection services in line with its 2009 Policy on Urban Refugees.

### **Urban projects with a livelihoods link: English lessons and fee sponsorship**

Programmes targeted at urban refugees in Kampala are mostly small-scale, and many deal with the protection and welfare issues facing this group. One type of intervention that researchers link to an increased chance of success in the job market are Luganda and English lessons (see Machiavello, 2003). A few organisations offer English lessons, including international NGOs and refugee self-help organisations. However, it appears that the drop-out rate is high as refugees cannot spare the time from livelihood activities (Buscher, 2010; and personal correspondence). A few organisations also sponsor school fees or other costs related to schooling, such as the Xavier Project, the Homo Njiani Refugee Project and Interaid, but these are on a very small scale.

### **Conclusion**

Several positive lessons can be drawn from the Ugandan case. The success of the Settlement policy (and the various semi-developmental strategies that followed it) can be seen in its creation of agricultural livelihoods for many refugees and a resultant contribution to their food security in the midst of donor impatience with long-running care and maintenance regimes. However, various studies have made it clear that agricultural production alone is not enough to create self-reliance, and diversification of livelihoods is seen as crucial in this regard. Policy has so far not been particularly enabling of the myriad other activities that are possible – and ongoing – in the Settlements. A clear and progressive legal framework also seems to have brought rewards, though work still remains to be done in getting legal entitlements recognised by all wings of government. Finally, it is also encouraging that refugee settlements are included in the government's drive to raise agricultural productivity by 2040, providing a clear example of how refugees can be brought into developmental programmes, where there is the will to do so.

A recurrent theme in the literature is the lack of support for non-agricultural livelihoods, especially amongst self-settled refugees and in urban areas. It was not possible to clarify why this is the case, but drawing on experience in other urban areas there is a pervasive assumption that these refugees are less needy, that this type of assistance is more costly while reaching fewer beneficiaries, and that it is therefore less cost-effective. While this may be the case in an absolute sense, this attitude fails to take advantage of the multiple connections between settlement economies and urban ones, or the ways in which successful refugee businesses generate employment for other refugees. Reports like that of Omata (2012) and Buscher (2011) make several recommendations in this regard.

### **Limitations of the case study**

This case study has attempted to provide a snapshot of the most important findings and debates about refugee self-reliance in Uganda and the external interventions which have attempted to support refugee livelihoods. The short timeframe (eight days in total), limited word count and primarily desk-based nature of the study were all tangible constraints on the study. Given the long period covered and the rich history of the Settlement policy in Uganda, this short study could not go into great depth.

### *Gaps in the evidence*

There is a relatively rich literature on Uganda covering academic, think-tank and NGO sources. This literature does however contain some gaps. Firstly, insecurity in the north of Uganda limited research there for many

years. Secondly, given the geographic dispersal of refugee settlements and the distances between and within them, most studies look at only one or two sites and few can provide an overview across the country. As the conditions – including, importantly, climatic conditions – vary considerably from Settlement to Settlement, this can produce reports which are biased heavily to conditions that do not necessarily pertain across the country.

There is also a certain unevenness in the coverage of refugee policy in Uganda. While several studies were undertaken in the early and mid-2000s, soon after the implementation of the SRS and its conclusion, there were relatively few between 2006 and 2014. Given the more optimistic reports about livelihoods made in recent studies (e.g HIP, 2014) it is hard to reconcile the current situation with that depicted in the earlier literature.

The literature also suffers from a lack of quantitative data, exacerbated by the lack of studies covering the entire country. As a consequence, while statements are made that the SRS boosted livelihoods, or conversely led to a decline in refugee food security, figures are not supplied to back these conclusions up.

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