

HPG Commissioned Report

Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile

Nicholas Crawford, John Cosgrave, Simone Haysom
and Nadine Walicki

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About the authors

Nicholas Crawford is a Senior Research Associate for the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

John Cosgrave is an independent consultant.

Simone Haysom is an independent consultant.

Nadine Walicki is a Senior Regional Analyst at the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

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Humanitarian Policy Group
Overseas Development Institute
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
United Kingdom

Tel. +44 (0) 20 7922 0300
Fax. +44 (0) 20 7922 0399
E-mail: hpgadmin@odi.org
Website: <http://www.odi.org/hpg>

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Executive summary

Globally, forced displacement¹ has been growing rapidly over the last decade, increasing on average by 1.6 million people a year from 2000–2014. The number of displaced people around the world at the end of 2014 stood at 59.5 million; internally displaced people (IDPs), who comprised just under 50% of the total displaced caseload in 1989, have accounted for over 60% of all displaced since 2001.

Five countries produced over half of the 59.5 million displaced people at the end of 2014. Syria alone was the origin for nearly one in five. Likewise, although more than 160 countries hosted displaced people in 2014, a small number bear the burden of hosting large populations: four countries – Syria, Colombia, Iraq and Sudan – are hosting 52% of all IDPs, while seven – Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine and Jordan – are hosting more than 50% of all refugees.

The majority of refugees and IDPs have been displaced from, within or into countries with serious protection, human rights and governance weaknesses. Roughly 36 million out of a total of 59.5 million displaced people (60%) originated in countries categorised on the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index as 'alert' and 'high alert', while 48% of all displaced were exiled in countries falling into those categories.

Displacement is increasingly an urban and dispersed phenomenon, with settled camps becoming the exception. At least 59% of all refugees are now living in urban settings, a proportion that is increasing annually. The majority of IDPs are likewise outside identifiable camps or settlements, and instead live dispersed in urban, rural or remote settings.

Most displacement crises will persist for many years. A rapidly resolved crisis of any significant proportions is a rare exception. Data from 1978–2014 suggests that less than one in 40 refugee crises are resolved within three years, and that 'protractedness' is usually a matter of decades. More than 80% of refugee crises last for ten years or more; two in five last 20 years or more. The persistence of crises in countries with internal displacement is also notable. Countries experiencing conflict-related displacement have reported figures for IDPs over periods of 23 years on average. Understanding the likelihood of protractedness from the outset – and well before the five years that is the current UNHCR threshold for protracted refugee situations – should influence the shape and duration of national and international interventions.

Just as most displacement crises persist for years and even decades, most refugees and many IDPs living in those situations can expect to be in exile for many years. Once displaced for six months, refugees have a high probability of finding themselves in displacement for at least three years and often much longer – what this study defines as 'protracted displacement'. Over the past decade, about 80% of refugees around the world were in a state of protracted displacement at any one time. At the end of 2014, two-thirds of all refugees, or 12.9 million people, were stuck in protracted displacement – a slightly lower proportion as a result of new refugees from Syria. Half of all refugees had been in exile for over ten years at the end of 2014. In 2011, prior to the large number of new refugees from Syria, half of all refugees had been in exile for over 22 years. Protracted displacement among IDPs is also a major phenomenon: in two-thirds of countries monitored for conflict-induced displacement in 2014, at least 50% of IDPs had been displaced for more than three years.

Global support for all situations of displacement (short and protracted) was estimated to total \$12.2 billion in 2014, or 50% of total global humanitarian spending that year. Roughly half of all global spending on displacement, or \$6.4 billion, was directed to situations of protracted displacement. Ten countries – Syria, Colombia, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, the Democratic

¹ 'Displacement' in this paper refers to people who are forcibly displaced as a result of armed conflicts, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. This includes refugees, IDPs and other 'persons of concern' to UNHCR, such as asylum-seekers and stateless people (UNHCR, 2012b). Historical data for IDPs for the period covered by the study is only available for those displaced by conflict and generalised violence. The totals for IDPs may include people who have been displaced by some combination of natural disaster and political instability or other causes.

Republic of Congo (DRC), Jordan, Turkey, Palestine and South Sudan – hosting roughly 37 million displaced people (62.3% of the total), absorbed about 37%, or \$4.5 billion, of all humanitarian spending in 2014. These same ten countries hosted 52.2% of all refugees in protracted displacement.

Drawing an exact picture of the global state of protracted displacement is an approximate and incomplete exercise – in part because each situation of protracted displacement is its own unique and complex system: layers of new, old or oft-displaced people; a sometimes indistinguishable mix of refugees, IDPs, migrants and host populations; a mishmash of wildly differing needs and social and human capital amongst the displaced and their hosts; and opaque systems of support – sometimes international, more often local and informal.

Improving the mapping and monitoring of protracted displacement calls for improvements in donor, agency and national government data and reporting systems. Further investment is particularly needed to count and track caseloads of IDPs, as in many cases neither governments nor the UN is regularly reporting such figures. For both protracted refugees and IDPs, even country-specific estimates of the numbers of urban and rural displaced people or the numbers of those encamped or self-settled need to be improved. Finally, existing donor and agency reporting systems do not account directly for the amount of international aid being directed towards displacement, protracted or otherwise, making it difficult to estimate levels of assistance.

Aid agencies seeking to promote self-reliance and livelihoods amongst people in protracted displacement have progressed from models of assistance largely focused on care and maintenance (with indirect but potentially important outcomes for long-term livelihoods) towards a more holistic response to the challenges and opportunities available to displaced people. Because of insufficient or inconsistent funding, care and maintenance regimes generally have not provided a stable platform on which beneficiaries could progress towards self-reliance. They also seem to have fallen short in contributing to lowering chronic malnutrition – an indicator of lost future economic potential. When it comes to more direct interventions to support self-reliance and livelihoods, such as vocational training and income generating projects supported by grants and loans, the research literature reveals a panoply of small-scale uncoordinated and unsustainable

interventions, mostly implemented by the humanitarian arms of aid agencies, with inadequate technical and managerial expertise, poor links to markets and short-term and unreliable funding.

At the same time, the research literature does suggest improvements in the diagnostics around self-reliance and livelihoods in protracted displacement. As protracted displacement has become the norm, analysts and aid professionals have developed a more complex understanding of the kinds of environments – policy, political, economic and geographical – that can encourage self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods among the displaced, as well as the characteristics of displaced people that favour or discourage positive economic integration.

Much of this improved diagnosis has been spurred by a pragmatic acceptance that displacement will be prolonged (and that options for traditional ‘durable solutions’ are often closed), which in turn has led to a better appreciation of how market forces and the connectedness of displaced people – amplified by their social capital – have allowed them in some contexts to achieve positive livelihood outcomes. Central to this shift in understanding has been a focus away from an aid-centric view of livelihoods in displacement – that the livelihoods of displaced people depend on external interventions – to an appreciation of the steps displaced people themselves are taking to find their way, and the support they may need to sustain these initiatives.

Evidence that the economic dynamism of displaced people can have positive effects for host populations and states has also led to a consensus around advocacy for displaced people: encouraging access to livelihoods (e.g. work permits or freedom of movement) is not just a human rights issue, but also offers practical economic and social returns – an argument, however, that has so far borne few positive results in host states, whose behaviour continues to be shaped by domestic political calculations.

Even if host states and local administrations have been slow to embrace more enabling policy frameworks, humanitarian and development agencies have begun to introduce programmes in support of self-reliance and livelihoods that appreciate the complexity of livelihood strategies open to displaced people, the barriers they face and the steps they are taking on their own. At the macro level, this has meant understanding protracted displacement in the context of broader national and

regional poverty and development challenges, and supporting displaced people through investments in national and local poverty reduction and development strategies. At the micro level, it has meant more integrated and holistic interventions which stress sophisticated market analysis, and which complement and upgrade traditional self-reliance and livelihoods projects (such as small grants, vocational training or micro-credit) with psychosocial and other technical and social services. In both cases, hosts as well as refugees and IDPs are targeted to the extent that they share vulnerabilities and their economic and social well-being is intertwined.

Both the macro- and micro-level approaches can build from humanitarian interventions, but in the end depend on longer-term development horizons (and funding), as well as links to sustainable, national systems. From the outset of a displacement crisis, development actors that acknowledge displacement as a fixture within the community – and that show greater speed and agility in designing new interventions or adapting ongoing programmes – could help displaced people find their path to livelihoods more quickly and with less pain, while preserving humanitarian funding for acute new crises. That said, the well-documented humanitarian–development programming and funding gap continues to pose a challenge to holistic approaches, despite adjustments over the years to the architecture of the international aid system.

In seeking ways to support the self-reliance and livelihoods of people in protracted displacement, donors and aid agencies need to guard against generalising about situations of protracted displacement or the needs of displaced people. Situations of displacement are not static events but instead change continuously; they rarely proceed along a predictable path from displacement to stabilisation to return; and the displaced are usually a highly heterogeneous population.

The receptivity of a particular situation to interventions that may support self-reliance and livelihoods can vary depending on a range of factors, including the legal and protective environment, access to markets, the resources and social capital of the displaced and the capacity and willingness of host institutions to absorb assistance. The better decision may be to concentrate assistance on social safety net schemes that support future livelihoods by protecting human capital over generations. In other instances, direct assistance that helps link displaced people to development opportunities or includes them within broader national developmental strategies may be possible. Often, some combination of these approaches would be preferable since, even in the most enabling environments for self-reliance and livelihoods, some displaced people – often the most marginalised – are likely to remain in need of social safety nets, though their needs may be indistinguishable from similarly vulnerable hosts.

This paper presents a pilot tool to begin understanding the opportunities for self-reliance and livelihood assistance afforded by various situations of displacement: a basic typology for where assistance is needed and what kind of assistance may be best suited to the situation at hand. The typology examines four themes in any situation of protracted displacement that affect the ability of people to seek self-reliance and livelihood solutions: i) the legal framework and protection environment; ii) access to markets and the private sector; iii) the capacities, resources and assets of the displaced; and iv) the environment for external intervention. Each of these themes is assigned a numerical score and the aggregate score provides an overall estimate – ranging from ‘most constraining’ to ‘most conducive’ – of how receptive that displacement crisis would be to external interventions in support of self-reliance and livelihoods. How a situation scores also provides clues as to the types of interventions that might be most appropriate.

Introduction

The number of refugees and IDPs around the world and the duration of their displacement have increased over the past two decades. In 2009 it was estimated that the average duration of displacement for refugees had lengthened from nine years in the 1980s to 20 years by the mid-2000s (Loescher & Milner, 2011).² Our research suggests that, at any one time, two-thirds to 85% of all refugees in the world are in protracted displacement.³ While more difficult to estimate, protracted displacement among IDPs is also a major phenomenon.

Most refugees and IDPs living in protracted exile have little or no prospect of achieving a durable solution – that is, of returning to their homes, integrating with full rights in their place of exile or settling elsewhere.⁴ With major new displacement crises in the Middle East as a result of the war in Syria, continuing conflict and displacement in Africa and longstanding displaced populations in countries such as Colombia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, governments and aid agencies are trying to grapple with this reality. Protracted displacement is today the norm; a quickly resolved displacement crisis is the rare exception.

It is also clear that displacement is increasingly an urban and dispersed phenomenon, with settled camps becoming the exception. The International Rescue Committee, for example, reports that ‘over half the world’s refugees now live in large towns and cities’ (International Rescue Committee, n.d.), a figure consistent with our own estimates that about six in ten refugees are living in urban areas. The UN Special Rapporteur notes that most IDPs are

outside identifiable camps or settlements and instead live dispersed in a variety of urban, rural or remote settings – a factor that contributes to their ‘invisibility’ when it comes to efforts to assist and protect them (United Nations, 2011).

A patchwork of humanitarian interventions helps meet the basic needs of some displaced people, in camp situations and in urban areas. Far more are struggling in their place of exile with little or no assistance, and subject to legal restrictions and protection threats that constrain their ability to build sustainable livelihoods for their families. Besides suffering the indignities and material hardship of exile, people in protracted displacement struggle to improve their economic lot or contribute to the development of their host communities or countries. Host countries and communities incur real and perceived costs that in turn result in policies that push solutions for displaced populations further away and incur even greater costs. International donors and aid agencies struggle to keep afloat expensive, open-ended humanitarian assistance packages that offer slim prospects for the longer-term well-being of displaced people.

For many years, aid agencies, researchers, advocates for displaced people and refugees and IDPs themselves have all called for investments in self-reliance and livelihoods as an important step towards overcoming the costly inadequacies of the present aid regime. Despite the great deal of writing that has been done on the subject, there has been no systematic examination of the evidence on the effectiveness and impact of actual self-reliance and livelihood interventions. This paper aims to help fill that gap, first by drawing a snapshot of global protracted displacement and then by exploring how aid agencies and governments have contributed to sustainable livelihoods among the long-term displaced.

Section 1 discusses the dimensions and characteristics of global protracted displacement and the extent of international resources directed towards the problem. Section 2 summarises the state of evidence uncovered in a comprehensive literature review. Section 3 reviews the literature on self-reliance and livelihood investments, analyses the theories of

2 The Loescher & Milner study did not include IDPs, and the data available does not allow for a reliable calculation of the average duration of IDP displacement historically.

3 The TOR for the study defined protracted displacement as three years or longer, which is an arbitrary cut-off. As the data in Section 1 demonstrates, significant situations of displacement that last more than six months or a year (with the exception of some displacement caused by natural disasters) tend to end in protracted displacement, with many people remaining in displacement for ten years or more. Annexes 1 and 2 provide a full explanation of the data and sources.

4 For refugees this is third country resettlement, for IDPs resettlement in a different location in their own country.

change underpinning those investments and suggests some possible future directions, based on the limited evidence available. Section 4 proposes a typology for understanding the opportunities and challenges in supporting self-reliance and livelihood activities in specific situations of protracted displacement. The findings of the paper are also drawn from four country case studies, in Sudan/Darfur, Colombia (IDPs), Uganda and Jordan (refugees).⁵

As discussed in Section 2, the study team found the evidence base for self-reliance and livelihood assistance

⁵ See Annex 8 for the case studies: www.odi.org/hpg/protracted-displacement.

for protracted displacement thin. Furthermore, the number and diversity of protracted displacement settings, encompassing both IDPs and refugees – some counted or registered, others not – limits the value of generalisations. A number of studies have provided useful insights about specific situations of protracted displacement. More of this kind of detailed analytical work is needed to better understand and find ways to contribute concretely to self-reliance and livelihoods amongst the protracted displaced. In sifting through the mostly anecdotal evidence that is available, the study team has tried to avoid simplified generalisations and instead to convey patterns in approach and execution that we hope will contribute to finding solutions.

Section 1

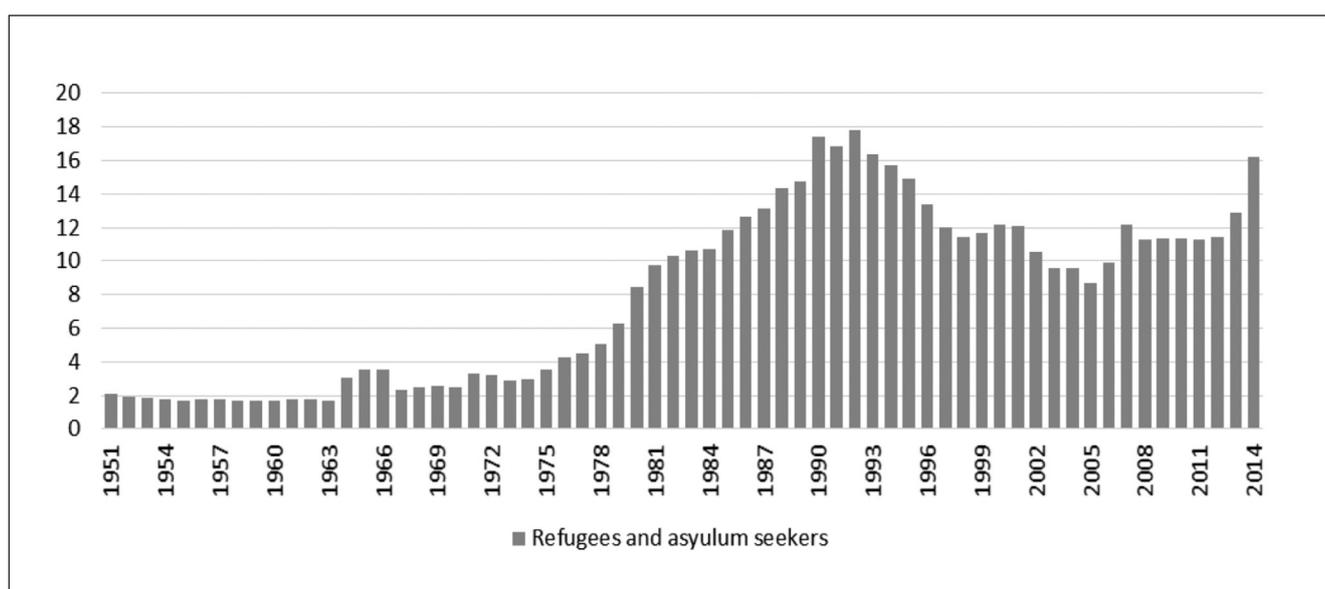
Protracted displacement: dimensions, trends, characteristics

In order to present a picture of the state of protracted displacement today – encompassing both refugees and IDPs – the study team built a typology of displacement around the world that attempts, not just to count the number of people in protracted displacement, but also to investigate broader trends, such as geographic patterns and the duration of displacement. The typology uses only publicly available data on people forced into displacement, which covers a wide range of countries for a significant time-span. The full typology and its methodology are presented in Annexes 1 and 2.⁶

1.1 Displacement today: trends and geographic distribution

By our estimate, some 163 countries around the world were hosting 21.3 million refugees and 38.2 million IDPs at the end of 2014. As Figure 1 demonstrates, the world's refugee population rose steadily from the 1970s, peaked in the early 1990s and is again on the rise, largely as a result of the war in Syria. A sustained rise in the world's displaced is more pronounced when both refugees and IDPs are counted.

Figure 1: Refugees and asylum-seekers 1951–2014⁷



6 The ToR requested inclusion of Palestinian refugees who, of course, represent the most protracted of refugee situations, though they are often counted and considered apart from other displaced populations. The study acknowledges the important evidence this population provides on the challenges of responding to protracted displacement; at the same time, it

is important to recognise the unique institutional, humanitarian and political context in which they are situated.

7 See Annexes 1 and 2 for data sources and commentary: www.odhpn.org/hpg/protracted-displacement.

Figure 2: All displacement 1989–2014

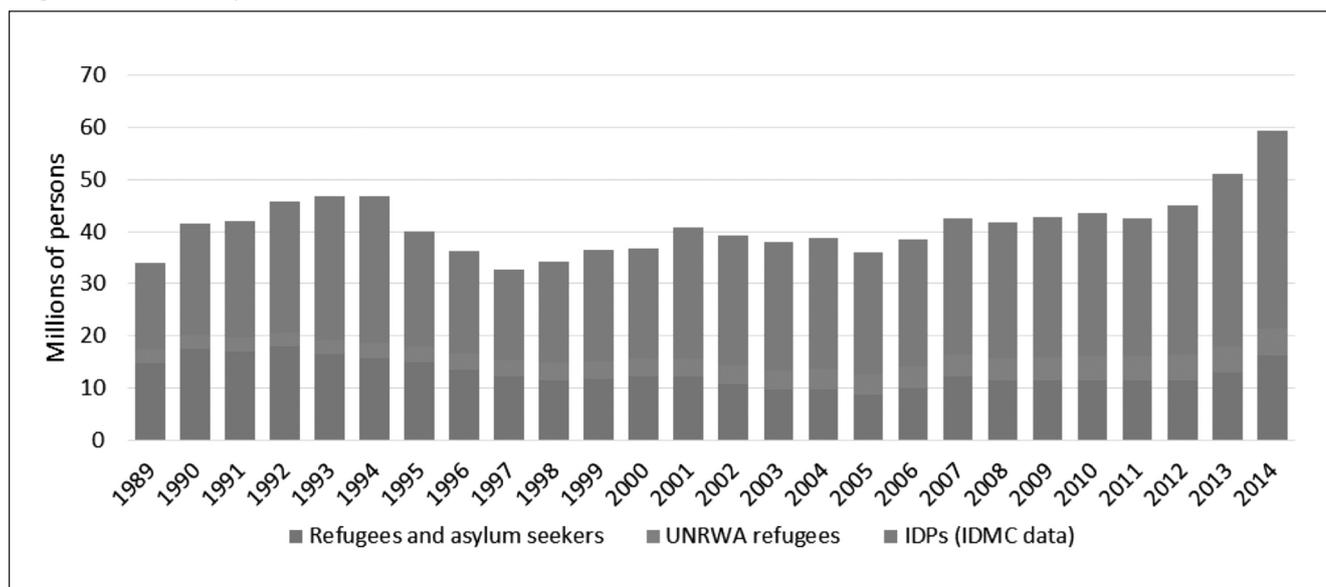


Figure 3: Distribution of displaced people around the world

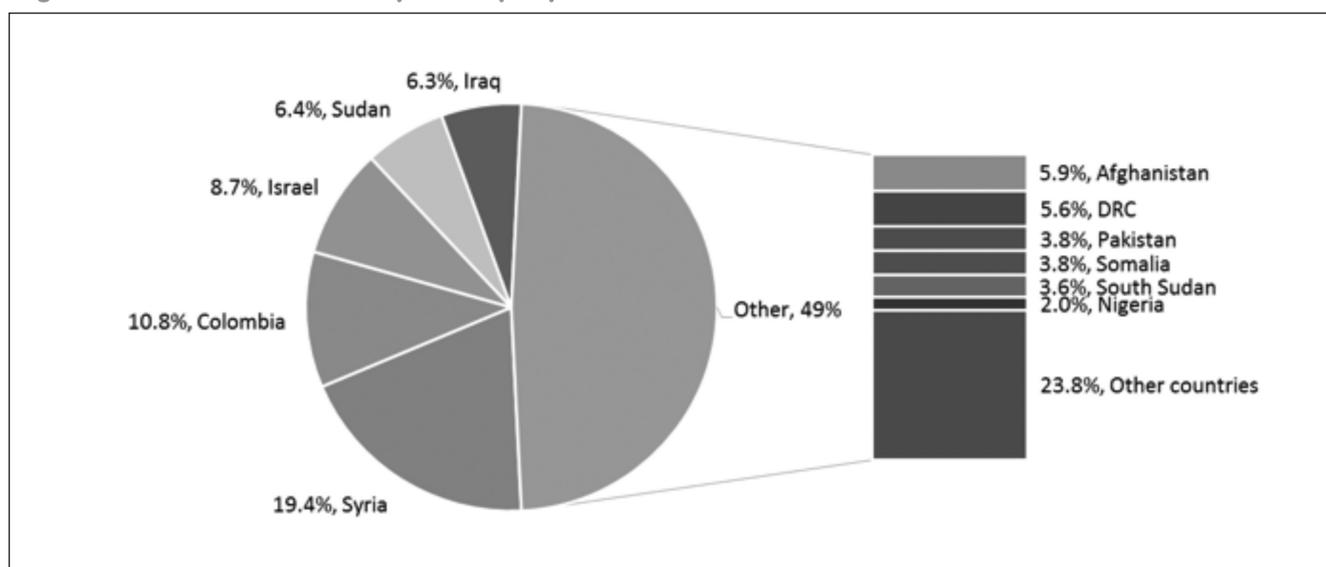


Figure 2 demonstrates we are in the third decade of an upward trend in displacement generally. From 2000 to 2014, the number of displaced grew by an average of 1.6 million a year. While IDPs were just under 50% of the total displaced caseload in 1989, they have accounted for over 60% of all displaced since 2001.

As can be seen from Table 1, internal displacement is a prominent feature in seven of the ten largest situations of displacement. Somalia has approximately equal numbers in internal and external displacement. In only two of the top ten cases – Israel, the country of origin for the UN Relief and Works Agency

(UNRWA) caseload, and Afghanistan – is displacement predominantly in the form of refugees.

Syria has the highest proportion of displaced people, both refugees and IDPs, amongst its population, with roughly one in five Syrians living in exile or internal displacement at the end of 2014.

The pattern of displacement for refugees has shifted over time. As Figure 4 illustrates, Sub-Saharan Africa was the source of the bulk of refugees in the late 1970s. This quickly changed with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, leading to large

Table 1: Breakdown of IDPs and refugees generated in countries with large displacement crises

Top ten countries of displacement	Percentage of caseload internally displaced	Percentage of caseload externally displaced (i.e. refugees in another country)
Syria	66%	34%
Colombia	94%	6%
Israel	0%	100%
Sudan	82%	18%
Iraq	87%	13%
Afghanistan	23%	77%
DRC	83%	17%
Pakistan	83%	17%
Somalia	49%	51%
South Sudan	71%	29%

Table 2: Density of displaced populations

Country	Displaced in 2014 per million of population	As IDPs	As refugees
Syria	492,841	326,170	166,671
Somalia	204,779	102,423	102,356
Cyprus	184,206	184,206	–
Central African Republic	180,608	93,116	87,492
South Sudan	180,121	127,629	52,492
Colombia	130,890	123,527	7,363
Afghanistan	108,654	25,748	82,906
Eritrea	57,071	1,530	55,541

Figure 4: Proportion of refugees and asylum-seekers by region of origin 1978–2014

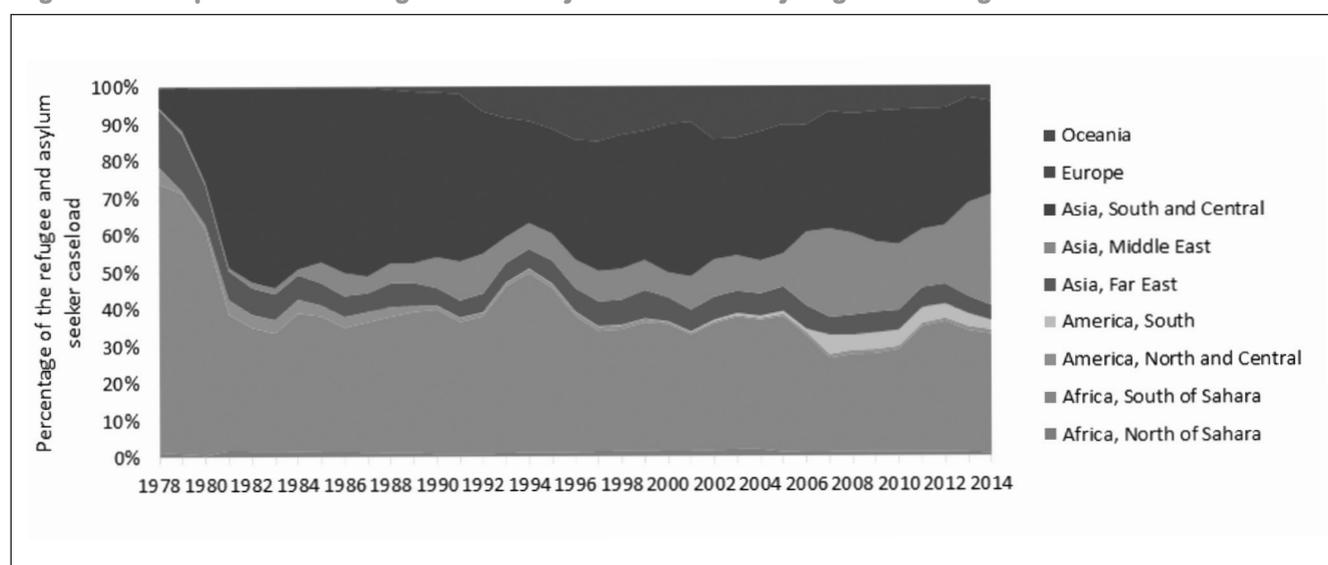
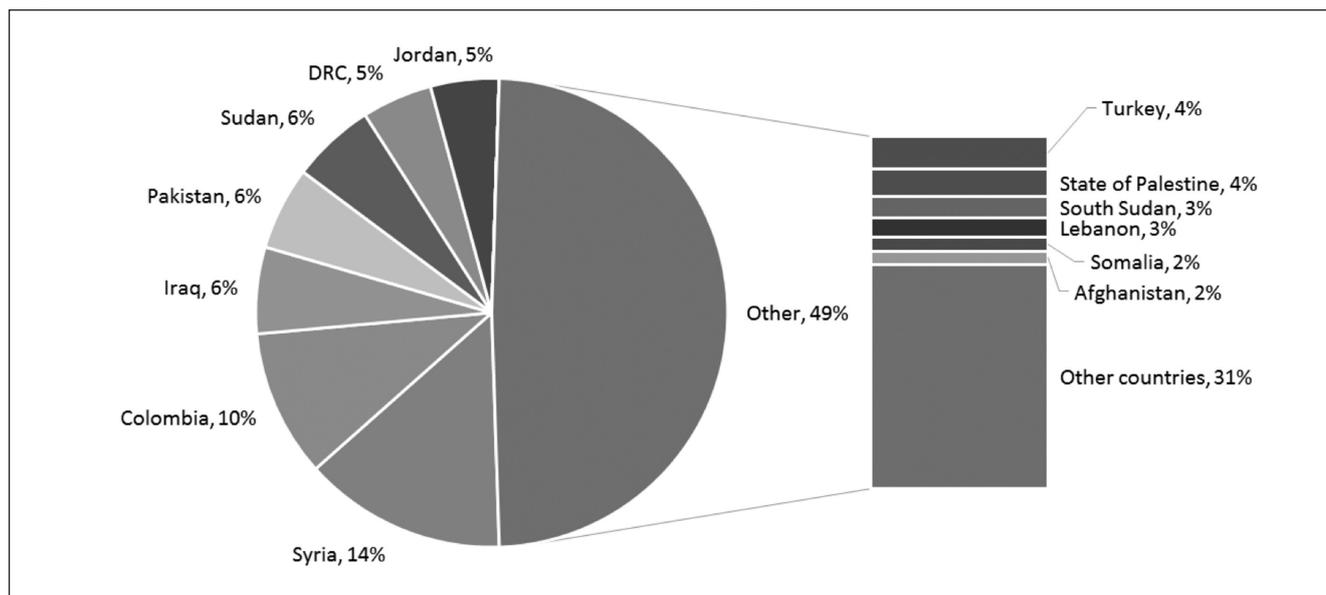


Figure 5: Distribution of displaced by country of refuge



increases in refugees in South and Central Asia. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the subsequent wars in the Gulf led to slowly growing refugee movements in the Middle East. Although sufficient data on IDPs prior to 2009 is not available to include IDPs in the graph, there is a strong correlation between the proportion of the population from any country in internal displacement and the proportion of the population in external displacement (see Annex 2) – suggesting that overall displacement (IDPs and refugees) may be following the same historic geographic pattern. Large crises that provoke refugee movements – such as those in Eastern and Central Africa and the Middle East – are often also accompanied by significant internal displacement and vice versa.

The concentration of displaced people in a relatively small number of countries is notable. Figure 5 shows that more than 50% of all displaced people are located in just seven countries. The concentration of displaced people in a small number of countries holds true for both IDPs and refugees. Four countries – Syria, Colombia, Iraq and Sudan – are hosting 52% of all IDPs, while seven countries – Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Lebanon, Turkey, Palestine and Jordan – are hosting more than 50% of all refugees.

Displacement is increasingly an urban and dispersed phenomenon, with settled camps becoming the exception. The International Rescue Committee, for example, reports that ‘over half the world’s refugees now live in large towns and cities’ (International

Rescue Committee, n.d.). The UN Special Rapporteur notes that most IDPs are outside identifiable camps or settlements, and instead live dispersed in urban, rural or remote settings – a factor that contributes to their ‘invisibility’ when it comes to efforts to assist and protect them (United Nations, 2011). In the case of refugees, our analysis strongly confirms these trends (see Annex 2). At least 59% of all refugees (UNHCR and UNRWA) are living in urban settings, a proportion that UNHCR says is increasing annually. Only in Sub-Saharan Africa is a clear majority of the refugee caseload in rural settings. Furthermore, the bulk (56%) of all refugees (UNHCR and UNRWA) are in private accommodation as opposed to planned camps.

1.2 Protracted displacement

Establishing a cut-off date for when a displacement situation becomes protracted is an arbitrary exercise. Determining how many people are in protracted displacement and how long they have been displaced within those situations is problematic since changes in displaced populations – provoked by returns, multiple displacements, new waves of displacement, varying degrees of integration etc. – are dynamic, and because national and international systems for tracking the displaced are often incomplete. A displacement situation may be incontrovertibly protracted – the Daadab refugee camp in Kenya, for example, has existed for decades – but not all of its residents at any one time are in protracted exile. Many IDP situations

– such as in Colombia – are protracted, but the ‘churn’⁸ of old and new IDPs can be significant.

In 2009 UNHCR provided a definition for Protracted Refugee Situations (PRS) as situations where 25,000 refugees or more have been in exile ‘for 5 years or more after their initial displacement, without immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions’ (UNCHR ExCom, 2009). Participants at the 2007 Expert Seminar on Protracted Internal Displacement organised by UNHCR and the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement agreed that protracted internal displacement situations are those in which ‘the process for finding durable solutions is stalled, and/or IDPs are marginalised as a consequence of violations or a lack of protection of human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights’.

For the purpose of this study, protracted displacement is defined more broadly as a situation in which refugees and/or IDPs have been in exile for three years or more, and where the process for finding durable solutions, such as repatriation, absorption in host communities or settlement in third locations, has stalled. This definition includes refugees and IDPs forced to leave their homes to avoid armed conflict, violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. It also includes those living in camps or dispersed among host populations.⁹

Reducing the number of years from five to three and factoring in IDPs swells the estimates of numbers of people stuck in protracted displacement around the world. Our research, though, suggests that the shorter time period for ‘protracted’ is justified – at least in the case of refugees – since very few refugee crises of any size are resolved quickly.¹⁰ This has also been recently

acknowledged in practice, with more than 25 states instituting resettlement programmes for Syrian asylum-seekers after just two years in displacement.¹¹

The situation for IDPs is more complex: while reducing ‘protracted’ from five to three years almost certainly increases the overall number of IDPs living in protracted displacement, the available data does not allow us to estimate that number, or say whether an IDP crisis will become protracted. Furthermore, the fact that the scale of internal displacement has on the whole increased over the past 15 years does not necessarily mean that more IDPs are living in protracted displacement, as there is no evidence that the same IDPs are included in each country figure from year to year. Some drop off the list, including because of return, loss of IDP status, death or re-registration exercises, while others are added to the list because they are newly displaced, born to IDPs in displacement or they manage to get registered after some time in displacement. These data limitations are discussed in more detail below and in Annex 2.

1.2.1 Situations of protracted displacement: refugees

Analysing data from 1978–2014 suggests that a rapidly resolved refugee displacement crisis of any significant proportions is a rare exception. Historically, there have been relatively few short-term refugee displacements: most refugee crises last for decades rather than years. Although there have been displacement situations that have involved the voluntary return of substantial numbers of refugees (e.g. Afghanistan, South Sudan, Angola, Mozambique), subsequent conflict has often triggered new waves of displacement.

There is no single overriding pattern for refugee displacement crises except that almost all endure for more than three years, and most for many years longer. Of the 20 largest refugee crises from 1978 to 2014 (each generating more than 400,000 refugees), 13 still have significant numbers of people in displacement in 2014 (Annex 2). Some crises rise and then fall away relatively quickly (e.g. Sierra Leone), others wax and wane over time, like Afghanistan. The onset of a refugee crisis can slowly build, as for Sudan, or rapidly explode, as for Syria. Crises that drag on for years may suddenly explode in scale, as for Iraq

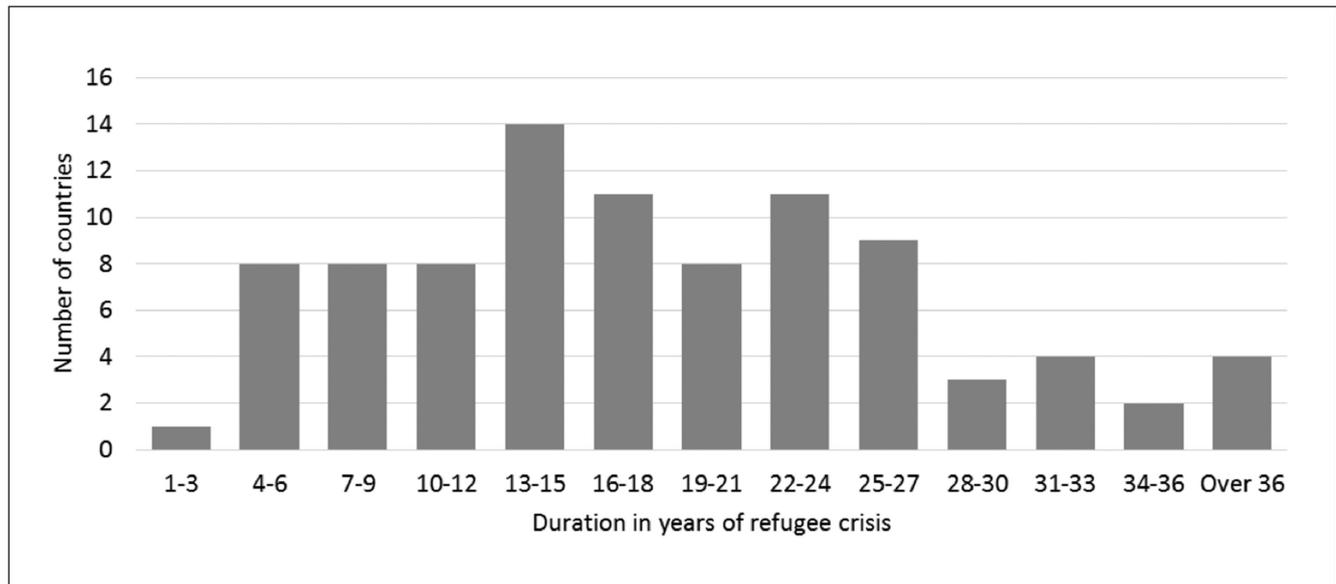
8 In this report, the term ‘churn’ is used to mean flux in composition of the displaced population. In the case of IDP displacement particularly, where multiple events often provoke multiple and distinct displacement crises in a single country, a situation of protracted internal displacement is where people have been internally displaced for at least three years by a single event. For example, describing Colombia as a protracted situation of internal displacement is shorthand for the recognised persistence of internal displacement that affects the state as a whole; it does not imply that there is a single event or even a single geographic area from which internal displacement has originated over the years.

9 Terms of Reference, Annex 7: www.odi.org/hpg/protracted-displacement.

10 Although it is commonly assumed that displacement situations provoked by natural disasters in otherwise stable settings are quickly resolved, more work is needed to determine the degree to which those situations end up/protracted, and how often they are quickly resolved.

11 UNHCR: <http://www.unhcr.org/52b2febafc5.pdf>.

Figure 6: Duration of refugee crises



or Rwanda (albeit with different caseloads). And even where refugee crises are resolved, as in Mozambique, there can be a tail of refugee cases for several years. Smaller refugee crises (with 5,000 or more refugees) demonstrate the same patterns, with fluctuations in size and duration but a ‘stickiness’ that results in protracted displacement over many years. In fact, the likelihood that a refugee crisis will become protracted has become more pronounced since the 1990s, which also saw an overall jump in the number of global refugee crises.

Figure 6, reflecting an analysis of all crises of 5,000 refugees or more since 1978, shows that fewer than one in 40 were resolved¹² within three years. Of the 91 crises displacing 5,000 or more people from 1978 to 2014, only one (Togo in 1993) was largely resolved in less than four years.¹³ Even more remarkable is just how long refugee crises tend to endure: well beyond our three-year definition of what constitutes a ‘protracted’ crisis. More than 80% of refugee crises last for ten years or more; two in five last 20 years or more, and the likelihood of a crisis lasting for 20 years or more is roughly the same whether it has 5,000 or 500,000 refugees.

¹² ‘Resolved’ is used here to indicate that the caseload was reduced to 10% of the peak.

¹³ There have been a very few exceptional cases of short-term refugee flows and returns, such as refugees from Kosovo in 1999 whose displacement lasted approximately 38 weeks in 1994. Since they were not in exile at the end of 1994, they would not be captured in the analysis.

1.2.2 Situations of protracted displacement: IDPs

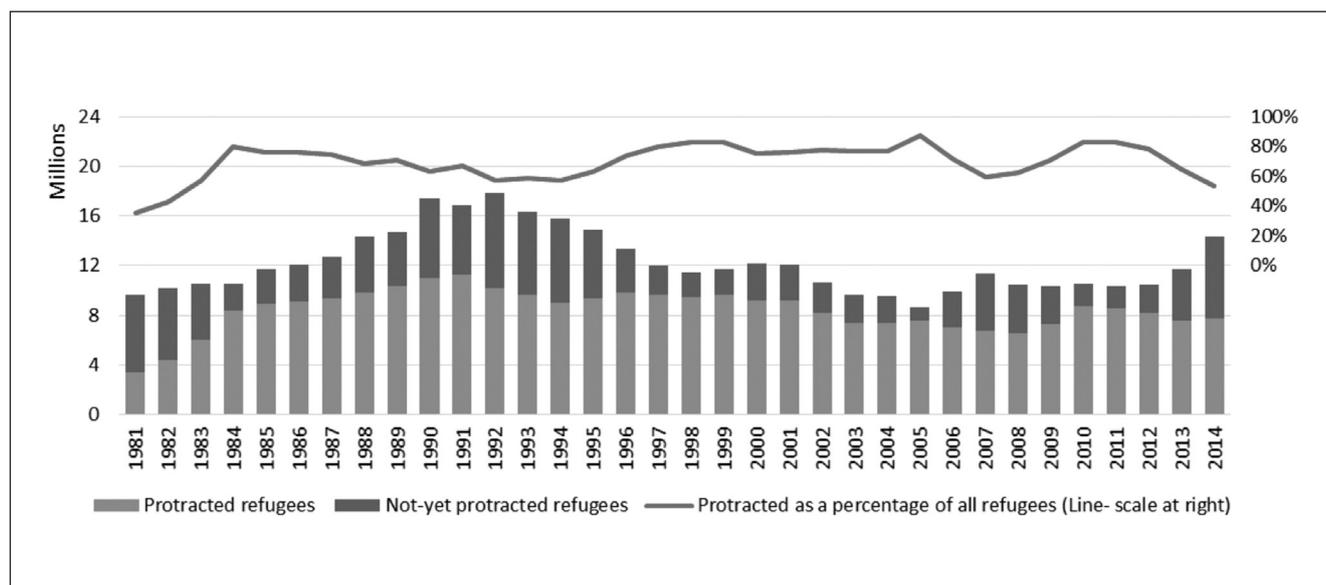
Estimating the numbers of situations of protracted displacement involving IDPs is more complicated and less data is available than for refugees (see Annex 2). Nevertheless, every country experiencing conflict-related displacement has reported IDP numbers over periods of 23 years on average, meaning that countries struggle with persistent IDP caseloads (in many cases, these are aggregates of multiple caseloads linked to different displacement events within one country). Consistent reporting on IDPs over decades in conflict-affected countries suggests that internal displacement is not easily resolved.

1.2.3 Refugees in protracted displacement

Just as most displacement crises are protracted, exile for the great majority of refugees persists for well over three years. In 2012, UNHCR estimated that almost 75% of the refugee population under its mandate had been living in exile for five years or more (UNHCR, 2012a). Our research, which shortens the time period of ‘protractedness’ to three years and which includes long-term refugees under UNRWA’s mandate, confirms that high proportions of refugees around the world have been living in protracted exile over the past two decades.

The percentage of the refugee caseload in protracted displacement varies as new refugees are generated and old ones return. Today’s percentage of non-UNRWA refugees in protracted displacement is the lowest proportion in protracted displacement since 1982; then, as now, that lower figure is due in part to the

Figure 7: Refugees in protracted displacement: 1981–2014



large number of new refugees within the previous three years. The percentage of the non-UNRWA refugee caseload in protracted displacement has been over 75% for 14 of the last 30 years (Figure 7). Refugee protracted displacement peaked in 2005 at 87%, and was at 83% in 2011, just before the start of the Syria crisis. If we include the UNRWA refugee population (all in protracted displacement), the percentage of refugees in protracted displacement stood at 91% in 2005, 88% in 2010 and 2011 and 66% at the end of 2014, the lowest percentage of refugees in protracted displacement for 20 years as a result of recent Syrian refugees. Given the likelihood of refugee crises becoming protracted (discussed above), it is reasonable to expect the percentage of refugees in protracted displacement to return closer to its historic highs by the end of 2017, barring any major new exodus or returns in the meantime.

The number of refugees in protracted displacement is notable on its own, but the duration of exile for many of them is perhaps even more striking. Figure 8 shows that, at the end of 2014, one-third of the UNHCR refugee caseload had been in exile for over ten years. Figure 9, depicting the situation prior to recent large Syrian and South Sudan displacements (which skew the averages), shows that almost half the UNHCR caseload at the end of 2011 had been in exile for over ten years. Factoring in the UNRWA caseload, half of all global refugees had been in exile for over ten years at the end of 2014. In 2011, again factoring in UNRWA refugees, half of all global refugees had been in exile for over 22 years.

Bearing in mind the near certainty that a refugee crisis will become protracted, the paucity of examples of large-scale returns within a short time-frame and the high proportion of refugees living in protracted displacement, it is reasonable to assume that, once a refugee family has been displaced long enough to be counted (i.e. for six months on average), they have a high probability of ending up in exile for at least three years and often much longer. There is not enough data available in the case of IDPs to make the same assumption.

1.2.4 IDPs in protracted displacement

Qualitative evidence from around the world shows that protracted displacement is a reality for a large number of IDPs displaced by conflict worldwide.¹⁴ In two-thirds of the countries monitored for conflict-induced displacement in 2014, IDMC estimates that at least 50% have been displaced for more than three years. IDPs tend to move in and out of displacement more often than refugees, though given large and long-term IDP populations in countries such as Colombia and Sudan, and well-documented long-term IDP populations in other countries such as Burundi, Lebanon, OPT, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cyprus, we can be certain that protracted displacement is a major phenomenon for IDPs. That said, the lack of data to determine the duration of displacement for IDPs in other countries with large numbers of IDPs, such as Afghanistan and

¹⁴ IDMC (2015), *Global Overview 2015: People Internally Displaced by Conflict and Violence*.

Figure 8: Duration of refugee displacement 2014

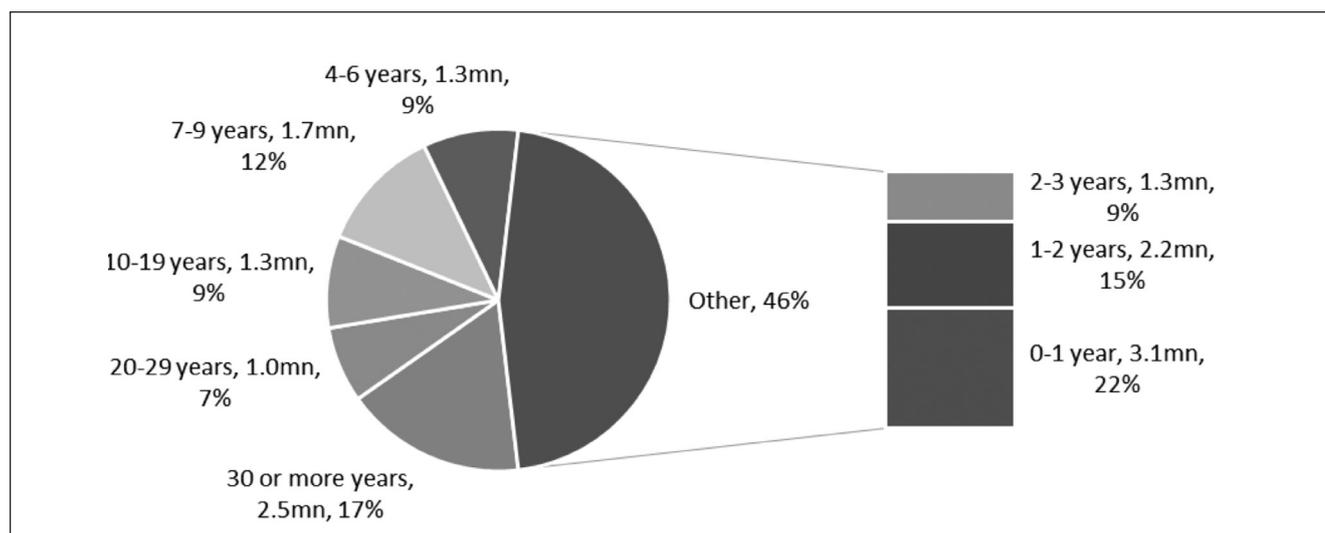
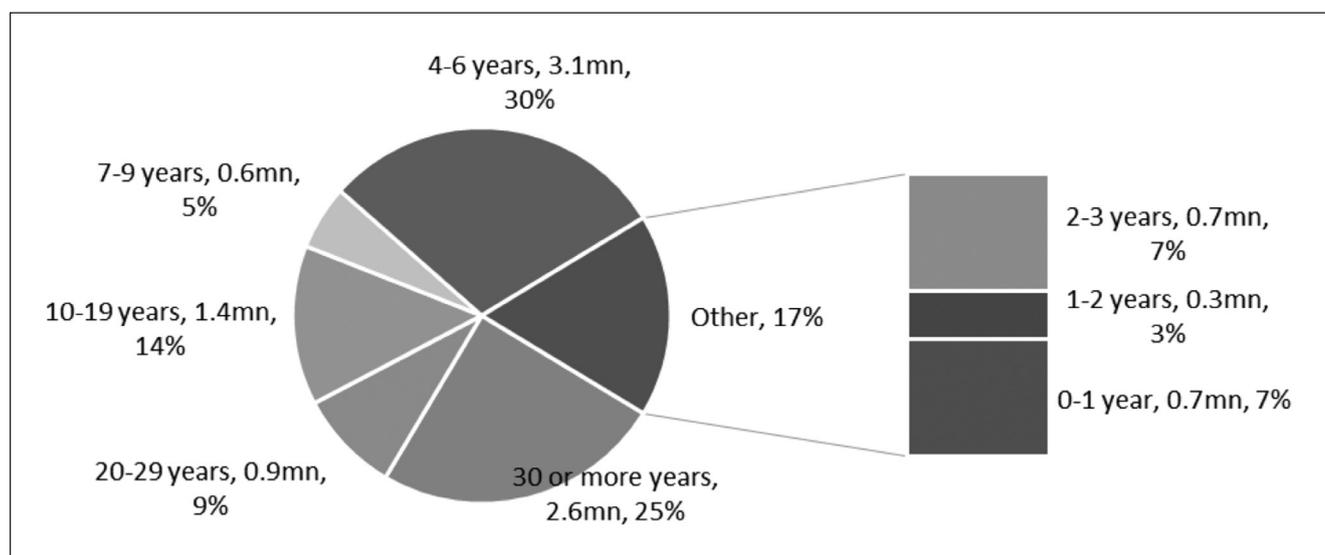


Figure 9: Duration of refugee displacement 2011



Nigeria, means any global estimates on protracted displacement among IDPs need to be treated cautiously.¹⁵ Better global estimates of IDP numbers and the duration of their displacement would require a significant expansion of country surveys, such as those done through the Joint IDP Profiling Service or the International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Displacement Tracking Matrix, which until now have only been carried out in a small number of countries for IDPs displaced by conflict.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Annex 2 for a detailed discussion of the difficulties in estimating the numbers of IDPs in protracted displacement.

¹⁶ The inter-agency Joint IDP Profiling Service provides technical support to government, humanitarian and development actors seeking to improve their information about internally displaced populations (<http://www.jips.org/en/about/about-jips>).

Long-lasting displacement is also a concern for IDPs who have lost their homes to natural hazard-related disasters. This is evidenced by 34 case studies analysed in 2014 by IDMC across the world.¹⁷ Although it is commonly assumed that displacement situations provoked by natural hazard-induced disasters in otherwise stable settings are quickly resolved, more work is needed to determine the degree to which those situations end up being protracted, and how often they are quickly resolved.

¹⁷ See Annex 2 for a detailed discussion of the difficulties in estimating the numbers of IDPs in protracted displacement.

Table 3: Top ten countries in terms of focus on IDPs and refugees and the focus of the international community

2012	2013	2014	2015 (to 14 July)
Syria	Syria	South Sudan	Iraq
South Sudan	Sudan	Iraq	Syria
Sudan	Lebanon	Syria	South Sudan
Somalia	South Sudan	Lebanon	Ukraine
DRC	Jordan	Sudan	Lebanon
Myanmar	Myanmar	CAR	Sudan
Mali	Philippines	Palestine	Yemen
Pakistan	Mali	Jordan	Myanmar
Jordan	CAR	Pakistan	Nepal
Lebanon	Somalia	Ukraine	Jordan

1.3 International attention to situations of protracted displacement

The attention of the international community on situations of displacement, measured by the percentage of ReliefWeb postings referring to that country and tagged by ReliefWeb as referring to IDPs or refugees, has changed focus over the past four years. Table 3 shows the ranking of countries by references to refugees and IDPs in ReliefWeb postings from 2012–15.

Trying to apportion international aid to situations of protracted displacement has proven difficult and the study team found major gaps in the data collected by donors and aid agencies.¹⁸ After testing various models, the team settled on estimating expenditures made by the major UN aid agencies – UNHCR, WFP, UNRWA and UNICEF – on both protracted and non-protracted populations. The proportions for WFP and UNICEF were then used to estimate additional international assistance aimed at protracted displacement, using the overall humanitarian expenditure figures for 2014 provided by the annual Global Humanitarian Assistance report

Table 4: Estimate of global humanitarian expenditure on displacement

Organisation	Humanitarian expenditure or funding in 2014 (\$ millions)	Of which for refugees or IDPs (\$ millions)	Of which for protracted displaced (\$ millions)
UNRWA	1,311	1,311	1,311
UNHCR	3,348	3,312	1,441
WFP	4,470	1,565	783
UNICEF	1,579	743	324
Total for 2014	10,708	6,931	3,859
Other humanitarian funding ¹⁹	13,792	5,241	2,516
Overall funding	24,500	12,172	6,375

¹⁸ Full discussion in Annex 2.

¹⁹ The figure for other humanitarian funding was obtained by

subtracting the identified humanitarian funding from the GHA estimate of \$24.5 billion of humanitarian funding in 2014.

by Development Initiatives, which combines OECD/DAC, UN and private agency data. The 2015 Global Humanitarian Assistance report estimated the global spend on humanitarian action at \$24.5 billion in 2014.

According to our estimates, 50% of overall humanitarian spending, or \$12.2 billion, was spent in displacement situations in 2014. Roughly 26% of overall humanitarian spending, or \$6.4 billion, was directed to situations of protracted displacement (see Table 4). It should be clear that this estimate is based on a tower of assumptions, and is little better than an informed guess as to the extent of funding for protracted displacement.

Our analysis found a strong correlation between humanitarian funding by country²⁰ for each year from 2006 to 2013 and the number of ReliefWeb postings about a particular country in that year, suggesting that the distribution of ReliefWeb posts could be used as a proxy for the distribution of humanitarian expenditure. Assuming the correlation remains valid, we can estimate the proportion of overall humanitarian expenditure by countries in 2014. Our estimate is that the top ten countries in terms of the number of displaced – Syria, Colombia, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, DRC, Jordan, Turkey, Palestine and South Sudan – hosted 62.3% of all displaced and accounted for 37% of all humanitarian spending in 2014. These same ten countries hosted 52.2% of all refugees in protracted displacement. They accounted for 44.6% of all UNHCR country-specific funding and 43.2% of all WFP country-specific funding.

The top 25 countries in terms of hosting displacement accounted for 84.4% of all displaced and 60% of all

²⁰ Humanitarian expenditure by country is normally for the country of refuge, not the country of origin.

humanitarian funding. They also hosted 76% of all refugees in protracted displacement and accounted for 76.6% of UNHCR's country-specific budget and 72.5% of WFP's. Conversely, some 2.5 million displaced people – of whom 500,000 are refugees in protracted displacement – are living in 26 low- and lower-middle income countries that fall into our typology's 'negligible focus' or 'almost forgotten' categories.

Estimating how much money has been spent specifically on displacement (protracted or otherwise) per country was impossible to calculate with confidence. This would have required an in-depth analysis of humanitarian funding and agency activities in each country, which time for the study did not allow.

No data is readily available on how development expenditure relates to IDPs and refugees, though Global Humanitarian Assistance estimates include funds with a humanitarian focus even if they are from development budget lines. Development expenditures on displacement – to the extent they can be identified – seem to focus on people displaced by natural disasters rather than conflict (there are some exceptions, such as Asian Development Bank funding in Pakistan that covers both flooding displaced and conflict displaced).

Unfortunately, drawing an exact picture of the state of protracted displacement in the world is an approximate and incomplete exercise. Donor, agency and national government data and reporting systems would need to be substantially improved to better map and monitor protracted displacement. Further investment is particularly needed to count and track caseloads of IDPs. For both protracted refugees and especially IDPs, improved estimates of the numbers of urban and rural displaced people or the numbers of those encamped or self-settled are needed.

Section 2

Literature review part 1

Promoting self-reliance and livelihoods in protracted displacement

In order to assess the evidence on self-reliance and livelihood interventions, the study reviewed primary and secondary literature published between 2000 and 2014. In all 157 documents were consulted, 84 of which were peer-reviewed articles published in academic journals and (mostly) peer-reviewed research studies.²¹ Additional reports and evaluations were consulted in the preparation of the country case studies and during the drafting stages of the report.

2.1 Overview

Generally, the literature review revealed a near-complete absence of independently evaluated reviews of self-reliance and livelihood interventions. Although roughly one-third of the documents discussed self-reliance or livelihood interventions in general terms, only a handful of evaluations were found, and these focused on small-scale NGO interventions. The majority of the reviewed literature was qualitative in nature. Just 20% of all sources referred to, or presented, quantitative research. Many of the reviewed documents had a practitioner focus, while approximately 12% was produced by intergovernmental agencies, predominantly by UNHCR. This absence of hard data and evidence mirrored the findings of another recent analysis of evidence based on available data and reports on livelihood interventions undertaken by the major organisations working with displaced people (Levine, 2013).

There was a strong concentration of reports focused on policy frameworks (close to two-thirds), with a good deal of consensus on advocacy strategies to reform those frameworks. Similarly, the appropriateness of

the funding architecture – repeatedly underscoring the humanitarian–development gap – received a good deal of attention as did, in a general way, gender dimensions in displacement. The literature review was less successful in finding instances in which ‘value for money’ – for care and maintenance regimes, self-reliance and livelihood interventions and food and education interventions – had been measured, and few documents went beyond very general assertions. Although the literature review produced a concentration of articles and reports on East Africa (Somalia, Kenya, Uganda), Colombia and Pakistan/Afghanistan/Iran were also well represented.

Although the literature on self-reliance and livelihood support for people in protracted displacement tends to be repetitive and there are few examples of carefully evaluated interventions, there is still reason for some cautious optimism. Researchers and practitioners are coalescing around a dominant theory of change that is more realistic about the characteristics of protracted displacement: its likely duration, the complexity of the livelihood choices being made by the displaced themselves and the opportunities afforded by market-based interventions and links to larger development processes.

The process of listening to displaced people and better understanding their livelihood strategies has contributed to a strong consensus on policy advocacy, for instance around liberalised migration, residency and work rights, bolstered by growing evidence on the potential positive overall impacts progressive displacement policies can have on host and displaced populations alike. Although host states have resisted making these policy changes, several countries with long-standing refugee and IDP populations, including Kenya, Uganda and Colombia, have taken important steps to enact or adapt legislation that emphasises greater rights for displaced people. While

²¹ A full description of the methodology used for the literature review and its summary findings can be found in Annex 3: www.odi.org/hpg/protracted-displacement.

international agencies are still struggling to bridge the humanitarian–development divide, the introduction of cash and vouchers for humanitarian responses, combined with widespread cell phone coverage, may on its own be helping to break down that divide by linking displaced people in a more meaningful way to markets, the private sector and longer-term development opportunities.

Appreciating from the outset that a displacement crisis will almost certainly be protracted poses challenges for and provides opportunities to policymakers and aid agencies seeking to contribute to self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods for the displaced. International systems for immediate humanitarian response are well-honed to deliver relief, but they are generally not designed – or funded – to understand in depth the livelihood strategies that displaced people themselves are pursuing, or the market and general development opportunities that might be made available to them. Basic humanitarian assistance is crucial in many displacement crises – and sometimes for many years for vulnerable people – but is insufficient to enable displaced people to build paths to self-reliance. From the outset of a displacement crisis, development-led programmes that acknowledge displacement as a fixture within the community – and that show greater speed and agility in designing new interventions or adapting ongoing programmes – could help displaced people find their path to livelihoods more quickly and with less pain, while preserving humanitarian funding for acute new crises.

2.2 Three theories of change

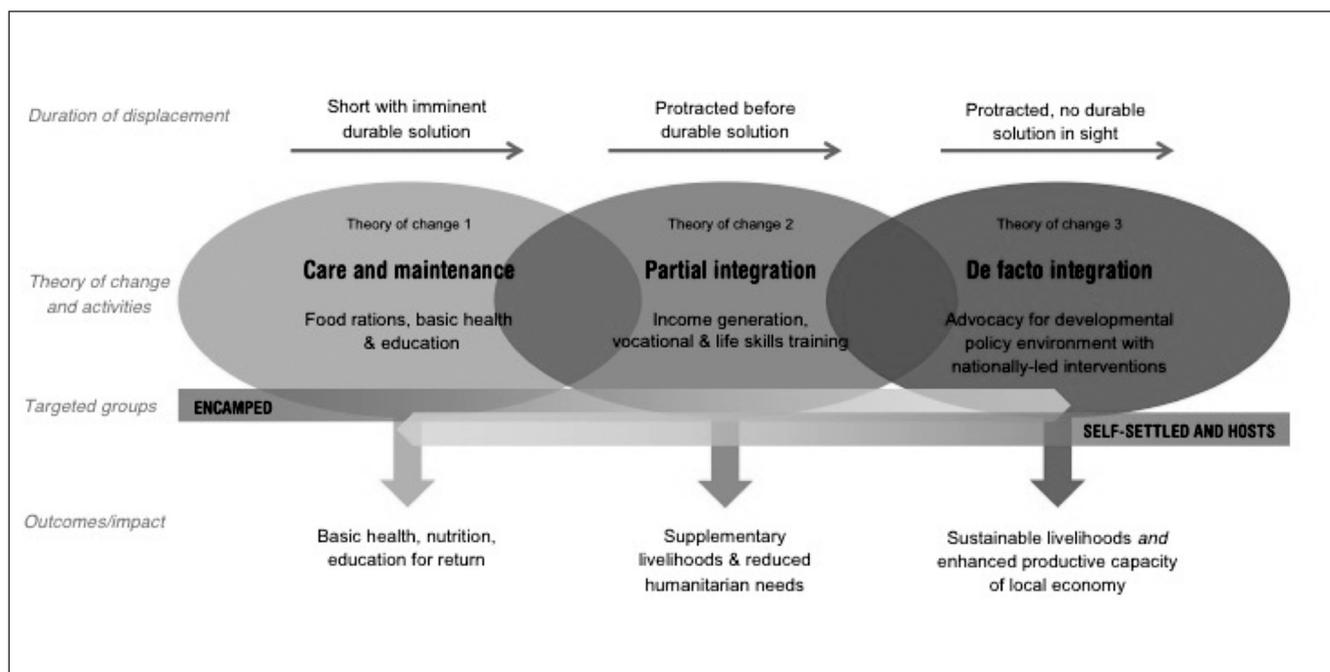
The literature review reveals an evolving consensus around the characteristics of protracted crises and the challenges and opportunities of promoting self-reliance and people's livelihoods in these situations. As the duration and dimensions of protracted displacement have grown, expectations for achieving a 'durable solution' have waned, and there is a growing call for realism: to accept that many of the displaced will not return home either because the conditions for return are unsafe or unfavourable or because they prefer to remain in exile. This realism has been accompanied by growing pragmatism when it comes to delivering humanitarian aid to the displaced, and designing and delivering programmes for self-reliance and livelihoods.

The likely duration of displacement means that the full cost implications of open-ended international care and maintenance regimes are now better understood, and pressure is growing on aid agencies to reduce those costs by transferring them to displaced people themselves in the form of more self-reliance and livelihood activities. Similarly, self-reliance and livelihood support interventions that were previously designed around preparing people for 'return' are increasingly cognisant of the fact that displaced people will need to earn their livelihoods – probably for many years to come – in their place of exile or wherever they may migrate to. This evolution is roughly mirrored in the evolution of the theories of change implicit in most of the self-reliance and livelihood interventions found in the literature. Often these theories of change are employed simultaneously and cannot be neatly separated from one another. Nevertheless, outlining the rough distinction between them suggests shortcomings and strengths in each.

Theory 1 is built around the traditional care and maintenance model – with a strong emphasis on relatively swift achievement of 'durable solutions'.²² This remains the most straightforward assistance model for the displaced. Theory 2 accepts the reality of longer displacement and the cost implications of open-ended humanitarian assistance, while still implicitly preparing for return or another durable solution. Theory 3 goes further in implicitly accepting the inevitability that many people in situations of protracted displacement will gravitate towards de facto integration or onward migration. The possibility of pursuing self-reliance and livelihood activities under one or more of these three theories of change is to some extent shaped by the external environment of a specific displacement situation: the legal and policy framework, the extent of conflict or violence, the geographic location, donor funding, the dynamism of the surrounding economy, etc. One is not easier than another, nor does pursuing one exclude trying others simultaneously. In most situations of protracted displacement, needs vary among the displaced depending on vulnerability, opportunities for work, expectations of return, existing social capital, etc. As such, ideal interventions to support self-reliance and livelihoods would probably involve all three theories of change.

22 The three traditional durable solutions for refugees refer to repatriation, local integration or third-country resettlement. The equivalent for IDPs would be return to place of origin, local integration, or permanent settlement elsewhere in their country.

Figure 10: Theories of change for self-reliance and livelihood interventions



Three other general approaches for addressing the challenges of protracted displacement through promoting self-reliance and livelihoods emerge from the literature. First, policy and research experts theorise about, and advocate for, policy remedies that are either unrealistic or that are openly contested by affected states. Second, displaced people themselves have different ideas about what they feel they need to pursue their own self-reliance and livelihoods. Third, the international aid system persists in its belief that reforming its own architecture – in order to bridge the well-understood humanitarian and development gap – will lead to better tools and greater funding for supporting self-reliance and livelihoods.

What seems to be consistent across these theories of change and general approaches is a gradual convergence around the complexity of the problem, driven in part by the pressure of new caseloads. This more nuanced understanding of protracted displacement is also driving new reforms in the international system, which together with the ascendance of new types of transfers and delivery mechanisms (such as cash and vouchers) may be signalling a shift towards more effective and sustainable assistance. While the record of external actors in contributing to the goal of achieving self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods is weak, some good practice seems to be emerging (alongside consistently noted poor practice: see Section 4).

2.2.1 Theory of change 1: care and maintenance

The care and maintenance model is built around the expectation of achieving a durable solution (repatriation/return, local integration, third country resettlement/settlement elsewhere in the country for IDPs). It is most often associated with refugees and IDPs in camp situations and tends to focus on protection and basic needs, including food and nutrition, education, health and shelter. The care and maintenance model is based on the assumption that a displacement crisis progresses along a linear path: a single displacement event and a short period of exile before a collective return. This short-term perspective is reinforced by the funding cycle of humanitarian agencies and the donors that provide those funds. Host governments (in the case of refugees) or host communities (in the case of IDPs) also reinforce this model by imposing encampment policies, restricting access to productive assets (e.g. land) and blocking work opportunities for the displaced. Because the displacement crisis is approached as a temporary event, there is less effort to build ties with local service structures or to include host populations who may also be affected by the crisis. There is also less analysis of the steps being taken by the displaced themselves to assure their own well-being, and less support for those efforts. The problem with this regime, as Durieux and others point out, is that over time the quality of life for displaced people in camp situations progressively

declines, as do their overall rights (Durieux, 2009; Crisp, 2004; Loescher & Milner, 2011). Furthermore, as the displacement becomes more protracted, international interest and donor support tends to drop off, undermining both humanitarian objectives and efforts to transition to self-reliance.

Although the limitations of self-reliance and livelihood development in such situations are usually stressed – especially because encampment situations are so often accompanied by restrictions on movement and access to work and productive assets – care and maintenance regimes offer crucial, if indirect, self-reliance and livelihood investments, such as nutrition and education. As investments in protecting human assets, the care and maintenance approach aims to ensure that displaced people (especially children) preserve the fundamental human capital foundations necessary to build sustainable livelihoods in the future. Although often discounted as a livelihood intervention in the context of displacement, mother-child nutrition and children's education are two of the surest development investments for improved lifetime economic achievement (UNESCO, 2004; World Bank, 2006). Investment in nutrition and education is a basic prerequisite for displaced people's self-reliance and livelihood prospects – whether in exile or upon return. While generally a secondary priority, the care and maintenance model also often includes some direct self-reliance and livelihood interventions, such as vocational and life skills training and, when land for farming is available, provision of agricultural inputs.

A recent joint UNHCR–WFP evaluation on the contribution of food assistance to durable solutions in protracted refugee situations underscores the potential strengths and weaknesses typical in care and maintenance regimes (UNCHR/WFP 2013).²³ Looking at four situations of protracted refugee displacement, the report found that the contribution towards nutritional status was generally positive in the case of severe and global acute malnutrition, especially when compared with the host population. However, chronic malnutrition rates – an indicator of lost future economic potential – remained unacceptably high. Inadequate and unpredictable donor funding and short planning horizons (on both the agency and donor side) were cited as major factors influencing the results.

²³ The evaluation covered assistance to protracted refugee situations in Bangladesh, Chad, Ethiopia and Rwanda.

Similarly, education and health outcomes suffered from funding levels and host government policies (or capacities) that limited access. Inadequate rations and the large-scale selling of food rations to meet other basic needs kept beneficiary households in a precarious state and – along with unsupportive host government policies – failed to provide a stable platform on which beneficiaries could progress towards self-reliance. Direct support to livelihood and self-reliance activities in these four protracted refugee situations was found to be similarly deficient. There were 'too many small, unconnected and low-intensity activities to make a difference ... vocational training and microcredit support were non-existent, sporadic, very low-scale and/or discouraged by host governments ... [and] the quality of training and the material support provided for start-up were insufficient to make most beneficiaries competitive enough to earn a livelihood on the open market' (UNCHR/WFP, 2013).

IDPs, especially in more structured camp situations, have also received care and maintenance assistance. In Darfur, for example, many IDPs have exhausted their own resources and rely on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs (Hill et al., 2006). Assistance has however failed to stem people's gradual drift towards unsustainable survival and livelihood activities that damage the environment, represent a risk to their safety or are exploitative (Young & Jacobsen, 2013).

Whatever its shortcomings, the importance to people in protracted displacement of the care and maintenance model should not be underestimated. In 2013, for example, WFP provided food assistance to 4.2 million refugees and 8.9 million IDPs – transfers that at a minimum supported household food security and freed up resources for other basic needs or for the pursuit of self-reliance (WFP, 2013). It should, however, also be noted that the large majority of people in protracted displacement do not live in the kind of stable camp settings where UNHCR or other agencies could, presumably, more easily administer and monitor care and maintenance regimes.

2.2.2 Theory of change 2: partial integration

Given the average duration of displacement, this theory of change represents a natural evolution in the approach of aid agencies. It is probably the most prevalent model for self-reliance and livelihood activities. While still predicated on 'return', it recognises the likelihood of prolonged displacement and is motivated by the need to reduce direct aid costs

by promoting self-reliance and reducing dependence on humanitarian aid. Both UNHCR and UNRWA, faced with funding shortfalls in recent years, have adopted self-reliance and livelihood policies at least in part for this reason (Al Abed, 2004; Jacobsen, 2005). Likewise, funding for IDPs in protracted displacement can be equally or more precarious than for refugees, so the pressure on aid agencies to help beneficiaries to achieve greater self-reliance from their own productive activities tends to grow (e.g. Haver, 2008).

While still largely a top-down approach – with aid agencies implementing projects to assist ‘beneficiaries’ – the ‘partial integration’ theory embraces a more holistic view of the economic settings in which displaced people find themselves. Many of these interventions are undertaken in and around refugee or IDP camps/settlements, building off the existing infrastructure of internationally supported care and maintenance regimes, though some are targeting protracted displaced who are self-settled in urban areas. In general, activities concentrate on opening up economic opportunities for displaced beneficiaries while still preparing them for return. In addition, there is greater recognition of the changing lifestyles of many displaced people, particularly their urbanisation.

Activities undertaken by aid agencies under the ‘partial integration’ model range from the ad hoc and small-scale, with little market analysis, to more sustained efforts to link beneficiaries meaningfully to market opportunities. Restrictive host government policies and capacities as well as the deficiencies of the humanitarian funding model tend to limit the results, leading to calls for stronger links with national development plans and international development actors. Because many interventions are still built around a ‘durable solutions’ outcome, there is often an emphasis on promoting transferable skills for return (or permanent resettlement elsewhere). This seems sensible, though there is little in the literature about whether the skills taught in displacement are eventually used by returnees. Whether aimed at IDPs or refugees, small-scale, ad hoc projects tend to fail, or their longer-term benefits, if any, are not captured. In Colombia, for example, donors and NGOs have concentrated support to income generation in urban areas primarily by funding small-scale, home-based industries which are prone to failure because of ‘skill levels, business inexperience, difficult market access and low income levels among would-be customers’ (Fagen, 2011).

IDPs in Colombia have benefited over the years from numerous livelihood interventions, including with World Bank and USAID support, but these interventions would have been more sustainable and had greater impact if the government (or others) had invested more in infrastructure, credit facilities, social services, employment opportunities and communications networks (HPG/IDMC Colombia case study, Annex 8) – pointing to a lack of coherent programming across sectors and agencies. A review in 2010 of USAID’s decade-long support to IDPs in Colombia found limited evidence that projects had stabilised their livelihoods, and called on future interventions to consider the multiple factors that determine a person’s ability to generate income, including survival needs such as food, health, housing, transportation and education. In addition, the review pointed out the need for better public infrastructure, closer links with the private sector and more rigorous market analysis to identify products and services in high demand (Management Systems International, 2010). Other studies point to similar problems in other settings.²⁴

In a very few instances host governments have been full partners in trying to make the transition from more traditional care and maintenance regimes to a hybrid model which seeks to shift the provision of services such as education and health to national systems, while offering a mixture of support to self-reliance and livelihoods activities in the form of financial services (grants, micro-credit, etc.), the provision of productive inputs (e.g. farming inputs) and vocational or life skills training. In partnership with UNHCR, the Ugandan government introduced the Self Reliance Strategy (SRS) in 1999. The SRS aims to build self-reliance by improving ‘the standard of living of the people of refugee hosting districts, including the refugees’ (UNHCR, 2004). Its primary objectives are the ‘[e]mpowerment of refugees and nationals in the area to the extent that they would be able to support themselves’ and ‘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, 2004). The programme has a self-reliance ‘deadline’: currently, refugees who are given settlement land have five

24 See, for example, *World Disasters Report 2012: Focus on Forced Migration and Displacement* for conclusions on the failure of vocational training and job placement programmes, and *Forced Migration Review* issue 20 for typical shortcomings of micro-lending/micro-enterprise interventions.

years in which to become self-sufficient in food, after which point, barring exceptional circumstances, they are phased off food assistance (Betts et al., 2014). 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-Peterson & Hovil, 2003).

The record of the first round of the settlement strategy is mixed, though undoubtedly an improvement on regimes that severely limit refugees’ access to productive assets. UNHCR points to ‘generous’ asylum policies and asserts that the Settlements have been successful at ‘reducing’ refugees’ reliance on material assistance, moving them towards food self-sufficiency (including increased crop production), the integration of public service systems into those in the Settlements and a greater level of dialogue between refugees and host communities (UNHCR, 2014b; UNHCR, 2006). Others find the results of the agriculture-based self-reliance component less convincing, in part because ‘land allocated to them was either too little or too poor in quality to allow them to achieve self-sufficiency’ (Refugee Law Project, 2005b). In terms of non-agricultural livelihood activities, income generating projects were characterised as ad hoc and small scale, poorly linked to the market, unsustainable and executed by NGOs without significant livelihoods expertise (HPG/IDMC Uganda case study, Annex 8). In addition, many refugees complained about restrictions on their freedom of movement and negative consequences for their livelihoods (Refugee Law Project, 2005b; Macchiavello, 2004).

Ultimately, the inability to be ‘self-reliant’ in the Settlements was underlined 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 (Refugee Law Project, 2005a), and almost always cited better access to livelihoods (and to some extent services as well) as a motivation for doing so (Dryden-Peterson & Hovil, 2003). A number of analysts characterised the SRS more as a way for UNHCR to manage budgets cuts, irrespective of the degree to which refugees were made truly independent of its aid (Meyer, 2006; Kaiser, 2006; Refugee Law Project, 2005b).

In some cases strategies and activities under the ‘partial integration’ heading represent a marked improvement – at least in terms of problem analysis – over self-reliance and livelihood interventions that

are largely afterthoughts to care and maintenance regimes. In practice, though, they tend to suffer from inadequate and unreliable funding, short time horizons and weak technical expertise (including inadequate market analysis) – all adding up to gaps in coherence, sustainability and coverage. Even in more holistic and longer timeframe examples, such as the Ugandan Settlements schemes, agencies and governments have pursued activities that seem to underestimate the complexity of peoples’ paths towards building livelihoods, which are often self-driven and move forward irrespective of – or with only marginal assistance from – the limited NGO or government interventions available.

2.2.3 Theory of change 3: de facto integration²⁵

The third prevalent theory of change underpinning interventions accepts the overwhelming evidence of prolonged displacement, circular displacement or onward migration and the likelihood that, in many instances, displaced people will not achieve any of the traditional ‘durable solutions’; it is pragmatic around the fact that displaced people themselves – their decisions, their movements, their activities – are the determining factor in the realisation of self-reliance and that external assistance has often been marginal or misdirected, and has a better understanding of the complex connections between displaced people and local, national and international communities and economic opportunities. The theory has evolved in response to the shortcomings evident in short-term investments predicated on the assumption of return, as well as a growing body of research that displaced people find their own paths to self-reliance over time.

Two types of interventions are generally pursued. First, emphasis is placed on further opening up the economic spaces that displaced people have found for themselves, with a strong emphasis on advocacy. Second, more direct interventions for self-reliance and livelihoods – mostly very small scale – are fully integrated within host communities, put major emphasis on analysing

²⁵ A number of studies discuss ‘local settlement’, ‘local integration’ and other terms, distinguishing between full legal integration in a community and more informal integration (Crisp, 2004; Fielden, 2008; Meyer, 2005). For our purposes, ‘de facto integration’ refers to displaced people integrating informally over time into their community (or communities if they are moving regularly), but not generally enjoying the full rights of their host neighbours. It does not necessarily imply permanent residence or citizenship.

the market forces that shape livelihood opportunities and consider carefully the multidimensional challenges facing displaced people (psychosocial, gender, protection, etc.). Both types of intervention assume the need for longer-term, developmental approaches and funding. Because the economic connectedness of encamped populations is often constrained, activities are more often aimed at the urban displaced or those who move relatively freely in and out of camps.

Research around the long-term effects of displacement on livelihoods has been an important driver behind development of the de facto integration approach. A number of studies have suggested that the strategies and options pursued by people in protracted displacement for building their livelihoods are in fact more creative and the opportunities greater than aid agencies and practitioners previously thought. While acknowledging how government policies and funding constraints can affect the impact of interventions to support livelihoods, recent research in Uganda suggests that the failure of these projects is equally due to their 'being abstracted from a holistic understanding of the economic systems within which those interventions take place' (Betts et al., 2014). The research debunks a number of myths that underpin the approach taken by many aid agencies in their attempts to support self-reliance and livelihoods, including that the displaced are economically isolated:

When multiple populations are squeezed into one camp or settlement, the perception is of refugees living in isolated socio-economic blocks, divided from each other on national, ethnic, or religious lines. In non-camp environments, refugees are perceived to survive in enclosed 'enclave economies' – in which each national group remains isolated in stark socio-economic segregation. Contrary to this conventional wisdom ... refugees' economic lives in Uganda do not exist in a vacuum shut off from the wider economic structures of their host country. Instead ... refugees [in settlements] cross national, ethnic, and religious lines on a daily basis to trade and exchange. Despite the remote location of rural refugee settlements, these sites are 'nested' in the local Ugandan economies, attracting goods, people, and capital from outside to their active internal markets. In urban settings, self-settled refugees are even more directly connected to the wider host economy and international business networks (Betts et al., 2014).

These findings confirm the results of other studies that have demonstrated the degree to which displaced people's livelihoods are integrated in the economies of asylum countries: Somalis in Nairobi (Campbell, 2005; Lindley, 2007; Pavanello et al., 2010) and Daadab camps (Enghoff et al., 2010; Kamau & Fox, 2013) or Afghans in Peshawar (Mosel & Jackson, 2013) and Iran (Geller & Latek, 2013). Additional research by the Women's Refugee Commission looking at the most vulnerable urban refugees found a high degree of economic resilience, but cautioned that only those with strong social ties have been able to integrate successfully within the economies in which they live. All of this research calls for international assistance to be better embedded in the reality of de facto integration:

Whether in the formal or informal sectors, refugee communities are often integrated within vibrant and complex economic systems. Recognising and understanding this represents an opportunity to turn humanitarian challenges into sustainable opportunities. It has the potential to unlock ways to enable those economic systems to be channeled to the benefit of refugees, host states, and donors, as well as possibly offering a neglected opportunity for private sector entrepreneurship (Betts et al., 2014).

Calls for interventions that allow for a broader recognition of the economic forces shaping displaced people's livelihoods seem to outnumber the actual number of direct interventions that attempt to implement this approach. Many studies have emphasised the potential benefits of negotiating accommodations with host states (or regional institutions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)) in areas such as migration, freedom of movement, residency and labour rights that may fall short of fully achieved 'durable solutions' – or even of fully respecting refugee law – but that would nonetheless recognise de facto integration and open up further opportunities for displaced people to build sustainable livelihoods themselves (see, for example, Long, 2009; Zetter & Long, 2012; Zetter, 2014; Banki, 2004; White et al., 2009). Section 2.3 discusses some of the fruits of this advocacy work.

One example of this approach falls under the joint Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI), an international partnership agreed by the World Bank,

UNHCR and UNDP in 2010.²⁶ Colombia is one of three pilot countries for the TSI. The programme goes beyond an isolated individual income generation approach and instead aims to nest its activities within broader public and private sector economic development activities, as well as the legalisation of informal settlements, community and governance strengthening, provision of services and justice and reparations for victims, to benefit the whole community (Section 4 includes a fuller description of this project).

There are also some, mostly small-scale and recent, examples of interventions that embody the holistic and integrated approach implicit in this theory of change. One example is a Near East Foundation income generation project in Amman for Iraqi refugees and their Jordanian neighbours (HPG/IDMC Jordan case study, Annex 8). The project, which was built on extensive market analysis, provides training, networking space and finance to support the establishment of home-based enterprises, along with intensive mentoring and psychosocial support. It is implemented within a government policy environment that explicitly discourages developmental approaches being applied to Iraqi ‘guests’ (Section 4 includes a fuller description of this project).

From a macro-intervention perspective, the ‘de facto integration’ theory of change has grown out of experience showing that, over time, displaced people, ‘in aggregate’, as Zetter concludes, can become self-reliant economic actors and usually do so ‘with minimal humanitarian relief and protection or development assistance’ (Zetter, 2014). To positively affect the great majority of protracted displaced people, the emphasis, therefore, must be on accelerating and expanding the development opportunities that, in many cases, displaced people themselves have already begun exploiting and that will equally benefit their host neighbours. From a micro-intervention perspective, though, an approach that benefits the ‘aggregate’ may not pay enough attention to marginalised or residual displaced populations and their neighbours, who face particularly difficult barriers to accessing development opportunities and therefore require intensive, direct interventions.

²⁶ Another TSI initiative jointly endorsed by UNDP, UNHCR and the World Bank is underway in north-eastern Sudan.

2.3 The policy environment

The literature on protracted displacement is clear in its assertion that policy frameworks and the policy environment are determinant factors – perhaps *the* determinant factors – in whether displaced people can achieve self-reliance and build sustainable livelihoods. Researchers and policy advocates have pushed for policy changes in hosting countries based on both legal and governance grounds, as well as on the theory that empirical evidence of the benefits of more tolerant asylum policies and frameworks would sway policymakers. Hosting states have modified legislation and policy frameworks to some extent, while clinging to practices based on a competing theory: that real or perceived security threats, and real or perceived economic/labour costs, outweigh the potential benefits (reputational or economic) of more liberal policy frameworks. Changes in legal frameworks have been uneven and their implementation weak because of poor capacity in many countries hosting protracted displacement. Evidence of the potential benefits of relaxing restrictions on displaced people – though relatively strong – seems not to have resulted in many host countries adjusting their restrictive policies around issues such as freedom of movement, temporary residency and employment.

Longstanding advocacy projects such as the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement (now the Brookings-LSE project) have helped lead the push for the adoption of policy guidelines such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UNOCHA, 1998) and the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2010) that emphasise the necessity of minimal legal and/or policy frameworks. UNHCR has also forcefully advocated for asylum states to respect refugee law pertaining, for example, to freedom of movement and the right to work, and for national legislation and programmes in support of those rights.

Where there has been progress on legal policies and frameworks, impact on the ground has been disappointing (HPG/IDMC case studies, Annex 8). In Colombia and Sudan, governments have adopted legal and policy frameworks for IDPs’ protection and assistance, but implementation, compliance and monitoring leave much room for improvement. Colombia has gone further by tasking national and local institutions with implementation and land restitution (with the Constitutional Court repeatedly

demanding accountability), but the impact on IDPs' lives – at least until fairly recently – has been negligible. In 2008, '[n]one of the indigenous persons or Afro-Colombians interviewed' in Colombia for a study of IDP perceptions 'had benefited from land allocation programs. They pointed out that Law 70 of 1993, which provides for the adjudication of land to communities of African descent, has not been effectively implemented' (Cohen, 2008).

The Ugandan government has adopted internationally recognised laws and frameworks regarding refugees. The country has signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1976 Protocol and the 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention on Refugees, and as such has numerous legal responsibilities under international law. The Refugee Act of 2006 and the Refugee Regulations of 2010 both fill a long-term gap in legislation to guide domestic implementation of the 1951 Refugee Convention. But despite confirming refugees' freedom of movement and their right to work, both these rights in practice are subject to severe restrictions (Buscher, 2011).

Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention, although UNHCR considers the 'protection space' for refugees and asylum-seekers to be 'favourable' and operates under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that 'establishes the parameters for cooperation on providing protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers, and allows mandated refugees a maximum stay of six months after recognition, during which a durable solution should be found' (UNHCR, 2014a). In reality, Jordan has over the years instituted an increasingly constrained policy framework for refugees. Palestinian refugees from 1948 were offered full citizenship, but subsequent Palestinian refugees (from 1967 onwards) are not full citizens and face obstacles to obtaining formal work permits. Iraqi refugees from 2003 onwards and more recent Syrian refugees are admitted on a temporary basis with no legal entitlement to work.

On one front, international institutes and policy advocates have pushed for new legal and policy frameworks, with limited positive impacts to date. On another front, researchers and agency experts have been promoting the potential economic (as well as social and political, even peacebuilding) benefits to countries and communities of hosting protracted refugees,²⁷ convinced that this evidence will persuade

reluctant policymakers to adopt more liberal asylum policies. The difficulty of attributing positive or negative economic and social effects to the presence of displaced populations is a common theme, but the consensus is that the *potential* benefits outweigh the costs. The record on measured costs and benefits seems to be mixed. Some studies point out that the economic benefits of hosting displaced populations mostly accrue to elites, for example by lowering labour costs for large landowners, and that poorer host populations tend to be neglected (Chambers, 1986; Maystadt & Verwimp, 2009). Others find both costs and benefits, which change over time along with market prices, the flow of humanitarian aid, new influxes of displaced people, etc., and urge policymakers to weigh these factors against outdated perceptions of costs or short-term domestic political considerations (Ongpin, 1998; Whitaker, 2002). Large humanitarian-displacement economies, such as the Daadab camps in Kenya, have also been shown to bring, on the whole, positive benefits to host communities (Enghoff et al., 2010). Reviewing the overall evidence on impacts, Zetter concludes there 'is compelling, though under-reported, research evidence of positive, aggregate developmental outcomes from displacement crises with benefits accruing to both refugees and their hosts; the impacts are most clearly discernable at the micro-economic level' (Zetter, 2014).

Evidence of real and potential benefits has been the centerpiece of almost universal (and oft-repeated) advocacy among experts and practitioners for hosting states and communities to adopt more open policy frameworks, including rejecting encampment practices, opening up access to land and services, liberalising migration and mobility policies and adopting more flexible residence and work policies (Long, 2011; Zetter, 2014; Werker, 2007; Jacobsen, 2006; Whitaker, 2002; Chatty & Mansour, 2011; Loescher & Milner, 2011; Chatelard, 2011; Scalettaris, 2009).

The pattern in situations of protracted displacement seems to be one of researchers and practitioners alike persisting in the belief that enlightened state behaviour will eventually create a more enabling environment for self-reliance and livelihoods. Yet despite the evidence and the overwhelming consensus on policy recommendations, there is little in the literature to suggest that host governments are changing their policy frameworks and practices. Describing the Kenyan government with regard to Somali refugees, Campbell characterises the unyielding government policy on encampment as 'a threat, both to placate a

²⁷ The literature review did not uncover much on the effects – positive or negative – of protracted IDP populations.

xenophobic public and as a way to exercise control over the refugees' (Campbell, 2005). Durieux notes that, besides generally not meeting their obligations under refugee law regarding the right to work, states are not convinced by – or adjusting their practices as a result of – evidence around self-reliance and livelihoods (Durieux, 2009). Dev, looking at protracted displacement in Africa, describes the 'reluctant host': 'host states ... believe – rightly or wrongly – that having refugees settle long-term within their nations will have severe and adverse impacts on their own populaces. This is based on two key fears: security and resources' (Dev, 2003).

2.4 The perspectives of the displaced

People in protracted displacement clearly have their own strategies and priorities for achieving self-reliance and building livelihoods. Aside from exceptional cases, the protracted displaced do not rely on international assistance, which is often unavailable (especially for urban displaced), insufficient or unreliable. The fact that some groups may not have received much or any assistance over a long period of time, however, should not be equated with those people having achieved satisfactory self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods. In some cases, over time, some people find their way, while others struggle over many years.

The Brooking-Bern project 'Listening to the Voices of the Displaced' revealed how the lack of consultation with IDPs can undermine from the outset external attempts to introduce self-reliance and livelihood-enhancing opportunities (Cohen, 2008). IDPs in Colombia, Azerbaijan and southern Sudan identified employment and access to land as their priorities, and expressed frustration at non-existent or inadequate programmes for vocational training, credit or land restitution. Creating livelihood opportunities for the vast majority of IDPs remained a major challenge (Cohen, 2008), a finding reflected in more recent studies from IDMC in the same countries (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2014b; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2014a; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2014c). The Listening Project also revealed a stark disconnect between potential beneficiaries and the policies of aid agencies (Brown & Mansfield, 2009). Long-term IDPs and refugees regarded the categorisation or labelling of beneficiaries by aid groups (e.g. conflict-

displaced, tsunami-affected) as arbitrary, the failure to consider host populations' needs as naïve and unproductive and the pressure for displaced people to return home as driven by outside agendas. They also expressed 'concerns about the appropriateness and the insufficiency of programmes intended to improve their livelihoods when they returned – often causing them to leave again to find work' (Brown & Mansfield, 2009). While the views of young people in situations of protracted displacement are not as well documented, one study, citing research by the Women's Refugee Commission in various conflict-affected countries, finds that they 'overwhelmingly cite the lack of good education as one of their top concerns. They link the absence of education closely to poverty, unemployment and lack of basic necessities' (Perlman Robinson & Alpar, 2009). As the duration of displacement grows, people tend to reject altogether the narrative of a 'clean return', even if they retain strong emotional ties to the idea of return. In many instances this is because of continuing insecurity or poor economic prospects in their place of origin, in others because they have established livelihoods and other social networks in their place of exile. Others hold out hope for resettlement in the West. The country case studies undertaken for this research in Uganda, Colombia, Sudan and Jordan all identify large displaced populations with no opportunity or intention to return to their original homes (HPG/IDMC case studies, Annex 8).

Numerous studies have pointed out that international assistance – if available – is only one small component of a much more complex search by displaced people to ensure their survival and build livelihoods. A great many displaced people in urban areas receive very little or no assistance whatsoever (Metcalf et al., 2012). For those long-term displaced who do receive assistance, it often comprises a small part of their overall survival, self-reliance and livelihood income: even in rural Uganda, where the majority of displaced people do receive some assistance, 'only 1% of refugee participants in the settlements lack any form of independent livelihood strategy beyond humanitarian assistance' (Betts et al., 2014). In the Daadab camps in Kenya, 'only a very small proportion of refugees – 2% – said they relied solely on food aid, meaning that the majority of refugees supplement the assistance received with other income generating activities' (Kamau & Fox, 2013). As one study points out: 'long-term refugees take whatever opportunities they can to establish their own livelihoods and to

supplement the meagre levels of assistance they receive'. Not uncommonly these include both relatively harmless activities (e.g. manipulating and maximising assistance) and more harmful or illegal ones (e.g. exploitative employment, illegal farming, sexual exploitation) (Crisp, 2004). Rural and urban refugees engage in 'hedging' livelihoods: maximising humanitarian aid, tapping into social networks and solidarity, engaging in subsistence farming (rural) or small trade (urban), begging, working for exploitative wages – whatever it takes (De Vriese, 2006; Betts et al., 2014; Buscher, 2011).

Because so many displaced people are finding their own way when it comes to self-reliance and livelihoods, they generally pay little attention to the distinctions made by aid agencies between humanitarian, relief, livelihoods or development. In particular, social welfare transfers, in the form of cash, vouchers or food aid, are seen as an integral contribution to self-reliance and building livelihoods: in Uganda, refugees who were being shifted towards the UNHCR/government 'Self-Reliance Strategy' – and who sensed their food rations and other basic needs were being cut – pointed to the illogicality of seeking to become self-reliant in the absence of basic safety nets:

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).

Selling food rations or other humanitarian inputs, while not often the most efficient kind of transfer, is common in order to finance other basic needs or to invest in self-reliance or livelihood activities. Likewise, beneficiaries, not surprisingly, use inputs meant to finance income generating or livelihood projects to meet basic costs when necessary.

On a positive note, researchers and practitioners seem to be paying more attention to how the displaced themselves – independently of external assistance – view their self-reliance and livelihood prospects and how they are integrating economically into their communities. This has led to calls (also noted in theory of change 3, above) to open up the space for

self-reliance and livelihoods that displaced people are finding themselves, for example by subsidising work or mobility permits (Chatty & Mansour, 2011), using humanitarian interventions to correct market distortions that are penalising displaced workers (Werker, 2007) or using technology to improve their links to networks and markets (Betts et al., 2014).

2.5 The architecture of the international system

The failure of efforts to bridge the humanitarian–development programming and funding gap are well documented. A recent study summarised the lack of progress:

While there have been some changes in the way that relief is delivered and conceptualised – for example through cash transfers and a stronger focus on exit strategies and sustainability – there have been fewer changes in the way development assistance is being provided and targeted in protracted crises, and bureaucratic and bifurcated institutional arrangements remain in place (Mosel & Levine, 2014).

These disappointing results have been apparent in the context of protracted displacement, both in repeated internal institutional reforms and in system-wide reorganisations. The assumption underpinning these reforms is that adjusting the international aid architecture will encourage the longer-term developmental approaches and funding models needed to build self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods among the protracted displaced. UNHCR, for example, recognising the shortcomings of its funding and programming tools in addressing the challenges of protracted displacement, has soldiered through a number of attempts over the years to expand its coverage and to encourage longer-term development actors to complement its investments. Within the humanitarian system, the introduction of the early recovery cluster in 2005 – another in a series of attempts to bring the humanitarian and development worlds together – was meant to introduce developmental approaches from the outset of a crisis and to encourage links with longer-term developmental processes and funding streams (Bailey & Pavanello, 2009).

Despite these and numerous other initiatives, finding sustainable solutions and promoting longer-term development programmes for refugees and their hosts remains a significant challenge (IFRC, 2012). The findings of the case studies for this report – as well as the literature review as a whole – confirm just how stubborn the humanitarian–development divide is, including when it comes to programming for people in protracted displacement. The vast majority of examples of self-reliance and livelihood support found in the literature review are small-scale interventions undertaken by humanitarian agencies or dual-mandated agencies working with uncertain and short time horizon humanitarian funding.

The case studies on IDPs in Colombia and Sudan for this report found that a key obstacle to improving self-reliance was the short-term nature of livelihood interventions. The authors tried to find examples of projects implemented by international development agencies, but found almost exclusively examples from their humanitarian counterparts. In most cases, projects ‘did not seem to allow for proper needs and environmental assessments, and a planning and implementation phase followed by monitoring and evaluation. As a result, only immediate impacts were measured, and there were no indications as to whether beneficiaries made sustainable progress towards becoming more self-reliant’ (HPG/IDMC Colombia case study, Annex 8). The case studies in Uganda and Jordan found that international interventions for self-reliance were dominated by UNHCR and WFP or by small NGOs, all with uncertain funding horizons. For the most part, examples of interventions undertaken by development agencies in the four countries were part of larger development or poverty reduction programmes and were not linked to humanitarian work.

As regards architectural adjustments to the international system, the most recent set of reforms and discussions on policy direction have made some analysts cautiously optimistic. Zetter finds that ‘intergovernmental humanitarian and development actors are transforming their role in promoting development-led responses to mass displacement’, pointing to shifts in the UN towards ‘development-led approaches ... [that] place increasing emphasis on programming that stimulates economic and social recovery’ (Zetter, 2014). Zetter also points to continuing programming changes within UNHCR which highlight development-led responses, as well as the World Bank’s Global Program on Forced

Displacement (GPFD), which is seeking to ‘identify opportunities for a more systematic contribution of the World Bank to developmental responses to forced displacement’. On the donor side, Zetter also sees hope in new policies such as the European Commission’s Global Approach to Migration Management (GAMM), which promotes development programmes for the protection and livelihoods of refugees and host populations. Another recent initiative, the Solutions Alliance, chaired by UNCHR, Colombia and Denmark and launched in 2014, brings together a wide range of actors to ‘promote and enable the transition for displaced persons away from dependency towards increased resilience, self-reliance and development’ (Solutions Alliance, 2014).

A common thread in this new thinking on reforming the architecture of the international system towards development-led responses – and one that has implications for decisions on external support to self-reliance activities – is that it emphasises macro-economic strategies and policies, not just the micro-level of households and livelihoods. As the literature review demonstrates, aid agencies and donors have until now had a fairly narrow vision of how to support self-reliance and livelihoods among the protracted displaced – i.e. at the household level through traditional, small-scale assistance projects. With so many protracted displaced people seeking their own solutions for livelihoods and self-reliance in whatever macro-economic context they find themselves, and given the poor record and limited coverage of external self-reliance and livelihood interventions, displacement-friendly macro-economic strategies and policies could have a greater positive impact on the livelihood prospects of many more millions of people in protracted displacement.

The introduction of cash and vouchers on a large scale may begin to build better links between the humanitarian and development communities. WFP’s support to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, amounting to \$54 million per month in 2014, was almost entirely in the form of vouchers for the purchase of food in local stores (ODI/HPG 2015, forthcoming). Besides giving greater agency to beneficiaries (allowing them greater latitude to invest in basic needs, self-reliance or livelihoods as they see fit), cash and voucher transfers can have positive developmental spill-over effects. WFP food vouchers in Lebanon created 1,300 new jobs, and the multiplier value of WFP assistance was estimated

to be up to 1.23x in the food products sector in Jordan and 1.51x in Lebanon (ODI/HPG 2015, forthcoming). The same emergency cash or voucher transfer systems (e.g. debit cards) used through banks or other financial service providers (such as telecom companies) could easily be used by longer-term development agencies to target the same beneficiaries. These transfer systems also have the potential to build fruitful relationships between beneficiaries and the banks or other companies providing financial services (Drummond & Crawford, 2014).

Given the international community's track record, a degree of scepticism about the latest efforts to bridge the humanitarian–development divide is probably in order. Several studies on protracted displacement, including the case studies for this report, find that the problems of the long-term displaced – especially in urban areas – are inseparable from the poverty and livelihood challenges faced by their non-displaced neighbours (Feinstein International Center, 2012; Haysom, 2013; IFRC, 2012; Buscher, 2011; Lindley, 2011). This description of challenges facing urban residents in Kabul – an almost indistinguishable mix of migrants, long-term residents and displaced people – is typical: 'Lack of access to basic services, insecurity of tenure, inadequate shelter and sanitation and physical insecurity result in high levels of vulnerability amongst recently displaced and longer-term residents alike' (Metcalf et al., 2012). Although displaced populations do face hurdles that are different from – and sometimes above and beyond – those faced by their host neighbours, the failure of the humanitarian-development architecture and funding when it comes to self-reliance and livelihoods is not specific to situations of displacement. Shortcomings in the international aid architecture, the lack of investment in poverty reduction, and the search for viable livelihood interventions for displaced people in poor and fragile states need to be seen within the much larger context of the global development agenda.

2.5 Unrealised theories of change and guarded optimism

Although the literature on self-reliance and livelihood support for people in protracted displacement tends to be repetitive and there are few examples of carefully evaluated interventions, there is still reason for some cautious optimism. As discussed above, researchers and practitioners are coalescing around a dominant

theory of change that is more realistic about the characteristics of protracted displacement: its likely duration, the complexity of the livelihood choices being made by the displaced themselves and the opportunities afforded by market-based interventions and links to larger development processes.

The process of listening to displaced people and better understanding their livelihood strategies has also contributed to a strong consensus on policy advocacy, for instance around liberalised migration, residency and work rights, bolstered by growing evidence on the potential positive overall impacts progressive displacement policies can have on host and displaced populations alike. Although host states have resisted making these policy changes, several countries with long-standing refugee and IDP populations, including Kenya, Uganda and Colombia, have taken important steps to enact or adapt legislation that emphasises greater rights for displaced people. While international agencies are still struggling to bridge the humanitarian–development divide, the introduction of cash and vouchers for humanitarian responses, combined with widespread cell phone coverage, may on its own be helping to break down that divide by linking displaced people in a more meaningful way to markets, the private sector and longer-term development opportunities.

Appreciating from the outset that a displacement crisis will almost certainly be protracted poses challenges for and provides opportunities to policymakers and aid agencies seeking to contribute to self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods for the displaced. International systems for immediate humanitarian response are well-honed to deliver relief, but they are generally not designed – or funded – to understand in depth the livelihood strategies that displaced people themselves are pursuing, or the market and general development opportunities that might be made available to them. Basic humanitarian assistance is crucial in many displacement crises – and sometimes for many years for vulnerable people – but is insufficient to enable displaced people to build paths to self-reliance. From the outset of a displacement crisis, development-led programmes that acknowledge displacement as a fixture within the community – and that show greater speed and agility in designing new interventions or adapting ongoing programmes – could help displaced people find their path to livelihoods more quickly and with less pain, while preserving humanitarian funding for acute new crises.

Section 3

Literature review part 2

Self-reliance and livelihoods interventions: what works?

Despite the lack of hard evidence and a preponderance of very small-scale interventions, there is the beginning of a consensus around the kinds of conditions that must be in place and the kinds of interventions that might work to support self-reliance and livelihoods in protracted displacement – bearing in mind the very many complex and different environments involved. As practitioners and researchers have shifted to a more realistic view of just how sticky situations of displacement are (and as experience with long-term displacement has grown), there is a better understanding of the characteristics of displaced people who are most likely to achieve, or not achieve, some measure of self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihoods – often in a context of limited external assistance. Understanding these characteristics can help shape assistance – or ‘ladder’ that assistance – in ways that are tailored to specific situations of displacement and to the heterogeneous mix of displaced people in each of these situations.

There is also a fair amount of commentary about the external factors – such as the legal framework, conflict and violence, restrictions on mobility, the surrounding economy – that can facilitate or inhibit the realisation of self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods. Section 4 proposes a typology that could be applied in specific situations of displacement in order to help assess potential opportunities for self-reliance and livelihoods programming. Many of the examples where people in protracted displacement have achieved some level of self-reliance involve them working creatively (legally, illegally, or in the margins) within existing external constraints, so the opportunities for external agencies to support these initiatives may be limited. The literature nevertheless identifies a number of good practices (e.g. around design, management, inputs, expertise) in typical external self-reliance and livelihoods interventions that should be supported.

3.1 Determinants of self-reliance and productive livelihoods

3.1.1 Characteristics of the displaced

Not surprisingly, most studies examining the socio-economic profiles of people in protracted displacement find different tiers of vulnerability and economic potential. What seems to set one group apart from the other – irrespective of whether they are refugees or IDPs, rural or urban based – is the degree of social capital and social networks that they possess: skills and connections, including education, language, ethnic, cultural and social ties and national and transnational economic links – all of which contribute to achieving self-sufficiency and building livelihoods (Jacobsen, 2006; Campbell, 2005; Crisp, 2002; Crisp, 2004; Betts et al., 2014; Mosel & Jackson, 2013; Banki, 2004; Women’s Refugee Commission, 2011; De Vriese, 2006; Macchiavello, 2003; Fielden, 2008; Buscher, 2011). People arrive in displacement with social capital and networks and, in some cases, acquire more over time in exile.

Betts suggests that ‘refugee populations are often assumed to be homogenous groups, crudely distinguished only by their broadest national or regional characteristics’ (Betts et al., 2014). Research in Uganda finds a wide range of refugee economic profiles, from surviving to managing to thriving, with Somali refugees – as opposed to Congolese and Burundians – thriving because of their social capital and networks (Omata, 2012; Women’s Refugee Commission, 2011). Similarly in Kenya, stronger self-sufficiency among Ethiopian and Somali refugees – as opposed to Sudanese refugees – in urban areas is attributed to their possession of social capital, in particular education, language skills and economic networks (Banki, 2004; Campbell, 2006). In Pakistan, earlier inflows of refugees who shared Pashtun

ethnicity with their hosts have integrated better economically than newer, non-Pashtun arrivals (Banki, 2004).

Time itself also seems to play a role in displaced people achieving self-reliance or sustainable livelihoods, allowing them to exploit their social capital or acquire new social capital and connections. Longer-term Somali refugees in Daadab are appreciably better off and far more engaged in livelihood activities than new arrivals (Kamau & Fox, 2013). In Colombia the picture appears mixed, with the constraints to employment faced by some IDPs declining over time (Aysa-Lastra, 2011), while others become poorer and more marginalised over time (HPG/IDMC Colombia case study, Annex 8). A number of studies identify differing lengths of displacement, ranging from seven years to three generations, as the time it takes for displaced people to adjust their livelihoods (e.g. from rural to urban) and reach something near economic parity with their host neighbours (Geller & Latek, 2013; Mosel & Jackson, 2013; Fielden, 2008, HPG/IDMC case studies Annex 8).

The duration of displacement can also be an indicator of declining self-sufficiency and growing or persistent vulnerability, especially as the assets displaced people arrived with are depleted over time, their rights diminish or livelihood opportunities are closed off, forcing them to pursue increasingly dangerous strategies (De Vriese, 2006; Durieux, 2009; Young et al., 2009, HPG/IDMC case studies Annex 8). The experience of different waves of refugees in Jordan demonstrates how social capital and time can intersect to produce very different self-reliance and livelihood outcomes (HPG/IDMC Jordan case study, Annex 8). The livelihoods of Palestinian refugees in the region, with the benefit of strong social capital (education, international employment networks, etc.) and buttressed by the UNRWA safety net, have stabilised and after three generations broadly resemble those of host populations (Hanssen-Bauer & Jacobsen, 2007). Many of the Iraqi refugees who arrived in 2005–2006 and who possessed strong social capital (in 2009, at the peak of displacement, one-third of registered Iraqi adults had a university degree) managed to make a living in the informal sector and have since been resettled, returned or moved on to exile elsewhere. However, those Iraqis who remain displaced in Jordan today – some 30,000 – brought very little in terms of assets or social capital from Iraq, have few options for return, resettlement or onward exile and remain highly vulnerable (HPG/IDMC Jordan case study, Annex 8).

3.1.2 The external environment

The case studies undertaken for this report hint at the extensive additional web of external factors that can constrain opportunities – including factors that in many cases equally affect host communities. In Darfur, the conflict has led to massive urbanisation (whether in camps or outside them) and the deterioration of traditional rural livelihoods based on farming and herding. IDPs and hosts alike have limited livelihood options as the rural food-based economy has declined. Those options that are available, such as collecting and selling firewood, brick-making and charcoal production, are overcrowded and contribute to further environmental degradation – putting even greater pressure on livelihoods. Insecurity remains a major impediment to returning to old livelihoods or pursuing new ones in both Darfur and Colombia. In Colombia, widespread stigmatisation and discrimination constitute a further obstacle to IDPs becoming self-reliant. Efforts at self-reliance by refugee women in Zarqa, Jordan, are hampered not only by the lack of a legal right to work, but also by cultural practices that restrict their movement and put them at risk of gender-based violence. Even in rural Uganda, where the government settlement scheme provides access to agricultural land for refugees, their quest for self-sufficiency is obstructed by the quality of the land provided, as well as uncertain tenure arrangements. For their part, refugees who settle in Kampala are entering an economy with very low formal employment opportunities and where a third of the population lives in poverty (Buscher, 2011).

What is clear across the literature is that displaced people face a continuous cascade of barriers to establishing a secure presence and accessing livelihood opportunities, including general poverty, threats of physical violence, small-scale extortion and exorbitant bureaucratic fees. Our study's global typology of protracted displacement settings shows that poorer countries are more likely to generate displacement, and that it is more likely that a higher proportion of people in poorer countries will be displaced. It is not clear, however, if poverty drives displacement or vice versa – the relationship between economy and displacement seems to be more complex and complicated. In addition, a vast majority of refugees and IDPs have been displaced from, or into, countries with serious protection, human rights and governance weaknesses. Roughly 35.7 million out of a total of 59.5 million displaced people (60%) originated in countries categorised on the Fund for Peace's Fragile States Index

as ‘alert’ and ‘high alert’, while 47.9% of all displaced were exiled in countries falling into those categories.²⁸

All of this adds up to enormous efficiency losses, which could instead be directed to family livelihoods. For camp populations, access to livelihoods is typically blocked by lack of access to land, movement restrictions, restrictions on the right to work, informal ‘taxation’ and their isolation from economic hubs, which results in transport and information costs (Werker, 2007). Urban refugees and IDPs face a range of legal restrictions, harassment and insecurity (Cohen, 2008; Jacobsen, 2006). In order to run businesses and access financial services, Afghan refugees in Pakistan must register their companies through Pakistani acquaintances (Mosel & Jackson, 2013). Refugees in Nairobi, because of their tenuous legal status, pay significantly higher rents and school fees, in addition to \$700 for a two-year work permit if they want to work legally. They also spend an inordinate amount of time and money just on registering as refugees and acquiring legal documents (Pavanello et al., 2010; Anderson, 2012).

3.2 Programmes, lessons and good practice in self-reliance and livelihood interventions

In the best of circumstances, trying to help people in protracted displacement achieve self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods is likely to be a slow and frustrating process. How can donors and international aid agencies invest in ways that will speed up local integration – a process that in the case of Palestinians in Jordan took three generations under an exceptionally generous relief regime and policy environment? How can external assistance help bridge the gap between displaced people with assets and strong social capital, who tend to find their way, and those who more closely resemble their very vulnerable host neighbours? There are no one-size-fits-all interventions for supporting self-reliance and livelihood interventions. The review of the literature has made clear that every situation of protracted displacement offers its own complex puzzle of constraints and

opportunities. Nevertheless, from the country case studies undertaken for this paper and from examples in the literature, there do seem to be a handful of types of programmes – and maybe more importantly approaches taken within those programmes – that may begin to help support people in protracted displacement achieve greater economic independence.

The programmes discussed below fall into four broad categories:

1. Absorbing displaced people in urban settings.
2. Integrated income generation, employment and skills programmes.
3. Predictable safety nets and basic social services.
4. Integrated regional and country development approaches.

Some of the specific projects described below illustrate common deficiencies that hamper achievement within these categories. Other projects presented – like most of the activities uncovered in the literature – have not been rigorously evaluated (or are too new to have shown convincing results), but they seem to have digested good practice from past interventions, for example:

- Involvement and empowerment of displacement communities and their hosts.
- Appreciation of the complexity of livelihood opportunities and constraints.
- The frequent need for a combination of humanitarian and development inputs.
- Careful analysis of the market environment for livelihoods.
- Building on the existing skills and strategies of displaced people.
- Reinforcing rather than replacing state functions.
- Working creatively within restrictive policy frameworks.

3.2.1 Absorbing displaced people in urban settings

A number of studies have highlighted the challenges of urbanisation generally and the presence in cities of large numbers of long-term displaced people.²⁹ A number of interventions, ranging from small-scale informal arrangements to large urban municipality projects, suggest that solutions around the livelihoods

²⁸ See Annexes 1 and 2 for sources and calculations. It should be noted that the fragility index itself uses displacement as one of its indicators, so countries with high levels of displacement would already be more likely to rank as more fragile.

²⁹ See for example HPG’s ‘Sanctuary in the City’ project, which gives a detailed overview of the challenges, drawing on case studies and literature covering a wide range of cities.

of the urban displaced, which often include improvements in housing tenure, can be pursued successfully in different policy environments.

Incremental upgrading: IDP urban settlements in Bossaso, Somalia

IDPs worked through a joint UN–INGO initiative to tackle the constraints to legalising their status and upgrading their settlements. It was clear to the community and to project planners that insecurity and housing were major constraints to IDPs pursuing livelihood initiatives. The economic incentives for ‘landlords’ to preserve the status quo were analysed and a market-based intervention that allowed for the incremental upgrading of settlements and improved protection for IDPs was begun. A tripartite agreement between landholders, the local authorities and displaced people opened the way for upgrading the settlement, which also increased the value of the land for landowners. Although faced with acute and ongoing humanitarian needs, the UN and INGOs sought longer-term developmental solutions: host and IDP populations in the settlements were involved, market incentives were used to draw in reluctant landowners and the municipal government was engaged – and not bypassed as it might have been in a more humanitarian response – in the allocation of land and upgrading of services (Decorte & Tempa, 2010).

Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI), Colombia: combining livelihood support to IDPs with regularising informal urban settlements

IDPs in urban areas in Colombia live mainly in informal settlements. Although they have grown over the course of the conflict and now sometimes cover a significant proportion of urban areas (UNHCR, 2015), these settlements are often not formally connected to water, sanitation and electricity, and IDPs living in them are at risk of eviction. The TSI programme recognises the complexity and inter-connectedness of IDPs’ livelihoods by simultaneously addressing three focus areas: improving living conditions (access to land, housing, basic services and local economic development), institutional and organisational strengthening and protection and support for the rights of communities. The programme employs a participatory approach, engaging communities, authorities and institutions (HPG/IDMC Colombia case study, Annex 8).

World Bank and the Jordanian government: upgrading informal settlements in Amman

Another example of a project with impact on protracted refugee livelihoods is an intervention

funded by the World Bank in the 1980s, and implemented in partnership with the Jordanian government’s Housing Corporation. East Wahdat was an informal settlement with poor living conditions adjacent to the overcrowded Wahdat Camp in Amman. The majority of its inhabitants were families of Palestinian origin. The core of the programme involved buying the land from the private landowner, dividing it into plots which were then serviced and sold to local households. As well as upgrading individual buildings and infrastructure in the neighbourhood, the project included a community centre, vocational training and access to credit for women. It involved a high degree of local participation (Oesch, 2010; Ababsa, 2010). While the legal framework for 1948 Palestinian refugees in Jordan allowed a good deal of latitude for development investment, the project demonstrates how an area-based intervention can combine urban planning interventions with community involvement and livelihoods programming. The project could be replicated to upgrade other informal settlements in Jordan that are now absorbing refugees from Syria (Cintron & Wendell, 2013).

3.2.2 Integrated income generation, employment and skills programmes

Vocational training and income generation schemes supported through grants or loans are probably the programmes most immediately associated with self-reliance and livelihood support to displaced people. They may also be the most discredited in the literature. Numerous studies point to a pattern of failure behind many of these schemes: failure to consider the market viability of either the skill being taught or the product being produced; failure to consider the competing needs of participants as well as the educational, social and psychosocial barriers they are facing; and lack of expertise within the agencies or NGOs providing lending or grants schemes and failure to link those schemes with more complete financial services that might allow them to grow or achieve sustainability. In addition, the ad hoc and short-term nature of humanitarian funding generally means that only a small number of beneficiaries can be targeted, and it is difficult to forge links with private sector labour markets or financial service providers.³⁰

30 See for example: Hill 2004; Hill 2006; Buscher 2012; Jacobsen 2006; Feinstein 2012; Azorbo 2011; WRC 2011 a/b; Kamau 2013; Azaiez 2009; Robinson 2009; Phillips 2009; Kvernrod 2004; Macheivello 2004; Sesnan 2004.

Despite this generally poor record, it should be acknowledged that introducing productive self-reliance and livelihood interventions of this sort among people in protracted displacement had long been seen as peripheral to core relief and protection activities. This has changed in more recent years. A review of UNHCR's experience with micro-finance points out that, in 2000, there was only a passing interest in livelihoods within UNHCR's global operations. By 2008, 70% of operations had at least some livelihood component, and in 2010–2011 UNCHR's global appeal identified self-reliance and livelihoods as one of seven global strategic priorities. Still, these livelihood interventions continued to suffer from limited in-house expertise and other technical shortcomings (Azorbo, 2011). The recent and rapid spread of technology linking beneficiaries directly with financial services is also opening up new possibilities. Most importantly, practitioners seem to be digesting lessons from past mistakes and appreciating the complexity involved in trying to build marketable skills and open up financing for people in protracted displacement. A feature of what seem to be more successful interventions is how management-intensive and multi-faceted they are, integrating a range and services and support and committing to long-term relationships within the community.

Three livelihoods and self-reliance programmes in Darfur

The country case study on IDPs in Darfur compared three NGO interventions by CHF International, the Danish Refugee Council and Practical Action in 2004–2007. In all three cases, while livelihoods and food security were partially protected in the short term, vocational training and income generation failed to consider the difficulties beneficiaries faced in accessing markets, illustrating the pitfalls of poor market analysis and the limitations of what can be achieved in training and income generation interventions when basic needs and protection threats predominate. The experiences do, however, suggest that providing direct relief assistance – in combination with vocational training and income generation activities – can open up space for families to engage in new productive activities and help them to avoid dangerous livelihood options.

Colombia: integrated support to IDPs and hosts in Santa Marta, Barranquilla, Cali, Buenaventura and the coffee belt

A CHF International programme from 2002–2006 provided a mix of support, including emergency short-term employment (community infrastructure), vocational training and job placements and small

grants and technical support for micro-entrepreneurs (HPG/IDMC Colombia case study, Annex 8). The programme combined immediate humanitarian assistance with intensive, integrated livelihood support for individual beneficiaries, while also building links to longer-term USAID and government-supported programmes. An important component of the programme was intensive psychosocial and life skills support: beneficiaries attended several months of therapy, including 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. 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. The project was funded through the humanitarian and development funding windows of the US government.

Emergency short-term employment had a positive psychological impact on IDPs, and the focus on community infrastructure reduced negative perceptions about IDPs among municipal leaders and local people. Vocational training was tailored to employment in urban labour and entrepreneurial markets, and local businesses were consulted in the design of the training courses to ensure that they addressed the needs of the market. CHF then worked with companies to place trainees (IDPs and vulnerable hosts) in jobs. CHF also provided training on work etiquette and orientation to the workplace, and subsidised social insurance and the transport costs of IDPs, reducing the cost to the employer. Of those trained, 83% found permanent positions.

Under the micro-enterprise component, 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 housing technical assistance. More than 9,300 business plans were developed, each receiving one-off grants of about \$500. The programme, which was expanded to include non-IDPs, was absorbed into a larger, ongoing government approach.

The programme not only supported IDPs in their efforts to establish livelihoods and contributed to improving their self-reliance, but also helped counter stigmatisation and negative perceptions by building

relations between IDPs and the host community, and by including other vulnerable people. It was tailored to the existing market rather than creating new productive units, and the incorporation of both the public and private sector meant that more beneficiaries were assisted and that there was greater logistical, methodological and institutional support. The programme was monitored and evaluated regularly and refined over time to eliminate weaknesses and reflect lessons learned.

Comprehensive support to economic resilience amongst urban Iraqi refugees in Jordan

A Near East Foundation programme implemented through Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in the northern industrial city of Zarqa 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. Implementation was preceded by a thorough assessment that identified constraints and risks associated with livelihoods for the target groups, which included legal restrictions on work, family responsibilities and – especially among women – cultural practices that could provoke harassment or violence and that would limit women’s ability to earn income safely. The pre-implementation work also included a careful assessment of the market for goods and labour (HPG/IDMC Jordan case study, Annex 8).

The project demonstrates how management-intensive such programmes are, though NEF has been able to maintain cost-efficiency through the use of volunteers and the inputs of its partner CBOs. Door-to-door information campaigns identified the most vulnerable; family members were included in initial meetings in order to address any queries or concerns that male partners in particular might have, and the support of male family members is solicited through every phase of the project. One outreach event is conducted each quarter through the life of the project for participants and their families. Outreach events do not address domestic violence directly, but instead address issues that are triggers for violence, such as control of household income.

Research had indicated that many of the beneficiaries’ existing skills were inappropriate to the Jordanian market or, for Iraqis, impossible to put to use given

the legal framework. Short training courses therefore focused on diversifying participants’ skills, covering areas like business management, marketing and production. A second course focused on how to conduct a simple feasibility study to assess the viability of a business plan. This fed directly into the application process for the grant or cash assistance. Each applicant went through a further evaluation process to assess his or her willingness and capacity to start a business.

Once awarded a grant or cash assistance, beneficiaries were matched to ‘mentors’ (a pool comprising 20 successful entrepreneurs) who provide one-on-one and group advice sessions. Female beneficiaries are also encouraged to attend business network meetings, which are held in CBO ‘safe spaces’. The network meetings combine discussions on progress with opportunities to flag any emerging domestic violence concerns. These meetings also aim to deepen participants’ social networks by encouraging connections and collaborations between the participants and fostering ‘greater understanding and harmony’ between Jordanians and Iraqis. All 700 beneficiaries also receive home visits to monitor how the grants and cash assistance are being used, and to provide psychosocial, health, legal and other service referrals. One additional important characteristic of the programme has been NEF’s ability to work on refugees’ self-reliance and livelihoods in compliance with (sometimes complicated) local laws and regulations, based on the trust built with the community and local authorities over many years, by focusing equally on refugees and needy Jordanians and by engaging in programmes and approaches that are carefully designed to conform to local regulations.

3.2.3 Predictable safety nets and basic social services

In situations where opportunities for direct support for income generating activities are extremely limited (e.g. isolated, closed camp situations or where security threats are severe), programmes that support education, nutrition and food security play a crucial, if indirect, role in building self-reliance and livelihoods. Examples from this report’s case study on IDPs in Darfur underscored the important role food transfers played in providing space for families to pursue safer livelihood strategies and agency-sponsored income generation projects. The case study in Jordan also underscored the vital role that UNRWA’s safety net has played for Palestinians seeking to establish sustainable livelihoods.

Research has clearly demonstrated the long-term economic impact of under-nutrition on livelihoods: in Ethiopia and Uganda the estimated cost of child under-nutrition to annual GDP is 16.5% and 5.6%, respectively (COHA project, 2012). A child receiving proper fortified complementary food at the right time can expect to grow up earning significantly higher wages – 46% higher, according to one study in Guatemala (Scalingupnutrition.org, 2011).

The impact of education can be equally great. Among Syrian refugee girls, the failure to offer safe access to education is contributing to sexual exploitation and harassment, domestic violence and a significant rise in early forced marriages (International Rescue Committee, 2014). Besides the human rights imperative to act, girls' education in the Syria refugee context is a 'priority for security, social stability and economic recovery' (Watkins & Zyck, 2014), allowing girls and young women to develop the social networks crucial for livelihoods in the long term (International Rescue Committee, 2014). While safety net or social protection assistance can be criticised as expensive and potentially open-ended – or because it is perceived to foster dependency – the links between such programmes and longer-term sustainable livelihoods are well-documented.

3.2.4 Integrated regional and country development approaches

The World Bank's Global Program on Forced Displacement (GPDFD), whose objective is to improve the contribution of development actors to situations of forced migration (World Bank, 2014a), is playing a

potentially important role in bringing comprehensive, regional approaches to bear on complex and protracted displacement crises. The GPDFD 2014 study on IDPs and refugees in the Sahel (World Bank, 2014b), though only a proposed policy framework at this point, seems to have digested many of the lessons of past, piecemeal – and humanitarian-focused – interventions to support self-reliance and livelihoods. While extremely ambitious in its recommendations (ranging, for example, from the need to obtain political support at the regional and national level to major regional infrastructure investments), the analysis does not shy away from the complexity of the situation and how humanitarian and development needs are intertwined for both displaced and host populations. The report recognises the risk posed to livelihoods of the continued loss of human capital and calls for a holistic, longer-term development response that builds on humanitarian interventions.

On livelihoods, the report analyses realistic sustainable livelihood opportunities for camp and non-camp displaced people and hosts, calling for 'displacement-sensitive' development investments. It recognises the strain displacement puts on infrastructure and services and outlines how national systems can be strengthened to address those strains. It recognises the new urban profile of many displaced people and accepts that they are unlikely to return to past – and now unsustainable – rural livelihoods. The report also appreciates the role mobility has played for people seeking to protect or find new livelihoods and sees potential opportunities in more open migration and labour policies.

Section 4

Identifying opportunities for self-reliance and livelihood programming

Clearly, each situation of protracted displacement is complex in its own right and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting self-reliance and livelihoods. This paper has tried to demonstrate how a complex web of factors – ranging from existing human, social and economic capital to variations in the external environment – impact on displaced people’s livelihoods. Appreciating this complexity, though, does not necessarily lead to steps towards understanding what opportunities might exist to support self-reliance and livelihoods in a given situation, or identifying appropriate, tangible interventions. This section proposes a methodology for diagnosing situation-specific constraints and opportunities for self-reliance – a typology that practitioners could use to rank, on a comparative scale, the likely receptiveness of a situation to self-reliance/livelihood programming.³¹

The typology was applied to the 12 contexts that were also the primary subject of the literature review.³² The exercise was intended to provide a preliminary categorisation of these contexts and to test the typology itself. As illustrated in Figure 11, the typology considers four themes that impinge on the ability of people in protracted displacement to seek self-reliance and livelihood solutions:

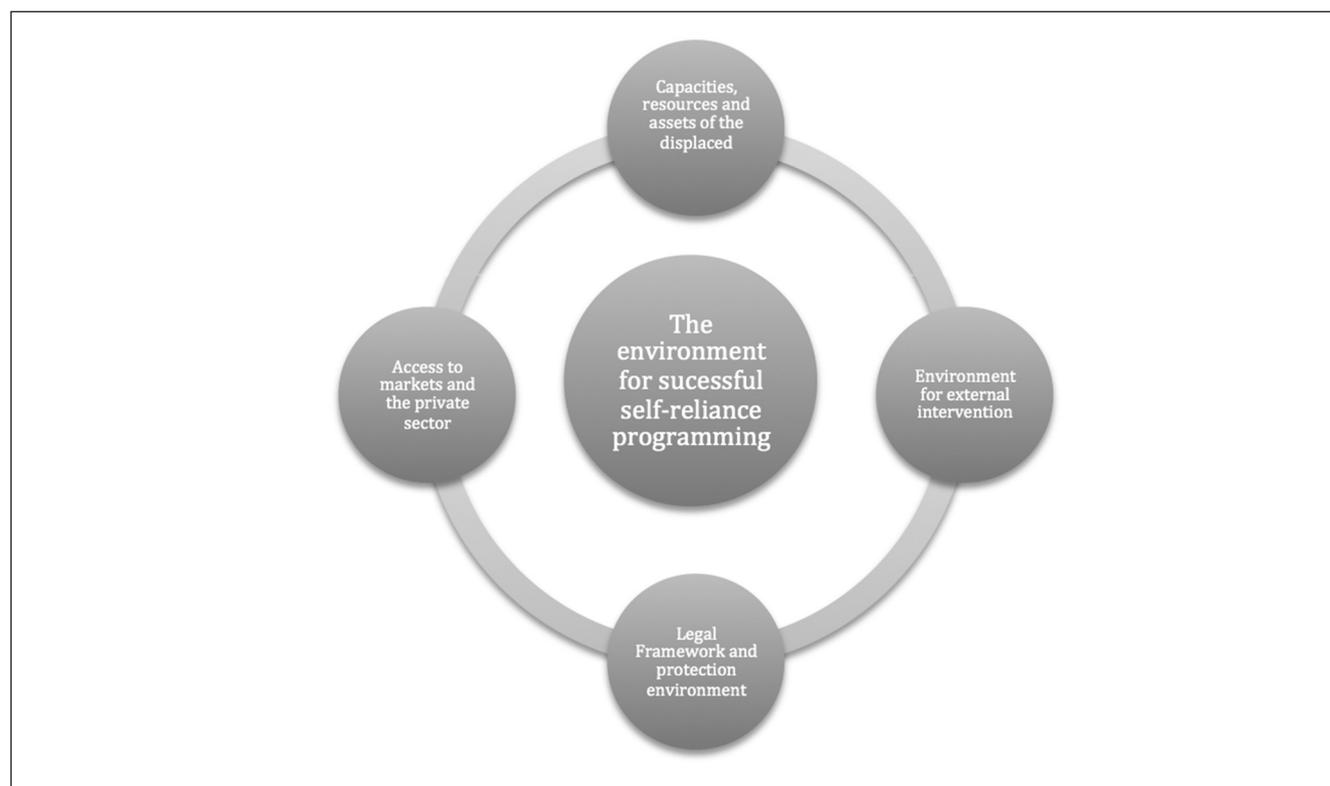
- ‘Legal framework and protection environment’ determines the rights of displaced people to residence, employment, property ownership and movement (and, in the case of IDPs, political rights), as well as the degree to which those rights might not be realised as a result of corruption, abuses or failures in the rule of law. The overall exposure of displaced people to protection threats is also considered.
- ‘Access to markets and the private sector’ measures issues such as geographic isolation or discrimination that may constrain access to markets or, conversely, displaced people’s connectedness to district, regional and even international markets.
- ‘Capacities, resources and assets of the displaced’ examines the human and social capital of affected populations as well as their resources, such as remittances and access to the basic services necessary for them to pursue stable and sustainable livelihoods.
- ‘Environment for external intervention’ considers the degree to which the government is likely both formally and informally to support livelihoods work by international organisations, as well as the willingness of donors and international agencies to channel external assistance collaboratively (e.g. linking humanitarian and development funds) and into host government programmes for livelihoods for the displaced.

³¹ The full explanation of the typology and how it was applied in this study to a number of situations of protracted displacement can be found in Annexes 4–6. Given time constraints and the breadth of this study, the typology should not be considered a final product. Further research and refinement would be needed to apply it with confidence either for the pilot examples presented here or across a broader range of countries.

³² The checklist was applied to six refugee contexts (Chad, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, Uganda) and six IDP contexts (Azerbaijan, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan).

For each situation of protracted displacement, each of the four themes is assigned a numerical score ranging from 0 to 60, based on a checklist of questions. The aggregate score provides an overall estimate, ranging from ‘most constraining’ (21 or below) to ‘most conducive’ (above 40), of how receptive that displacement crisis would be to external interventions in support of self-reliance and livelihoods. Applying

Figure 11: A proposed typology for situations of protracted displacement



the methodology across the range of displacement contexts, the typology suggests four broad categories of ‘receptiveness’ for self-reliance and livelihoods in situations of protracted displacement:

1. ‘Social Protection Priorities’ (score: 0–21)

In these scenarios it is likely that little is possible beyond care and maintenance or protection activities, probably because of acute needs among the displaced population, political constraints on livelihoods work, instability in the local environment and weak leverage or interest of the international community, or a combination of these factors. This does not mean that livelihoods should not be analysed and factored into programming, just that resources spent promoting ‘self-reliance’ are highly unlikely to achieve that result at scale and may detract from core emergency activities.

2. ‘Precarious Providers’ (score: 22–30)

This scenario also displays a range of severe constraints on livelihoods work, though there may be space for small projects to exploit ‘grey areas’ in legal or political frameworks or engage in work that may reap benefits when conditions change. These scenarios may require humanitarian modalities in the present, though possible links to development programmes

or the integration of development approaches should not be ignored where these do not compromise humanitarian space.

3. ‘Hopeful Providers’ (31–39)

In these scenarios there is scope for innovative programming, though perhaps not at scale. There is capacity and willingness in some parts of government to improve the self-reliance of the displaced, though this probably does not enjoy widespread political support. The scope may exist for integration into some development plans. The environment is probably enabling for spontaneous income generating activities and for some of the displaced to cover basic needs and still have surplus income.

4. ‘Partners in Prosperity’ (score 40–57)

In this scenario there is scope for meaningful collaboration with host governments and an enabling environment for innovative approaches. Dialogue is possible on integrating the displaced into national and local development frameworks. The displaced are free to work or own businesses and property without extraordinary discrimination. With some support, they could achieve economic integration and the ability to invest in the future.

Box 1: Colombia and Chad: diagnosing opportunities for self-reliance and livelihoods programming

Applying this study's proposed typology, urban IDPs in Colombia and Sudanese refugees in Chad fall on opposite ends of the 'receptiveness' spectrum for interventions that could contribute to self-reliance and livelihoods. Colombia falls into the 'partner in prosperity' category, while Chad is categorised as a 'social protection priority'.

In Colombia, there are numerous examples of external actors supporting a strong state in its efforts to protect and assist IDPs, including some collaboration between humanitarian and development organisations. That said, IDPs living in informal urban areas have poor access to services, risk further displacement and face some barriers to accessing markets. While most IDPs are unlikely to return to their original homes, resettlement elsewhere or local integration are viable and legal options. Self-reliance and livelihood

support for urban IDPs under these conditions is highly possible and appropriate.

Chad scores highly in terms of its government's tolerant or positive attitude to the displaced achieving self-reliance, the rights they are accorded and the large degree of leverage external actors have to encourage and support government policies that encourage self-reliance. However, displaced populations are largely in remote and destitute areas where even the local population frequently exhibits alarming rates of malnutrition, and there are concerning levels of insecurity. Return is unlikely because of ongoing insecurity in Darfur. Local integration would be a challenge given the limited capacity of host communities. Few resettlement options are open to these refugees. This may be a situation where emphasis for the time being needs to be on care and maintenance and protection interventions.

Table 5 provides a broad estimate of the environment for successful self-reliance and livelihood interventions, as well a comparative ranking of various situations of protracted displacement. Delving further into the

detailed scoring for each context (see Annex 6) gives a more precise indication of where the greatest obstacles and opportunities exist for self-reliance and livelihood programming. A low score does not preclude the

Table 5: Ranking prospects for livelihood interventions in selected protracted displacement contexts

Country and caseload	Aggregate score	Category of receptiveness
Colombia (urban)	40	Partner in Prosperity
Uganda (Congolese refugees)	39	Hopeful Provider
Azerbaijan (urban)	33	Hopeful Provider
Iraq (2006–08 IDPs)	28	Precarious Provider
Pakistan (Afghan refugees)	25	Precarious Provider
Kenya (urban refugees)	25	Precarious Provider
DRC (North Kivu)	23	Precarious Provider
Jordan (Iraqi refugees)	22	Precarious Provider
Iran (Afghan refugees)	21	Social Protection Priority
Sudan (Darfur)	20	Social Protection Priority
Chad (Sudanese refugees)	20	Social Protection Priority
Somalia (urban in South-Central and Puntland, Somaliland not included)	16	Social Protection Priority

possibility of small-scale or under-the-radar livelihoods projects, nor does it suggest that livelihoods should not be an important element in the analysis and design of programmes. In addition, some conditions – such as donor interest and support, or a change in host

government policies – can change quickly. Even in the most acute emergencies the livelihoods strategies of the displaced should be taken into account right from the start, even if only to ensure a ‘do no harm’ approach in the provision of assistance.

Conclusion

Displacement around the world has been growing over the last decade and, once displaced, a refugee family has a high probability of finding itself in protracted displacement. Protracted displacement is also a major phenomenon among IDPs. Looking at a large data set of situations of refugee displacement, its ‘stickiness’ is clearly apparent – situations of displacement tend to persist over many years, with many IDPs and refugees living for years in exile or experiencing multiple displacements.

Whether registered and encamped or living amongst urban populations, displaced families are, in the best of scenarios, only accessing humanitarian assistance that covers minimal needs. Most protracted displaced populations live outside of refugee camps and organised IDP camps and are receiving minimal or no external assistance (recent urban Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan are a recent exception). As displacement becomes more prolonged, funding for long-term displaced people and residual displaced populations tends to decline. In this context, and with little prospect of return, resettlement or local integration, people in protracted displacement are struggling, mostly by their own means, to establish self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods.

This paper has explored and quantified where possible the dimensions and characteristics of protracted displacement, the levels of international assistance directed towards the problem and the factors – or interventions – that can help people in protracted displacement achieve self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods. Three main findings are clear.

First, the picture of the state of protracted displacement in the world is incomplete and approximate. At the local level, each situation of protracted displacement is its own complex system: a mishmash of widely differing needs and levels of social and human capital among the displaced and their hosts; layers of new, old or oft-displaced people; a sometimes indistinguishable mix of refugees, IDPs, migrants and host populations; and opaque systems of support, sometimes international, more often local and informal. The various reporting systems of donors, aid

agencies and national governments are inadequate to produce a complete map of protracted displacement and – more importantly – to monitor over time changes in the numbers of displaced, let alone their needs. Systems also do not allow for reliable estimates of the amount of international assistance being directed towards displacement, protracted or otherwise.

Second, the threshold of time for what constitutes the onset of a protracted displacement crisis should be much shorter than is currently accepted. Our data suggests that the great majority of refugee crises that endure for six months or a year develop into crises of at least three years, and usually much longer. Similarly, countries with conflict-affected IDPs face persistent displacement crises over many years. Accepting the likelihood of protractedness from the outset – and well before the five years that is the current UNHCR threshold for protracted refugee situations – should influence the shape of national and international interventions.

Third, a comprehensive review of the literature demonstrates that evidence for the effectiveness of international interventions aimed at promoting the self-reliance and livelihoods of people in protracted displacement is weak. Instead, the literature reveals, for the most part, a panoply of small-scale interventions – mostly implemented by the humanitarian arms of aid agencies – that have suffered from inadequate technical and managerial expertise and short-term and unreliable funding.

At the same time, the literature does suggest improvements in the diagnostics around livelihoods in protracted displacement. As protracted displacement has become the norm, so analysts and aid professionals have slowly shepherded in a more complex understanding of the kinds of environments – policy, political and geographical – that can help encourage self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods among the displaced, as well as the characteristics of displaced people that favour or discourage positive economic integration. Much of this improved diagnosis has been spurred by a pragmatic acceptance

that displacement will be prolonged (and that options for traditional ‘durable solutions’ are often closed), which in turn has led to a better appreciation of the factors that have allowed displaced people in some contexts to achieve positive livelihood outcomes. Central to this shift in understanding has been a focus away from an aid-centric view of livelihoods in displacement – that the self-reliance or livelihoods of displaced people depend on external interventions – to an appreciation of the steps displaced people themselves are taking. Evidence that the economic dynamism of displaced populations can have positive effects for host populations and states has also led to a consensus around advocacy: encouraging access to livelihoods (e.g. work permits or freedom of movement) is not just a human rights issue, but also offers practical economic and social returns – an argument, however, that has so far had few positive results in host states, whose behaviour continues to be shaped more by domestic political calculations.

Still, even if host states and local administrations have been slow to embrace more enabling policy frameworks, aid agencies have begun to introduce programmes in support of self-reliance and livelihoods that appreciate the complexity of the livelihood strategies open to displaced people, the barriers they face and the steps they are taking on their own. At the macro level, this has meant understanding protracted displacement in the context of broader national and regional poverty and development challenges and supporting displaced people through investments in national and local poverty reduction and development strategies. At the micro level, it has meant more integrated and holistic interventions that stress sophisticated market analysis and that complement traditional self-reliance and livelihood projects (such as small grants, vocational training or micro-credit) with psychosocial and other social services. Both the

macro- and micro-level approaches can build from humanitarian interventions but in the end depend on longer-term development horizons (and funding) and links to sustainable, national systems. That said, the well-documented humanitarian-development strategy and funding gap continues to pose a challenge to holistic approaches despite adjustments over the years to the architecture of the international aid system.

In seeking ways to support the self-reliance and livelihoods of people in protracted displacement, donors and aid agencies need to guard against generalising about situations of protracted displacement or the needs of displaced people. Situations of displacement are not static events but instead change continuously; they rarely proceed along a predictable path from displacement to stabilisation to return; and the displaced are usually a highly heterogeneous population. The receptivity of a particular situation to interventions that may support self-reliance and livelihoods among displaced people can vary depending on a range of factors, including the legal and protective environment, access to markets, the resources and social capital of the displaced and the capacity and willingness of host institutions to absorb aid. The better decision may be to concentrate assistance on social safety net regimes that support future livelihoods by protecting human capital over generations. In other instances, direct assistance that helps link displaced people to development opportunities or that includes displaced people within broader national developmental strategies may be possible. Often, some combination of these approaches would be ideal. This paper presents a pilot tool to begin understanding the opportunities for self-reliance and livelihood assistance afforded by various situations of displacement – a basic typology for where to assist and with what kind of assistance.

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Humanitarian Policy Group
Overseas Development Institute
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
United Kingdom

Tel. +44 (0) 20 7922 0300
Fax. +44 (0) 20 7922 0399
E-mail: hpgadmin@odi.org
Website: <http://www.odi.org/hpg>

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craftsman weaves a seko (wall of
straw used for roof or delimitation
of compounds)
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