

Internal Displacement as a Development Challenge

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This paper synthesises existing analyses of how to address internal displacement as a development challenge. It begins by describing how internal displacement can be appropriately considered as a development challenge (part 1). It then asks how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be leveraged to promote greater emphasis on addressing internal displacement in the context of sustainable development (part 2). It then examines how development approaches might be integrated within humanitarian work with internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the outset to achieve this objective (part 3). Finally, it summarises the main recommendations resulting from the foregoing analysis for consideration by the High-Level Panel (part 4).

1. Internal displacement as a development issue

Internal displacement is a complex phenomenon with diverse implications for the individuals and societies that it affects, whether as displaced or host communities. Internal displacement has consequences that are immediate. In this regard, we can think, on the one hand, of those concerned with 'protection', i.e. the threats posed to the forcibly displaced by particular risks to their safety or other basic conditions of existence. On the other, forced displacement often results in the need for immediate 'assistance' due to the loss of access to tangible or intangible resources such as shelter, lands and jobs and attendant risks to IDP livelihoods as a result of h tf812 Tw 0 -033 Td()Tj/3jobs a h r Om1

housing, land and property; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs; and access to justice.⁵

The concept of solutions implies a transformative agenda at the societal level. Crucially, the rights on which solutions depend are not free-floating but rather imply a wider set of structures to guarantee them, which may not be functioning (or even exist) in that society and thus need to be modified or even created. Likewise, the fact that IDPs may not have enjoyed these rights prior to displacement suggests a push for societal levelling-up is implicit in this conceptualisation of solutions. In short, the end of displacement is not assessed by reference to the IDP's circumstances before displacement, which might indeed raise questions about how far back in time the assessment

17).⁹ For instance, SDG 1 (no poverty) is directly relevant as 'IDPs tend to be the poorest people in their countries and poverty increases the likelihood of renewed displacement'.¹⁰

States affected by internal displacement increasingly recognise the link between displacement and development in their annual voluntary national reviews (VNR), a follow-up mechanism for reporting progress against the SDGs. Not all of these States publish VNRs but, annually, the tendency is for a steady increase in the number of VNRs that acknowledge this link and address it in ever-greater depth, especially for conflict-related displacement.¹¹ In tandem, the Sendai Framework, which complements the SDGs by outlining action to protect development gains from disaster

tages of a diverse set of actors, including those from the private sector. Moreover, particularly for humanitarian actors, a clear exit strategy needs to be built-in early in the process and strong coordination with the national and local government promoted, where possible, in order to facilitate government ownership and take-up over the longer-term.

Secondly, there is widespread consensus that the issue of internal displacement and attention to IDP needs must be properly integrated into national and local development policy, planning and budgets by States affected by internal displacement. Toward this end, both humanitarian and development actors should systematically remind national and local governments of their obligations vis-à-vis IDPs, with all actors advocating and reinforcing both economic as well as social and political rights. For their part, in designing IDP-inclusive development policies, these authorities should ensure that the IDP data that they use for planning purposes is reliable and takes account of the voices of those affected by internal displacement (see further below). Governments in these countries should also designate a high-level focal point to coordinate action among relevant ministries, national and international partners and IDPs to lead efforts to integrate IDPs in national development plans. For donor governments, it is appropriate to consider the creation of multi-year funding schemes that can be channelled to both humanitarian and development ends.¹⁷

Thirdly, for both government and other interventions, there is a need to gather 'development-relevant' IDP data. This is necessary to map the direct and indirect economic, social, environmental and political impact of the particular situation of internal displacement. In this regard, it is often useful to gather comparative data not only on the displaced but also on other relevant groups, such as hosts, those who did not displace and even other kinds of internal migrants to identify where acute shared needs exist and also where internal displacement has had a differential impact, as well as the 'knock-on' effects of such displacement. Data on the qualitative experience of displacement, which takes account of the voices of IDPs, host and others, will often be useful in showing the real prospects for particular collective outcomes (and reflect the need to consider solutions other than just return). Likewise, any mapping should investigate not only the burden created by displacement but also any potential opportunities that may be created for the displaced or their hosts.

Fourthly, in general, interventions need to be context-specific and designed in a flexible way to adapt over time and respond to the evolving needs of IDPs. Yet there is no need to wait until conflict is fully resolved or disaster impact ceased: even in areas of ongoing conflict, measures can be taken to reduce IDP vulnerability and impoverishment. At times, it will be appropriate to take an area-based approach that benefits IDPs and other local populations (and includes both in planning) and to prioritise actions that strengthen the resilience of IDPs and host communities by investing in livelihoods, stable housing and access to basic services, in light of local business and market needs. However, this will usually need to be balanced with special attention for particularly vulnerable groups, who should be identified on the basis of evidence rather than assumptions. Where displacement has an urban face, it is vital to include strong urban planning elements to pursue IDP solutions as part of urban poverty reduction strategies and to integrate IDP settlements in city-wide urban planning and provide innovative housing solutions. Mobility itself is often a livelihood and protective strategy and it is vital to take account of the right of IDPs to move freely.

Finally, it is important to highlight a longstanding concern among humanitarian actors that engaging in the kind of collaboration that exists between development actors and governments may weaken their ability to observe the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, especially since such studies emphasise strengthening

¹⁷ See A. Al-Mahaidi, "Innovative Financing Solutions for Addressing Internal Displacement: Ideas from Current Thinking and Practice", IDRP (forthcoming).

government capacity at all levels as crucial to development work on internal displacement. In practice, this tension is not easily resolved. At least, though, it should be ensured that any collective outcomes formulated in this context by humanitarian and development actors are in line with applicable international standards (and, where appropriate, higher national standards) on IDP protection and assistance, as articulated in instruments such as the Guiding Principles, IASC Framework and Kampala Convention.

4. Conclusions

Internal displacement can have a long-term collective impact on sustainable development at local, national and international levels. In order to make progress towards achieving the SDGs and ensure that ‘no one is left behind’, States and other key humanitarian and development actors need to work more consistently to address the longer-term collective challenges that internal displacement poses. In this regard, drawing on the existing body of evidence and analysis, this paper has highlighted five key areas with which humanitarian and development actors need to engage in order to better integrate development approaches in the response to internal displacement.

Firstly, incipient efforts to improve coordination and cooperation between the humanitarian and development architecture in the UN and beyond must be strengthened and further institutionalised, including in relation to IDPs. Secondly, in countries affected by widespread or protracted internal displacement, State development plans at national and sub-national levels need to take properly account of the ensuing development challenges and opportunities, and donor States should support this shift, if there is to be progress towards achieving the SDGs. Thirdly, a more focused and participative approach to gathering and using ‘development-relevant’ data on internal displacement that integrates both humanitarian and development concerns is needed. Fourthly, development approaches to internal displacement need to be built into wider interventions from the start of the crisis and rooted in local circumstances but with sufficient flexibility to respond to changes in the situation on the ground. Finally, development strategies and outcomes need to be compatible with applicable international standards on IDP protection and assistance, including their rights to mobility and non-discrimination, and due attention to particular vulnerabilities among affected persons.