

1. Profiling of urban IDP situations

Description

The general lack of information about IDPs is a major challenge for those advocating for the fulfilment of their rights. Tools such as the urban profiling exercise developed by JIPS are useful ways of collecting baseline demographic data on displaced communities. Given that urban IDPs tend to be dispersed and are difficult to distinguish from the urban poor more generally, the JIPS methodology gathers comparative data on both IDPs and their counterparts in the general population in the same neighbourhood. Since the experiences of different groups can vary, there is a need to better understand the realities of different groups who reside in the same area (e.g. IDPs, refugees, economic migrants and urban poor with different backgrounds).

Profiling provides a comprehensive picture of the target populations, including demographics, indicators of strengths and vulnerabilities, their preferences in terms of settlement options and their degree of local integration. As such, it forms a solid basis from which to determine policies on durable solutions and the development of other strategies addressing problems identified during the profiling exercise. Profiling combines quantitative and qualitative methods at the individual, household or community levels to provide data disaggregated by location, sex, age and diversity. The analysis can be enriched with key informant interviews and a review of secondary data, leading to an extensive profile of urban populations affected by displacement and the local infrastructure and policy environment they face.

Profiling is not, however, limited to data collection. It is a sequence of interlinked steps that begins by building a consensus around the need for the exercise, and ends with the validation of its findings by the profiling partners and target populations themselves and the dissemination of results. It is a collaborative and ethical process based on the principles of transparency, and actively promotes the buy-in of partner organisations and governments at all stages.

By bringing central and local authorities and their humanitarian and development partners together to collect information on demographics, migration patterns, and factors related to the process of attaining durable solutions, including housing, land and property issues, profiling by design aims to ensure that the data obtained is widely accepted and used. It helps to ensure that those working in the same urban setting share a common un-

derstanding of the displacement situation, and reduces the need for parallel surveys by different organisations and the costs they involve.

IDPs often face specific challenges in securing housing and livelihoods, ensuring community support and building social networks. In many urban areas affected by displacement, however, the local population live in similar conditions and face similar issues. Profiling aims to understand both the crossover and the divergence between the different communities' realities, which in turn allows policymakers and practitioners to incorporate them into the development of targeted responses. Profiling works towards durable solutions by creating an evidence base for decision making.

Displaced people, like all migrants, bring with them particular skills and experiences that can benefit their host families and communities, and which, if tapped into, form the foundation for durable solutions. Profiling sheds light on such positive attributes and those of IDPs' counterparts in the local population (host families and other non-displaced neighbours) as well as their vulnerabilities. By looking at future aspirations, plans and decision-making criteria it forms the basis of a forward-looking response, even in volatile contexts.

Methodology and process

JIPS was established in 2009 to provide technical support and coordination for governments and their humanitarian and development partners in conducting collaborative profiling exercises. Given the rapid rate of urbanisation worldwide, the ever increasing numbers of IDPs who flee to towns and cities, and the distinct challenges of data collection in urban areas, JIPS has produced a specific profiling methodology for them.¹ JIPS also specialises in profiling to inform strategies for durable solutions, and advocates for the operationalization of the criteria for durable solutions set out in the IASC's framework on the issue as the starting point for planning an exercise.

Each profiling exercise uses a methodology tailored to the specific information needs of those who will use the data, and established via jointly agreed objectives. A mixed methods approach tends to be used to capture different types of data and triangulate findings. Consultation with national entities responsible for compiling statistics ensures that the methodology is compatible with existing population data sources such as censuses.

When possible, profiling aims to provide statistically representative information of the target populations acquired through an anonymous sample-based household survey. The surveys may also include individual-level questions for each household member. The quantitative data is

complemented with focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The anonymity of the process is important on a number of levels. It has ethical and protection implications, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics, and it helps to guarantee more reliable data by clearly disassociating responses from eligibility for assistance.

Given the consultative and time-consuming nature of profiling exercises, they generally take several months to complete. Findings are validated and disseminated among the partners in the exercise, wider groups of stakeholders and the target populations.

Using profiling to improve housing policies and programmes

Urban profiling can support more effective and sustainable housing policies and programmes for IDPs in a number of important ways. In Afghanistan, JIPS supported NRC in conducting a protection study of IDPs that identified a series of housing, land and property (HLP) issues and the need to improve the humanitarian response to them. The findings led to greater investment in an existing HLP taskforce that enhanced its expertise and reach.² The study also played a significant role in bringing about official recognition of urban IDPs and the inclusion of area-based approaches in a national policy on displacement. Both the survey and the policy highlight the need for comprehensive profiling to inform the design and implementation of response programmes.

In Côte d'Ivoire, JIPS provided technical support to the government and UNHCR in undertaking a profiling exercise in locations with significant displaced populations, including urban areas of Abidjan and San Pedro.³ The findings revealed the need to address issues such as IDPs' access to housing documentation such as rental agreements. They also showed that IDPs and their host communities faced many similar challenges in housing terms, while highlighting the specific challenges of different groups where relevant. The exercise informed a national strategy on durable solutions, which acknowledges the importance of adequate housing and related documentation and makes targeted suggestions for different population groups.

Challenges and lessons learned

The paucity of information on urban IDPs and their neighbours makes designing a profiling methodology much more challenging. The problem can be overcome, however, by combining what does exist with information collected through local key informants and mapping at the community and neighbourhood level. Such preparation can be

time-consuming and costly, but it ensures that the profiling exercise is representative of the target populations and produces valuable output in its own right by mapping the location and density of different groups in a given area.

The fact that profiling exercises are based on achieving a consensus about the information sought also tends to make the process time-consuming, and maintaining momentum can be a challenge while different stakeholders' definitions of key concepts are reconciled. Ensuring momentum for these long processes can be challenging in the face of lengthy discussions on the modality of the exercise. Once the objectives, methodology and tools have been agreed, however, the ground is also laid for the joint use of the findings. Given the substantial commitment of time, resources and political buy-in that profiling exercises demand, they are best suited to informing longer-term strategy and policy development rather than quick programming.

Profiling exercises are locally owned and implemented. They also increase local government capacity and establish or reinforce collaborative ways of working. An inclusive approach to the development of objectives, methodology, collection tools, analysis and recommendations is particularly important when the information sought is highly politicised or there is no consensus on existing data.

Case study: Profiling urban IDPs in Afghanistan

Background

Afghanistan's most recent displacement crisis began in 2001. There are currently around 805,000 IDPs in the country, of whom 174,000 were newly displaced in 2014.⁴ Many have fled from rural to urban areas, where around 40 per cent of the displaced population now live.⁵ Many urban IDPs are unable to afford adequate housing. Instead they rent or squat in precarious conditions in informal settlements, where they are often threatened with forced evictions - a key obstacle to their achievement of durable solutions.⁶

Informal settlements make up between 60 and 70 per cent of Afghanistan's urban areas, a consequence of rapid unplanned growth. Kabul's population grew from two million to 4.5 million between 2001 and 2010, a rate well above the average for Asia.⁷ Given the difficulties authorities face in delivering adequate housing and basic services in rapidly growing cities, there has been political reluctance to recognise urban IDPs or to support their local integration despite doing so being their preferred settlement option.⁸ Authorities also fear that the regu-

larisation of informal settlements where IDPs live would drive further migration from rural to urban areas.⁹

Survey

No country-wide profiling of IDPs has been carried out in Afghanistan, but a broad survey of the demographic data and protection needs of 1,000 households in five regions of the country affected by displacement helped bring about authorities' recognition of the need to assist urban IDPs and those with similar vulnerabilities via an area-based approach.

The survey was carried by Samuel Hall for NRC and IDMC with support from JIPS, and was completed in 2012. It helped to confirm the significance of urban displacement and the particular vulnerability of urban IDPs from rural areas. Its findings were presented at a workshop hosted by the ministry in charge of developing policy on displacement, during which it worked with national and humanitarian actors to formulate recommendations for Afghanistan's national policy on IDPs, which was being drafted at the time. The participatory process made the recommendations effective.

The recommendations highlighted the need to use the definition of an IDP set out in the Guiding Principles to shape the government's response, and to assist other people with similar needs living in the same areas. The recommendation corresponded to the finding that differentiating between various groups in urban areas, including IDPs, could be highly complex and sometimes unnecessary.

Hall's survey underlined the need to facilitate all three options for durable solutions rather than focussing on return, and emphasised that addressing displacement was as much a development challenge as a humanitarian one. The study also highlighted the need for a comprehensive profiling exercise to gather countrywide data to support the design and implementation of the national policy on IDPs.

National policy on IDPs

Afghanistan's national policy on IDPs¹⁰ was finally adopted in November 2013, and reflects a number of the points mentioned above. It recalls the primary responsibility of authorities to assist IDPs "irrespective of whether those internally displaced are in settlements or living with host families, are in rural or in urban settings, in their provinces of origin or elsewhere in the country" (para 2.2, p.16). It also recommends an area-based approach, "a response without differentiating between groups who live there and will benefit such as IDPs, returning refugees and urban poor" (p.9).

In terms of IDPs' registration, it states that "it is not necessary in the case of area-based responses to internal displacement [notably in urban areas] which do not require the explicit identification of individual IDPs". It also recognises profiling as a tool to design response. "In such cases, general profiling will be sufficient for purposes of planning and implementing such response" (para 3.3 ii, p.20).

Adequate housing for informal settlers is also identified as a key element of durable solutions. "Where there are large numbers of IDPs living in informal settlements and in substandard conditions, (authorities) will consider strategies to formalize informal settlements and improve living conditions there, and to provide the urban poor, including IDPs, with low-cost social housing" (4.4.2 Para iv, p.26).

Notes

1. JIPS, *Guidance for Profiling Urban Displacement Situations: Challenges and Solutions*, June 2014
2. Interview with a staff member of the Norwegian Refugee Council on 9 December 2014
3. Ministry of State, Ministry of Planning and Development, the National Statistics Office (INS) and UNHCR (forthcoming): 'Profilage des personnes déplacées internes, retournées et rapatriées de Côte d'Ivoire'
4. UNHCR Afghanistan, *Monthly IDP update*, 1-31 December 2014
5. OCHA, *Afghanistan 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview*, p.10
6. IDMC, *Still at risk: security of tenure and the forced eviction of IDPs and refugee returnees in urban Afghanistan*, February 2014, pp.5-6
7. ODI, *Sanctuary in the city: urban displacement and vulnerability*, 23 June 2013, pp.6-7
8. IDMC, February 2014, op. cit, p.18
9. *Ibid*
10. Government of Afghanistan, *National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons*, November 2013