

## 8. Supporting municipalities

### Description

When large numbers of IDPs arrive in an urban area, a sudden increase in housing demand is only one of a complex set of strains the influx places on a city, its municipalities and other governance institutions. Longer-term shelter strategies such as NRC's integrated urban housing programme in Jordan, which stimulate the housing market and add extra units, also require municipalities and commercial providers to make their services more widely available.

As such, working towards durable solutions for urban IDPs living in protracted displacement means supporting not only the host community, but also the host municipality as a partner whose resources and capacities need to be strengthened. Local governance institutions play a key regulatory role, and they have resources and decision-making powers that can multiply the efforts of international agencies and NGOs.

If urban governance and infrastructure are to be more resilient and able to absorb rapid fluctuations in population, flexible municipal support tools are needed that can make quick assessments and provide financial and other resources to maintain adequate water, electricity, transport and waste management services. Supporting municipalities is an indirect but more sustainable way of supporting IDPs, and it strengthens local ownership and accountability.

Many IDPs move into districts that are poorly planned and under-served by municipalities that are either strapped for cash, staff and resources, or do not have the authority under a centralised government to set their own budgets and development plans. Water, electricity and waste management infrastructure may not have been adequate in the first place, meaning that a population influx has the potential to create social tensions over access to overburdened services. The more rapid the expansion of informal settlements, the harder it is for municipalities to keep up with demand. As such, it is important to think about how to link short-term approaches centred on households to medium and long-term development interventions for displaced and host communities as a whole.

The following case study is of a project that targets urban refugees, but it could be adapted to apply to IDPs. It demonstrates how the development sector is evolving and innovating practices for urban areas that deal with large population influxes.

### Case study: Host community support platform<sup>1</sup> (Jordan)

#### Overview

Jordan has a history of poor planning and urban sprawl, made worse by previous influxes of Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. The arrival of more than 620,000 Syrian refugees since 2011 has only served to complicate matters further. It has been estimated that in addition to the expense of running camps, it will cost Jordan \$1.68 billion to cope with the Syrian refugee crisis.<sup>2</sup>

Given that more than 80 per cent of the new arrivals are thought to live outside camps,<sup>3</sup> governorates such as Irbid, Mafraq, Amman and Zarqa are experiencing rapid informal growth in both urban and rural areas. The population of Mafraq has increased by 128 per cent since the arrival of Syrian refugees.<sup>4</sup> Many municipalities in all four governorates were already struggling to meet service demand and in some, refugees have begun to outnumber local residents.<sup>5</sup>

Solid waste management is the most acute challenge for those hosting large populations of Syrian refugees.<sup>6</sup> Across the country as a whole, the influx has created around 340 tonnes of extra solid waste a day.<sup>7</sup> Such an increase requires a major overhaul of handling, compaction, treatment and landfilling, and significant investment.

Jordan's national resilience plan for 2014 to 2016 identified the a series of shortcomings in the country's existing municipal services:

- Limited attention to service delivery performance, standards and outcomes
- Out-dated equipment and logistical means of ensuring the delivery and maintenance of services and assets
- Insufficient capacities underpinned by a freeze on public recruitment and a patronage-based system of other recruitment
- Lack of planned urban growth, resulting in burgeoning informal settlements
- Limited participation of the population, especially in local development planning
- Out-dated financial management practices and system, leading to limited revenue generation and an unsustainable debt and salary burden
- De facto authority rests with mayors, with few checks and balances
- Inadequate civic engagement
- Steady decline in approval ratings<sup>8</sup>

Given the vast structural and systemic issues in local governance institutions, a flexible and responsive model of cooperation between Jordanian authorities and international agencies that can align along different spheres

Snapshot	
Practice	Host community support platform (HCSP) 2013; now the Jordan response platform to the Syria Crisis (JRPSC)
Main actors	UNDP Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) Various municipalities
Context	Displacement of Syrian refugees to Jordan driven by conflict Small municipalities with insufficient financial, material and human resources to provide services for a rapidly growing population
Target group(s)	Small municipalities in poor regions that have received a rapid influx of refugees
Summary	The practice established a coordination mechanism for ministries, local authorities, donors, UN agencies and international NGOs to help address the water, sanitation, education, health and livelihood needs of both the refugees and their host communities. The large influx of Syrian refugees put extra pressure on urban infrastructure and waste management services that were already struggling to cope, and the coordination mechanism supported municipalities by providing resources and capacity building. UNDP set up the first coordinating body, HCSP, in 2013 and identified municipalities' priorities through a national assessment review. In 2014 under MOPIC's initiative HCSP was converted into JRPSC, emphasising national ownership. Its mandate was also expanded from five to 11 task forces, each chaired by a line ministry, in the areas of education, energy, environment, health, justice, livelihoods and food security, local governance and municipal services, shelter, social protection, transport and water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH). JRPSC updated the national assessment review and built on the 2014 national resilience plan to produce the Jordan response plan for the Syria crisis. Municipalities hosting large refugee populations identified their most acute need as solid waste management, <sup>9</sup> leading JRPSC to respond in the short term by providing compactors, fogging machines, pesticides and training, and in the longer term by contributing to structural changes that prepared the ground for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to develop its solid waste management plan at the local level in 2015. Its planning was a direct consequence of the advocacy and thinking in the 2014 national resilience plan and UNDP's national assessment review.
Strengths <i>(Key elements of right to adequate housing and key programmatic elements from matrix appear in bold)</i>	HCSP and JRPSC are holistic strategic bodies that try to <b>address both short-term</b> needs at the household and community level, <b>and the medium and longer-term development needs of municipalities and other institutions.</b> The practice is an <b>effective, flexible and responsive model of cooperation and coordination</b> between the Jordanian authorities and international agencies that can be aligned in different areas of intervention. It led to the <b>transfer of knowledge</b> between agencies and <b>changes in institutional norms.</b> It benefited both refugees and <b>the wider community.</b> It included an <b>effective needs profiling exercise</b> , which led to plans being based on priorities the municipalities themselves identified.
Key challenge(s)	During the first phase of the project, only some of the municipalities' needs were addressed. It was unclear whether this was because those involved in the response were unable to do so, or because they adopted a pick-and-choose approach. For organisations keen to count the number of beneficiaries served, it may prove difficult to quantify the impact at the individual or household level of supporting municipalities. Municipalities' needs do not necessarily dovetail with those of displaced households, which were not clearly established by UNDP's needs assessment. It was not clear, for example, how an external organisation would deal with a municipality's failure to prioritise the expansion of water and electricity supplies to meet increased demand. Further analysis would have been needed to determine the best way of supporting municipalities that used commercial providers to deliver services. The majority of municipalities identified the same issue as their top priority, which made it easier to determine how to respond. Disparities between different municipalities would require a broader array of resources and support, which would make the programme more complex and expensive.
Factors for potential replicability	A national ministry able to coordinate the roles and responsibilities of international organisations and national and local authorities Municipalities that are open to receiving resources and training from external sources May not be applicable in capitals and mega cities, given the scale of service provision required

of intervention was needed to mitigate the impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis on vulnerable host communities.

### Programme design

UNDP set up the host community support platform (HCSP) with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC). It was a strategic body made up of donors, UN agencies and government line ministries. It aimed to ensure effective communication and coordination between national planning efforts and humanitarian and development projects as different agencies tried to respond to the needs of Syrian refugees and the concerns of host communities.

The HCSP secretariat researched and published a national assessment review (NAR) in December 2013, and the national resilience plan for 2014 to 2016 (NRP) in May 2014. Four months later, MOPIC decided to extend HCSP's mandate and rename it the Jordan response platform to the Syria crisis (JRPSC). Aside from putting greater emphasis on national ownership of the plan, JRPSC's task forces were reorganised and their number increased. HCSP had five task forces covering education; health; water and sanitation; municipal services; and livelihoods and employment. JRPSC has 11 covering education; energy: the environment; health; justice; livelihoods and food security; local governance and municipal services; shelter; social protection; transport; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

The line ministries responsible for each sector chair the task forces, which have representatives from the UN system, the donor community and national and international NGOs. One of the UN bodies acts as the task force secretariat and a representative of the donor community serves as a focal point.<sup>10</sup> JRPSC has subsequently updated the national assessment review and built on the work of the national resilience plan to produce the Jordan response plan for the Syria crisis.

The assessment, resilience and response plans constitute an effort to identify and plan investment responses across all of the sectors covered by the task forces. Both HCSP and JRPSC were set up as holistic strategic bodies that aim to address both the short-term, household-centred needs of refugees and host communities, along with the medium and longer-term development needs of municipalities and governance institutions.

This case study focuses on HCSP's intervention in solid waste management in 2014. It is too early to evaluate JRPSC's work, but the organisation's evolution from HCSP suggests the application of lessons learned from the previous model.

### Municipal needs assessment

The municipal services task force under HCSP (see Table 1) was funded by the World Bank and made up of representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, UNDP and ACTED. UNDP allocated \$16.7 million to improve municipal and social service delivery as part of its 2014 budget request for Jordan of \$32.4 million.<sup>11</sup> In 2014, it carried out a municipal needs assessment to examine the main challenges facing 36 municipalities in Irbid and Mafrq governorates.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the wider structural issues identified above in the national response plan, UNDP's assessment focussed on tangible goods and resources.

Given that 33 of municipalities surveyed identified solid waste management as their main challenge, a list of priority interventions was drafted (see Table 1). Across the two governorates, the influx of Syrian refugees has created an extra 60 tonnes of solid waste a day, on top of the 90 tonnes created each day by the local population – far in excess of the municipalities' capacity to collect and process.<sup>13</sup> The assessment identified priority interventions for both international organisations and the government. They included a longer-term redesign of the entire solid waste management system, from collection, processing, transfer and landfills to recycling and re-use.

It is important to point out that the priorities in table 1 were set by surveying municipalities and reflect their perceptions of the problem as opposed to assumptions imposed by outsiders. Each municipality not only framed its own problems and determined its priorities, but also provided a wish-list in terms of vehicles and equipment. This is the most appropriate way to design a municipal support programme that requires revision and adaptation from one year to the next as needs change and the impacts of previous interventions are factored in.

### Impact

The UNDP programme to support municipalities in Jordan is still evolving, but preliminary results suggest that approaching municipalities directly, learning about their needs and limitations and providing tangible goods is a positive approach in mitigating the impacts of rapid and unplanned population increases. In addition to supplying 18 solid compactors,<sup>16</sup> 36 fogging machines and 9,500 litres of insect pesticide to the municipalities,<sup>17</sup> the programme also trained staff in nine municipalities.

Its most significant work, however, has targeted the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, which intends to develop a solid waste management plan at the municipal level in 2015. This is a direct result of advocacy, the thinking behind the national response plan and UNDP's municipal needs assessment. The plan will focus on the entire solid waste management cycle, and the ministry is currently redesigning its financial administration system to provide funds to

**Table 1: Municipal needs assessment findings on solid waste management<sup>14</sup>**

Issue	Projected intervention	Actual intervention <sup>14</sup>
Insufficient and aging vehicles	Provide rubbish collection trucks	
	Provide compressors	18 compactors delivered
	Provide light pickup trucks, dump trucks and loaders	
	Provide wheel barrows	
Health hazards: pollution, insects, rodents and dogs	Provide fogging trucks and related equipment	36 fogging machines and six ultra-volume sprayers provided
	Provide pesticides	9,500 litres of pesticide delivered
Insufficient and broken containers	Provide containers	
Inefficient labour	Increased number of labourers	Plan to increase labour shifts and create a labour-intensive recycling programme
Cost of fuel and maintenance	Government to provide municipalities with immediate financial support and equipment	
Long-term support		Training in nine municipal offices

municipalities more efficiently. It will also fund labour-intensive recycling programmes and make improvements to the main Alakaider dump.

### Challenges

Only some of the municipalities' needs were addressed during the first phase of the project. This may be because aid organisations were unable to fulfil all of the requirements, or because they have adopted a pick-and-choose approach to their interventions. There may also be differences between municipalities' requests and the types of services displaced households need, but this was not made clear in UNDP's needs assessment. If, for example, a municipality or commercial provider does not improve or expand its services to meet increasing demand, how should external organisations deal with the disparity between IDPs' and the municipality's priorities?

The majority of municipalities identified the same issue (i.e. solid waste management) as their top priority, which allowed for a narrower focus in terms of what to provide. How the programme would cope with a wide range of different priorities is unclear, but a broader array of resources and assistance would be needed, with obvious implications in terms of cost.

Helping municipalities to provide better services to a growing population is effective, but for organisations that focus on counting the number of beneficiaries served, it may be difficult to quantify the impact of such an approach. If it is to be replicated, further analysis of how to support municipalities that contract commercial providers to deliver services is also needed.

### Conclusion

UNDP's solid waste management programme and the HCSP coordination mechanism were able to help translate municipal needs into longer-term policy shifts, which should help municipalities to provide better services to both Syrian refugees and vulnerable host communities. The approach is also proactive in terms of social cohesion. Service delivery failures are not only the result of population influxes, but the arrival of IDPs can reveal existing institutional flaws and make them worse. Rather than authorities and host communities blaming the new arrivals, it would be better to use the accompanying hike in international aid to address structural and systemic issues in ways that lead to better services for all.

Municipal issues had already been flagged up in 2013 when HCSP was established, and they were reiterated in national response plan in May 2014. The mobilisation, however, of support for municipalities and its gradual realisation will take several years. If such an approach had been adopted at the outset of the Syrian refugee crisis and established as a priority by a coordination body for national and international responders, the situation may not have become as acute as it became.

The establishment of HCSP/JRPSC and UNDP's programme set an important precedent for a more integrated approach to servicing vulnerable refugee populations that addresses both short-term humanitarian and longer-term development needs. The lessons from this evolving practice should improve knowledge about how best to support urban municipalities in dealing with large populations of displaced people.

### Notes

1. Established in September 2013
2. NRC, Fact Sheet: Integrated Urban Shelter Programme, August 2014
3. UNHCR, [Syria Refugee Regional Response figures](#), January 2015, last accessed 8 January 2015; NRC, Fact Sheet: Integrated Urban Shelter Programme, August 2014
4. Government of Jordan, National resilience plan 2014 – 2016, May 2014, p.42
5. MOPIC, Jordan Response Plan 2015, p.7
6. UNDP, Municipal Needs Assessment Report: Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordanian Vulnerable Host Communities, 2014
7. Government of Jordan, National resilience plan 2014 – 2016, May 2014, p.43
8. *Ibid*, p.42
9. UNDP, Municipal Needs Assessment Report: Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordanian Vulnerable Host Communities, 2014
10. Government of Jordan, National response plan 2015
11. UNDP, Resilience-based Development Response to the Syria Crisis, December 2013, p.18
12. UNDP, Municipal Needs Assessment Report: Mitigating the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordanian Vulnerable Host Communities, 2014
13. *Ibid*, p.31
14. *Ibid*, p.30
15. Based on Jan 2014 reports of provisions made in late 2013. It is unclear what additional support was provided by UNDP in 2014.
16. Given on August 26, 2014
17. The rest was supplied in late 2013