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**Migrants and rapid urbanization: A New Agenda for humanitarian and
development urban planning?**

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Migrants and Rapid Urbanization: A New Agenda for humanitarian and development urban planning?

Background note by Fernando Murillo

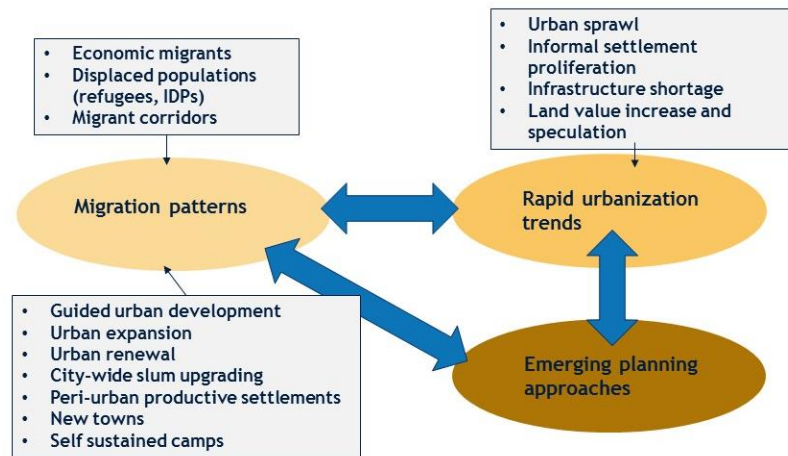
Summary

This paper presents an on-going research identifying emerging territorial planning approaches responding to rapid urbanization, understood as the socio-territorial transformation process caused by migration and forced displacement of populations. It is mainly characterized by low density sprawling, informal settlements proliferation and infrastructure shortages. Based on the experience gained by developing participatory and self-organizing planning tools, which aim at measuring human rights to design humanitarian and development plans, a comparison of case studies provides empirical evidence to assess different planning approaches, strategies and achievements. The paper advocates for tailored participatory plans suited to the needs of different categories of migrants and displaced groups rather than top-down approaches unable to prevent negative impacts on vulnerable people. A planning paradigm shift is proposed to move away from traditional responses like refugee camps or informal settlements hosting migrants towards generating incentives for community self-organization to build up infrastructure supporting jobs and income generation and diversified habitat. It is highlighted the feasibility to integrate the humanitarian and development agendas capturing the subsequent land values created by humanitarian investments. In this way, responses to migration crisis contributes to shape a multiple-scale new agenda supporting long-term urban policy reforms towards sustainable fulfilment of human rights.

From the Right to the City to fulfilling of migrants' Rights

Human rights have systematically evolved since their universal declaration after the Second World War. SDG (sustainable development goals in the year 2000) defines specific implementation strategies. The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015) creates coordination mechanisms and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015) establishes the financial structure for achieving development post 2015. The New Urban Agenda (Quito, 2016) provides principles towards “the right to the city” supported by the New York Declaration (2016), which protects migrants’ rights in that process. Currently there are 65.3 million people displaced due to conflicts (UNHCR, 2016), more than twice as many as the 24 million displaced during the Second World War. This historical record challenge traditional urban planning theories and practices demanding innovative ideas to turn such migrant crisis into an opportunity (figure 1).

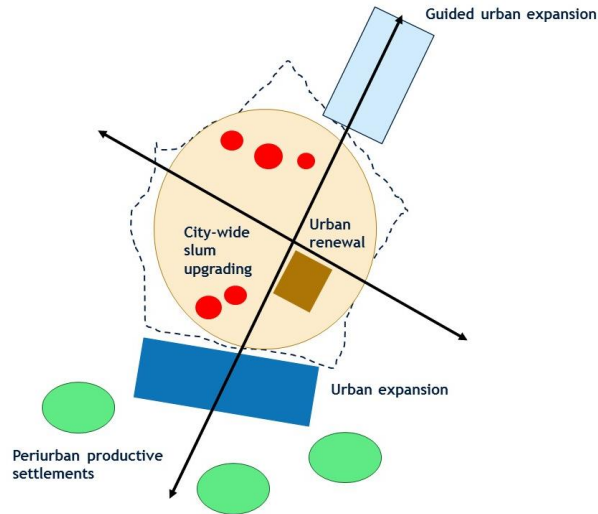
Figure 1. Migration patterns, rapid urbanization trends and emerging planning approaches



UNHCR thinking regarding “alternative to camps” (UNHCR, 2014) proposes a policy that moves away from building special settlements for refugees and encourages cities to incorporate them within existing settlements. But whether this move is leading to relevant territorial planning changes is a key issue for further discussion. Migration patterns include economic migrants and forced displaced population. Both groups shape migrant corridors producing rapid urbanization in different cities sizes, types and their hinterland. This can be noticed in urban sprawling, informal settlements proliferation, infrastructure shortages, land value increase, human rights abuses and growing tensions between migrants and host communities competing for scarce basic urban services. Some emerging planning approaches to host refugees and IDPs learning from the experience of hosting economic migrants provide clues to protect vulnerable natives and migrants by means of smart policy frameworks. This includes guided urban development, urban expansion, city wide slum upgrading programmes, peri-urban settlements, new towns and self-sustained camps among others. A comparative assessment of these approaches provides planning principles to match humanitarian and development agendas in different contexts (figure 2).

Guided urban expansion extends trunk infrastructure to settle migration groups achieving higher densities at the same time, a key for sustainable urbanization minimizing urban sprawl. Urban renewal encourages migrant agglomeration in existing urban areas optimizing available infrastructures through rental housing developing real estate market models channelizing investment in infrastructure protecting the interest of the vulnerable groups of the city in the long run. The city-wide slum upgrading approach regularizes existing land providing basic urban services through a participatory planning exercise introducing the perspective of migrant and refugees. Peri-urban productive settlements resulting of agreements between migrant communities and municipalities creating jobs, products and services for local markets benefiting host and guest communities. Self-sustained camps in remote areas hosting vulnerable displaced groups make affordable the provision of human right protection for people traumatized by refugee experiences.

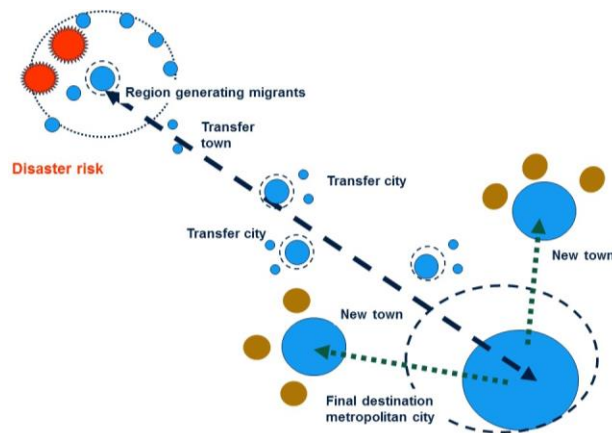
Figure 2. Emerging urban planning approaches in response to rapid urbanization trends



Humanitarian plans create unique real estate opportunities. They play a major role as migrant crisis demands massive infrastructure investments producing extraordinary increases in land values that can either support social protection and development goals or mainly benefit speculative markets if they are not directed in the right direction. Precisely for this reason, the emerging planning approaches tends to incorporate land value capture mechanisms as a cornerstone for success.

Migrant corridors are developed by groups moving from conflict areas towards safe places. Figure 3 illustrates the influence of migrant corridors on transfer and final destiny cities, explaining rapid urbanization trends. Identifying population dynamics of migrant corridors support city planning according to transitory and permanent inhabitant numbers. In addition, emerging approaches promotes further coordination among municipalities to take advantage of migrant flows to support local economic development. Strategic areas like frontier or unpopulated zones create the opportunity for IDP/refugee self-sustained camps for supporting local development and facilitate refugee repatriation, when needed.

Figure 3. Migrant corridors and emerging regional planning approaches



Rapid urbanization gathers economic migrants and displaced populations whose plans and expectations are essentially different. Economic migrants sustain local economies in their countries of origin and their new homes alike. Migrants usually arrive at their transitory and final destinations smoothly as workers

and only bring their families with them once they have settled. This is very different from refugees who arrive in great numbers, generating a sudden influx of people that in turn creates infrastructure and services shortages. Precarious transitory “emergency camps” are often built up as a remedy, intended as short-term solution that usually remains in place for decades. Economic migrants commonly have a self-help strategy linked to their territorial social networks, different to displaced groups who arrive without any links to their new territories. Expectations are also different: migrants leave their homes looking for a better future, while displaced are forced to leave with devastating consequences (table 1).

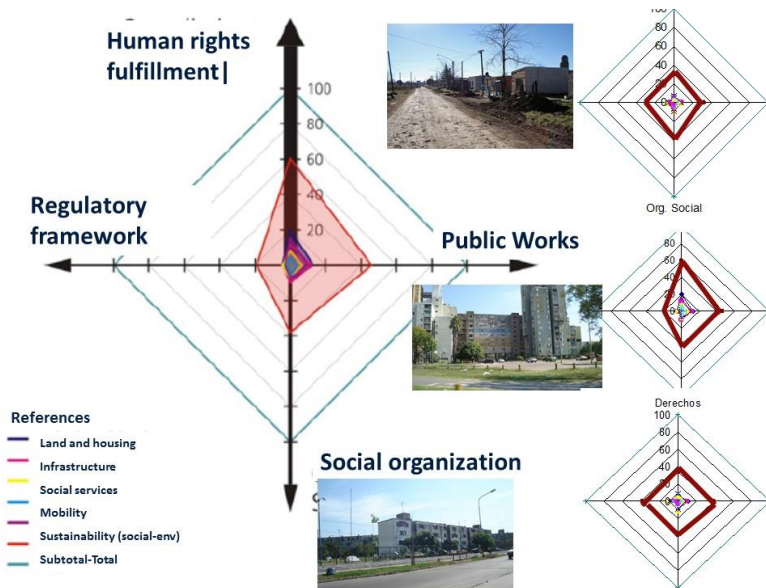
Table 1. Categories of population in rapid urbanization processes.

Type	Categories	Final destiny	Community composition	Legal protection	Habitat
1. Natives & economic migrants	1. Vulnerable natives	Certain	Homogeneous	Secure	Informal
	2. Economic migrants	Uncertain	Heterogeneous	Unsecure	Informal
	3. Temporary migrants	Certain	Homogeneous	Secure	Worker camps
2. Forced displaced	4. Refugees/IDPs	Uncertain	Homogeneous	Unsecure	Refugee camps
	5. Returnees	Certain	Heterogeneous	Secure	Formal

Emerging participatory planning tools leading to innovative planning approaches

A way to promote participatory planning leading to innovative approaches is for local governments to introduce tools so they can work together with displaced communities to determine priorities for action. The “compass” is a participatory methodology employed to collect data from host and displaced communities, using key indicators to measure their living conditions, expressed in terms of human rights, community organization, regulations and ongoing public works (Murillo et al., 2010). This methodology aims to produce critical information, validated by low-income communities, including slum dwellers integrating vulnerable natives and migrants. It brings together communities and local governments to discuss priorities and to select action plans. A great advantage of the methodology is that it expresses the results of the participatory diagnosis and agreed proposals graphically (figure 4), reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of alternative planning approaches to respond to rapid urbanization challenges.

Figure 4. The compass applied in different areas of cities in a migrant corridor



The application of the compass complemented by coordinated exercises between different municipalities lead to innovative planning approaches summarized in table 1.

Table 1. Urban and regional planning alternatives responding to rapid urbanization challenges

Planning principles	Alternative strategies	Approaches	Case study/targeted populations
1. Participation and self-organization and progressive upgrade.	City-wide slum upgrading	Coordinated interventions in slums supported by infrastructure and services	Medellin. Displaced population by war.
2. Humanitarian investments channelizing infrastructure extension	Guided urban development	Infrastructure extension towards strategic areas for urban expansion.	Kigali, Rwanda. IDPs after the genocide. Land regularization
3. Migrants building affordable rental markets on existing urban areas	Urban renewal	Hotels and rental housing for low income groups	Several municipalities in Argentina and Bolivia
4. Densification and mixed land uses supporting vulnerable groups.	Rehousing of vulnerable groups	Protection through infrastructure, housing and income creation schemes	UNRWA Rehousing refugee plan. Gaza Strip
5. Job creation, income and sustainable local markets	Peri-urban settlements	Peri-urban production targeting local markets	UN Habitat periurban IDPs settlements Sudan
	New towns	Autonomous settlements	UNHCR South Sudan.
6. Regional development strategy.	Worker camps (industrial)	Accommodation for workers in existing areas	Quilicura, Chile. Migrants/refugees in industrial parks
	Refugee self-sustained camps	UN agencies and NGO camps to host refugees	Mayukayukwa/Meheba frontier areas. Zambia
7. Multiple-scale coordinated public-community actions.	National returnee reintegration strategy	Shelter, quick impact projects and plots	UNHCR Reintegration in South Sudan returnees.

	Inter-municipal cooperation	Municipal Network created by migrant/ IDPs	San Carlos and Medellin (Colombia). IDPs.
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These approaches demonstrate how integrating humanitarian and developmental agendas is feasible basing on collaborative strategies among multiple stakeholders. Emerging planning principles can be drawn from the alternatives presented. These principles can be useful to guide programmes/projects designed to face rapid urbanization going beyond early recovery.

A first principle is **participation, self-organization and progressive upgrading of migrants, refugees and IDPs communities**. The reference model is the well-known city-wide slum upgrading programme of Medellin. The achievement of planners working together with migrant communities through participatory approaches is remarkable. It requires identifying the proper methodology for specific contexts. Participatory planning has the capacity to engage communities in **city-wide slum upgrading** exercises based on the wish and possibilities of the communities involved. This gives back human self-respect and value for communities to manage their future, rather than just being recipients of aid. When informal settlements are supported technically and get the right kind of attention from their local governments, environmental risks and potential social conflicts can be prevented. Introducing strategic activities and infrastructure can minimise such risks, and thus enable much safer and more resilient living conditions in these settlements. In addition, humanitarian investments in infrastructure are complemented with urban frameworks which ensure that increasing land values are not appropriated by real estate speculative markets, and on the contrary, are used to support long term social inclusion urban development goals.

A second emerging planning principle is the **humanitarian investments channelizing infrastructure extension**. When erecting new settlements, the communities are first driven by survival needs. But once pioneer migrants have identified the most convenient places to settle usually close to jobs and social service opportunities offered by cities or close areas where these resources are accessible through public transport- fellow migrants follow. They self-organise and mobilise their financial and human resources through multiple formal and informal cooperation networks developed by migrants to help each other. The presence of city planners utilizing humanitarian funding for infrastructure expansion can play a crucial role in connecting these communities with their local authorities by selecting strategic areas for renewal. Facilitating suitable land and properties for these migrant networks is central to achieve their integration based on a rationale of collective decisions, overcoming individual actions as the only survival option. Kigali, capital of Rwanda is a good reference model as it is one of the few countries that after the genocide implemented a reconstruction program giving priority to **guided urban expansion** investments complemented with a national land regularization process. A good lesson learnt in Rwanda is that massive land regularization can easily lead to speculative real estate markets that instead of improving the harsh living conditions in slums, tend to generate more overcrowding and precarious living conditions.

A third emerging planning principle consists in **Migrants building affordable rental markets on existing urban areas**. Self-building gives displaced families the chance to organise their habitat in a flexible manner satisfying the multiple challenges resulting of their uncertain future. This produces diverse kinds of transitional shelters that progressively become permanent housing. In addition, diversifying housing types creates new identities. This should be supported by basic infrastructures that encourage and foster social networking. This makes informal settlements the perfect platform for the poor to literally become

part of the city. In South America is common that downtown of major cities experience urban transformations resulting of migrants renting in certain neighbourhoods where they carried out economic activities. Also big companies like oil enterprises require affordable housing to host their employees (Murillo, 2015), as well the availability of hotels and rental housing as a strategy to host employees instead of worker camps. Mutual agreements between these companies and local governments allow to transfer this housing stock after a leasing period, once migrants are not required anymore, normally after 5 years. The presence of migrants in these **hotels and rental housing** opens opportunities to create new vibrant neighbourhoods.

A fourth principle is **densification and mixed land uses supporting vulnerable groups**. Agreeing urban regulatory frameworks developed through participatory planning exercises with refugee groups acceptable to local governments can be a key to develop areas in which mixed land uses and increasing densities creates diverse affordable housing schemes according to the inhabitants' incomes and preferences. Some examples where the described principle was applied require a clear understanding of the complexities of different contexts. The case of refugees in Palestine living in urbanised and consolidated camps for more than 60 years reflects that the amalgamation and integration into their surrounding areas is possible. An UNRWA project (Murillo, 2007) to improve living conditions for refugee families in the Gaza Strip whose houses were demolished in military actions¹ was designed as a **rehousing of vulnerable group scheme**, developing a new neighbourhood adjacent to the existing fabric. Density was increased by building houses up to three stories which were shared by the same family on the same piece of land, as well as by mixing land uses to protect land for agricultural purposes, minimizing sprawling and facilitate social appropriation of spaces in an environment of family and tribal ownership of their neighbourhood, expressed in cultural respect and strong identity

A fifth planning principle focuses on **job creation, income and sustainable local markets**: Introducing basic social services like health and education facilities and community centres to build up the confidence of disadvantaged groups and to support them in claiming their rights is crucial for their actual integration. It is equally important to connect the roads of informal settlements with the surrounding city network to ensure integration into the urban fabric. This planning principle is applicable to **new towns** built to dynamize a lagging region or a refugee camp in a frontier area to facilitate the return of displaced populations to their place of origin. In Santiago de Chile, the Municipality of Quilicura developed a legal framework offering refugees hostage and jobs in industrial parks. The move responds to a humanitarian and developmental strategy. Countries like Zambia, as another example, are offering long-standing refugees the possibility to become citizens. In addition, they provide land and support for those who decide to remain in frontier areas, where the two major refugee camps are located (Meheba and Mayukwayukwa). This crucial part of their national policy aims at protecting and developing the frontier areas of a country with a vast territory but with a small population².

A sixth principle points out on **regional development strategy**: With adequate densities and enough available space, displaced communities are able to open small shops and warehouses to generate a basic

¹ The project was built in Khan Younis and Rafah by UNRWA (United Nations Refugee Work Agency) targeting the construction of 12,000 housing units initiated in 2005 and still under implementation.

² Zambia population is 17,186,468 inhabitants in 742,992 Km², that means a density of 23 persons per Km².

income. In the Global South, informal settlements often provide qualified construction workers and in some cases, migrant communities grow fruits and vegetables in peri-urban areas. These win-win situations, where guest and host communities benefit mutually, require creativity. Such creativity is generally absent in public planning responses to the needs of displaced groups framed generally as mono-functional land uses and standards plans not differentiating the complex typologies of economic migrants and displaced groups. The state's responses are usually designed on the basis of massive cheap solutions which turn out to be very expensive in the long run due to their consequences of social alienation. UN Habitat and UNHCR building **peri-urban productive IDPs settlements** are good cases testing the validity of the approach. They combine site and services and self-built housing, plus small agricultural programs creating income, and welfare in cities of Darfur (Sudan)

The seventh principle consists in **coordinated multi-scale public-community actions**. This principle is key to deal properly with migrant and displaced populations as it involves a regional dimension affecting the whole system of cities. Creating pull factors in strategic towns for the settlement of displaced populations aiming at returning-back to their places of origin is critical to minimize the negative consequences of displacement within a framework of social protection. The experience of South Sudan is unique in several aspects. The displacement within the country, first towards Khartoum, the capital, and later, especially after the independence of South Sudan, towards Juba and other state capitals, was followed by a national strategy to host returnees. Planners agreed to create new neighbourhoods and towns with a **national returnee reintegration strategy** encouraging a balanced population distribution among the ten states and major cities. The strategy was designed based on three pillars: Quick impact projects (schools, roads and water/sanitation), site and services and shelters, supported by stabilized soil blocks and income generation schemes. Efforts were made to reduce the gap between humanitarian shelter and permanent housing through transitional approaches, but at a limited level that was not able to match the massive scale of the demand³. Unfortunately, recent conflicts saw the demise of these achievements

Final reflections: A New Urban Agenda with a focus on migrants and displaced populations

The paper presents available approaches to deal with migration and the displacement of populations in which humanitarian interventions lead to sustainable development plans. They provide solutions in different contexts and fulfil humanitarian and developmental targets, basing on participatory and technical rational approaches considering the specific legal status, long term plans and expectations of different migrant groups. Lessons learnt provided by the experience of projects and programs referred open a window of opportunity to scale up tailored solutions and approaches contributing to the achievement of SDG and its global framework for sustainable urbanization. Also, the experiences warn on the risks of humanitarian investments that finally benefit speculative real estate markets which capture extraordinary land values increases, limiting the government and community possibilities to implement the New Urban Agenda achieving SDG. Such challenge demands effective and efficient tools to measure human rights fulfilment as a foundation to design urban and regional plans. The experience has demonstrated that adequate tools utilized by self-organized communities backed by local governments

³ For further details, see page 93 at <http://shelterprojects.org/shelterprojects2011-2012/SP2011-2012-Intro.pdf>

are more effective to ensure sustainable environments than those created by top-down traditional planning approaches. Participatory approaches have the potential to mobilize resources to safeguard human rights principles supported by humanitarian investments designed with a development agenda.

Emerging territorial planning approaches incorporate migrant and displaced populations transforming urban and regional dynamics. The regional impact of migration flows produces urban growth of cities in strategic locations, expelling populations from lagged regions. Identifying migrant corridors helps to foresee rapid urbanization scenarios of different city types and sizes, helping to apply adequate approaches to avoid informal settlement reproduction without basic infrastructures. When native vulnerable groups co-exist in informal settlements with economic migrants and displaced groups, the latest suffer double discrimination, because of their status as “foreigners”, even in the case of IDPs who never left their nations, and as “informal dwellers”. This situation must be avoided as the experience has shown that without proper mechanisms for protection, these populations tend to suffer an extraordinary segregation and become soon targeted by out-of-the law groups for recruitment in illegal activities. It is the role of international humanitarian organizations to protect the right of displaced groups as well it is the role of the developmental organizations to ensure that these rights are sustained in the long run and that an agenda for sustainable urban development is established for host and guest societies equally.

Territorial planning responses to rapid urbanization reflected in different modalities such as guided urban development, urban renewal, peri urban settlements or new towns, are alternative way forward to achieve urban sustainability. But at the core of such emerging approaches, as illustrated, exchanging planning approaches utilized by humanitarian., development, communities and private sector is essential. New roles for these stakeholders regulated by agreed legal frameworks requires effective and transparent participatory planning instruments supporting territorial planning changes protecting human rights.

Settlements for displaced people and economic migrants provide enormous opportunities for out-of-the-box solutions creating socially and culturally mixed communities. These solutions are based on values and experiences that are shared by host and guest communities, developing fair mechanisms for social cohesion. The cases presented provide lessons on community mechanisms framing adequate habitat conditions. Understanding sound architectural and urban planning principles is a way forward to develop these mechanisms, ensuring that humanitarian and developmental efforts overlap to achieve results. A new generation of emerging territorial planning approaches provides a unique opportunity to shift from speculative real estate land markets, taking advantage of land values capture from humanitarian investments. A more sustainable urban growth based on a sustainable use of land for settlement and production and land value capture for social inclusion and environmental protection constitutes the only way forward towards fulfilling the right to the city and migrant rights. Rapid urbanization and migrant crisis is an opportunity to introduce structural changes in the urban planning paradigms that will support vulnerable native groups to achieve their fundamental rights rather than stressing them with competition for basic infrastructure and services with migrant groups. In that case, the right to the city and the right to choose freely wherever people want to live (Marmora, 1997) either in cities, in peri-urban, rural areas or in their place of origin is protected by planning principles, that already are showing in the global south clues on how to implement the new urban agenda in the context of rapid urbanization and migrant crisis.

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