

CLUSTER 7: REFUGEES HOUSING, LIVING, AND LIVE-WORK

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ABSTRACT

In chapter seven, the challenges are to identify and formulate new design patterns that enhance qualities of lives, dignity, and autonomy for refugees and forced migrants living in a new host community. While necessities may be similar for refugees and non-refugees alike, this chapter has layout spatial qualities that tackle the social and well-being of refugee and forced migrant populations. The solutions also compromise cultural diversity as well as financial and spatial constraints. This paper presents twelve patterns of RPL Cluster 7 in a concise format.

PART I: REFUGEES ARRIVAL AND AMENDMENT

Cluster 1: THE REFUGEE FAMILY

Cluster 2: LEAVING PLACE – ESCAPE JOURNEY

Cluster 3: WELCOME COUNTRY - ARRIVAL PLACE

Cluster 4: ARRIVAL CITY – Urban Life and Infrastructure

Cluster 5: REFUGEES IN NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES

Cluster 6: BUILDINGS, FACILITIES, NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT

Cluster 7: HOUSING, LIVING, AND LIVE WORK

7.1 ABSORBING REFUGEE HOUSING

7.2 CREATIVITY IN HOUSING REFUGEES

7.3 BEYOND SHELTER – RADICAL HOSPITALITY

7.4 THERAPEUTIC GREENS IN REFUGEE HOUSING CLUSTER

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Cluster 8: WORK AND WORK LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION

An influx of refugees brings many challenges politically, spatially, culturally, and socially to a host community. Shelters and housing not only provide safety and security but also enable these populations to reestablish their life. In this paper, we look at refugee housing as a meaningful way of settlement that enable and support refugees and migrants to expand their social and economic life while improve their living qualities. Selected patterns from the Refugee Housing, Living, and Live-Work cluster 7 are presented in this paper. First, we discuss the emergency needs of shelters, integration of refugees to a larger host society, and radical hospitality of welcoming community. Consequently, we explore program and living units of refugee housing. These patterns connect to other patterns in both A Pattern Language (APL) and in Refugee Pattern Language (RPL).

The patterns of refugee housing intend to ameliorate mental and physical burdens in refugees' lives by providing space that encourage refugee populations to gain self-autonomy and dignity. These patterns also emphasize qualities for self-expression and self-transcendence which help refugees to

rediscover their identity in a new context. This paper only presents refugee housing patterns focusing on problems of refugee qualities of lives. However, the Pattern Language itself is connected through context patterns to the original APL as well as RPL.

BACKGROUND

Christopher Alexander and his colleagues first developed APL in the 1970s. The theory of Pattern and Pattern Language looks at social and spatial elements and their characteristics that embrace qualities of places and lives. In RPL, the same method and approaches are put into a context of human flow, forced migration, and resettlement.

Refugee Housing, Living, and Live-Work is connected to the original pattern language book and includes new literature and research. Each individual pattern provides socio-spatial solutions of refugee living to their problems when experiencing uprooting, traumatizing, and reestablishing lives in a new land. These patterns are supported by RPL which provides more details on refugee themselves, an arrival country, neighborhoods and communities, and supporting facilities.

PATTERN LANGUAGE RESEARCH METHOD

The pattern language research method as a process starts with the recognition of a particular recurrent problem (in any domain). For example, if young people are being deported repeatedly by the Feds in the US, you formulate this as a problem statement or research question. Then, you pursue this question in your research, using analytical, empirical, and other techniques appropriate for the question. As a result of your research, you should be able to formulate an answer or a partial answer that solves the problem. In our context, the answer may be to establish 'sanctuary cities,' in which case the Feds will have difficulties to catch young people in such cities.

Once you have established a general solution, you also need to make a judgment call and ask the question if this solution is a good solution (i.e. does it improve the wholeness of the situation). Finally, you need to connect your new pattern with already existing patterns, and also connect it to potential new pattern problems that need to be explored. Following this process will give you individual patterns as well as a pattern language for a particular domain.

REFUGEE PATTERN LANGUAGE – HOUSING, LIVING, AND LIVE-WORK

... the pattern **ABSORBING REFUGEE HOUSING (RPL7.1)** bridges the housing cluster to the previous neighborhood cluster. How can a city integrate refugee housing in a way that promptly accommodates these populations without disturbing a local community? This absorption is crucial because it brings about residential spatial integration that promote organic development while encourage social interaction between diverse groups of people. While a host region may benefit from redevelopment vacant areas to accommodate refugees and migrants, the absorption means becoming parts of a whole community spatially, culturally, and economically. It is also feasible to optimize the utilization of available resources and city infrastructure. Thus, we need to understand conditions of housing market, its context, and potential development to place refugee housing.

In 'Study on Adequate Urban Housing for Refugees' in Thessaloniki, Greece (Deprez & Labattut, 2016), researchers conducted a spatial analysis of available areas for development and vacant

housing units for immediate accommodations. They identified other accommodation opportunities such as dormitories, hotels, and even partially constructed or torn down buildings.

Therefore:

A neighborhood and community must identify available resources such as buildings or units that open for refugees and migrants. Then, residents need to understand common needs and potential development of these spaces such as refugee housing within a residential building, infill housing developments, or refugee housing clusters. The spaces should have connections and transportation to prevent risk of isolation. It is also essential to look for employment opportunities which enhance economic integration (RPL CLUSTER 8).

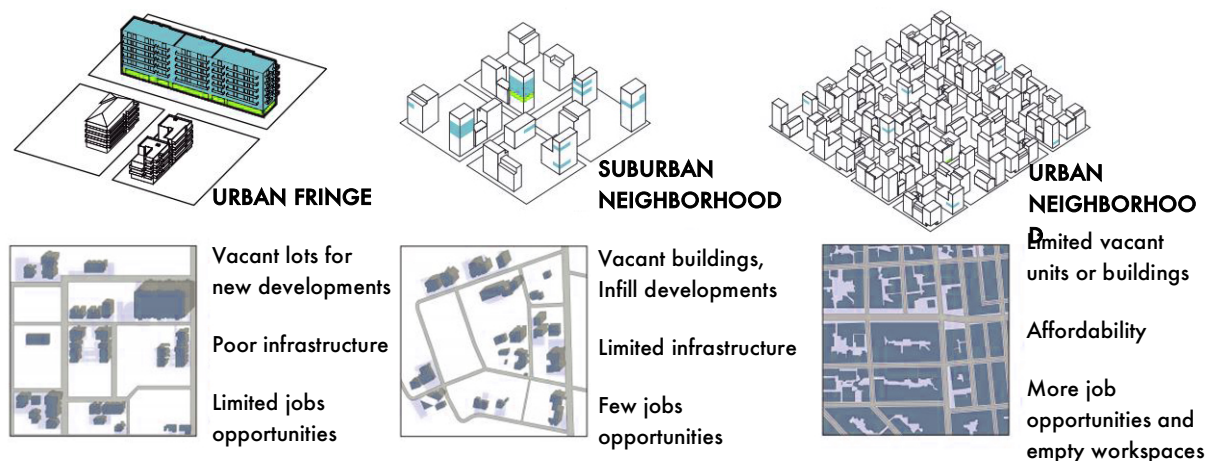


Figure 1 Typologies of housing opportunity in urban fabric (adopted from Deprez & Labattut, 2016)



Along with the **ABSORPTION OF REFUGEE POPULATION (RPL 7.1)**, **CREATIVITY IN TEMPORARY HOUSING FOR REFUGEES (RPL 7.2)** and **BEYOND SHELTER - RADICAL HOSPITALITY (RPL 7.3)** are two patterns that call for 'out of the box' and for humanistic solutions. The approach with **CREATIVITY** is not only limited to efficiency and feasibility but also humane, sociable, and permanent qualities of shelters. In a review of housing for refugees in Germany, Besner (2018) argues when architects design spaces with a focus on efficiency and necessities but neglect social needs, conflicts between residents often arise.

Therefore:

...temporary housing must enhance sense of belonging which redeem self-authority and autonomy such as through partial self-built units. It also should promote social interactions among residents with community space, worship corner, or communal kitchen. And it should provide adequate visual and acoustic privacy besides basic needs for safety and security.



In addition to spatial accommodation, **RADICAL HOSPITALITY** refers to extraordinary effort to create welcoming atmosphere and inclusive environment to the strangers. In most conditions, refugees require extra assistance to navigate new ways of living, their social life, as well as their legal rights and protections. In a household level, this concept is manifested in forms of hosting migrants and refugees temporarily or even permanently while also acting as their advisors or guardians. How can a living unit be modified to accommodate another person or a family while

provide comfort for all? How to protect refugees from surveillance until they receive their legal status? In France, residents have initiated IMBY movement with a tiny home for refugees. In Germany, some residents help protect refugees from being deported in their transition status until their right to stay is legally granted. These actions show extraordinary efforts and sacrifice of host residents to comfort the new populations.



... refugees and migrants generally have less extended social lives and networks. For this reason, programming refugee housing requires facilities that reinforce their social needs and civic needs beyond living units. Securing a housing unit can fortify the idea of independent living and enable these population to regain their self-autonomy. It is equally important to focus on creating a healing place in refugee housing. Facilities in refugee housing clusters must enhance health and wellbeing as well as encouraging skills development. The pattern **THERAPEUTIC GREEN IN REFUGEE HOUSING CLUSTER (RPL 7.4)** suggests a common outdoor space that promote physical activities, improve emotional health and prevent social isolation (Hartwig & Mason, 2016). Gardening spaces reconnect people to nature, and in some case, help refugees from food insecurity.

In order to create therapeutic qualities in garden space, the garden must be interactive. For refugees and immigrants, this could be a method of relaxation and keeping in touch with home roots by being a part of an outdoor setting in an otherwise foreign urban setting. Programs such as "Roots and Shoots" and "Grounding Project" in the UK help refugees with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) via gardening and connection people with similar experiences. Many settlement agencies also affirm that gardening allows refugee to regain confidence and experience directivity in their new lives. Refugees are able to create purpose and ambition in their lives that can follow them to integrate more fully into the new society they have become a part of. In the US, "World Relief Seattle Garden" help connects refugees and locals, older populations and youth with community gardens while also emphasize on environmental facet creating bioswale, using rainwater, and increasing urban green.

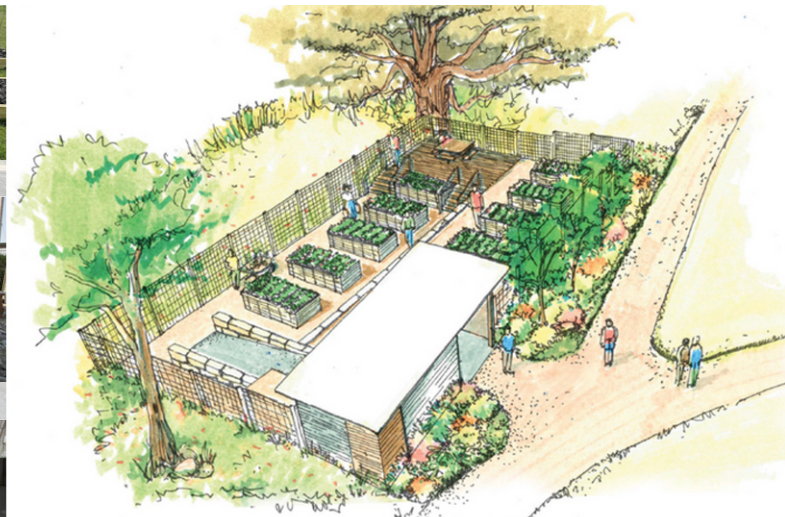


Figure 2. Therapeutic Green with gardening and socializing spaces

Right: Community garden in Rancho Sienna (source: www.ranchosienna.com)
 Left: Various Refugee Community Gardens (source: Emily Spartz / Argus Leader, <https://worldreliefseattle.org/>. and <https://www.arenoprophet.com/>)

Therefore:

...refugee housing cluster should provide a community garden space such as roof garden, edible courtyard, or a community garden plot. The garden comprises of many 4 x 8 ft plots. The number of plots should not be less than 60 percent of housing units. In addition to these plots, the garden should include recreational areas with seats and space for exercise and relax. The garden must be easily access for all residents, especially older refugees, with smooth leveled path. Fruit trees and foliage surround the garden create sense of privacy and protection while it remains a monitored space.

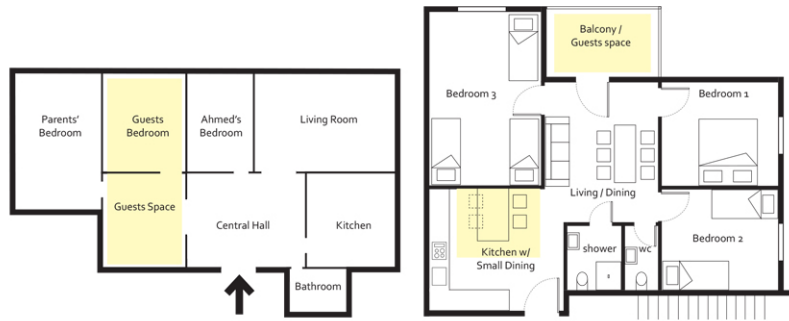


To regain self-autonomy and independence, RPL further suggests RAISING MINORS – SUPPORT FOR SINGLE PARENTS (RPL 7.5), TRANSCENDED SPACES – LEARNING, WORKING, AND SHARING (RPL 7.6) and MIXED USE AND LIVE-WORK (RPL 7.7) patterns. These patterns focus on skills development, job retraining, and provide entrepreneurial opportunities for refugees. They also intend to attenuate generational differences and bring about mutual benefits for diverse groups. Because large number of refugees are unaccompanied minors and Sigle parents, **RPL 7.5 RAISING MINORS – SUPPORT FOR SINGLE PARENTS** suggests a reconnection between young and old while ameliorating burdens from single parent refugees. This pattern of self-service space combines aged refugees with needs of childcare to reduce risk of isolation and promote social relationship and economic independence. **RPL 7.6 MIXED USE AND LIVE-WORK** combines housing units with commercial and retail spaces. Shophouse or storefront units activate streets and advertise cultural diversity with ethnic business such as restaurants, ethnic markets, travel agencies, and money lenders. These businesses create more jobs and self-sustaining economy for refugee populations. They can also bridge cultural differences and increase the visibilities of these populations. The street visibilities can vary from street front shops to an upper level or internal courtyard workspaces depending on nature of a business. **RPL 7.6 TRANSCENDED SPACES – LEARNING, WORKING, AND SHARING** provides a training or workshop space such as maker space, community kitchen, or lecture room so that the residents can develop their skills and

reintegrate into the local labor market. This space should be multipurpose to accommodate and rotate wide range of programs. With the dimension of 20 x 30 ft and connection to courtyard or open space, the room can host 25-30 people for lecture or language lesson or 60 people for casual gathering with an extension opportunity. In case of pandemic, this room size reduces its capacity to 10-12 people to provide safer distancing while its connection to outdoor help maintain good ventilation.



... to feel at home is important for refugees especially because these people have been traumatizing from their departure. Refugee housing generally has a limited budget and small space program. Design with efficiency many times impede a consideration of social space (Breivik cited in Besner, 2018). Unlike locals home space, refugee home has to be both retrospective as well as proactive place. **RPL 7.8 GUESTS REALM** derives from a study of refugee housing in Syrian refugee housing in Essen, Germany (Davis, 2017). Culture of dedicated guest spaces, having guests – teachers, colleagues, neighbors, and strangers can bond people with intimate welcoming and sharing moments. However, the smaller a unit is, the more difficult it is to host guests. Thus, this space is particularly important because it encourages refugee residents to socialize while maintaining the privacy of their housemates or family members. In some culture with strict gender separation, the absence of guest space discourages people from inviting their friends and colleagues to their home.



A: Sketch of a typical Syrian house with dedicated guests' space (extracted from Davis' interview with Ahmed, Syrian refugee in Essen, Germany)

B: Revised floor plan of refugee housing, BAD KROZINGEN to create guest realms. (adopted from

Figure 3. Guest Realm

Right: Guests space in Syrian housing vs guests realm in a refugee housing
 Top Left: Italian families host refugees (source: <https://www.infomigrants.net/>)
 Bottom Left: Guests area in refugee housing (source:

Therefore:

...a living unit for refugees should incorporate the guest realm into their living space in order to encourage social interaction. the space for hosting guests can be a shared space in a communal area of a housing building. Within a unit itself, guest realm should be separated from the main living area with some visual privacy. It should be able to accommodate 2-4 people in a casual setting. This can be balcony seating, casual dining in a kitchen, or a separate guest room that while some residents are hosting guests, others can continue their routine. Connecting to people enable residents to share their memories and searching for opportunities in their new lives.



While the pattern Guest Realm invites others to their housing unit, the pattern **STREET FACING BALCONY (RPL 7.12)** connects the private living space to the public domain. Living in a denser city especially in a small apartment in multistory building, the housing units that lack connections to outdoor can lead to spatial isolation even within a city center. Balconies offer private outdoor space, increase natural ventilation, and provide a link as well as buffer between housing units to a neighborhood and a city (Poon, 2020). Balcony becomes a safe zone for these newcomers to develop their relationship to a city from a far. The connections to outdoor is essential for refugees and migrants housing because they are prone to live in an overcrowded space. Moreover, street façade is enlivening by balconies, showing variety of lifestyles and culture. Many times, glass façade and plain window panel may be more cost effective with less maintenance; however, they leave no room for human touches that activate souls of a city. For housing cluster, architects should consider arranging of courtyard or garden balcony as alternatives. It is also important to orient balconies to sunny side and avoid north facing balcony in northern hemisphere because of direct lacking sunlight.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, many people pay more attention to the uses of balcony. Balconies help people connect while keeping their social distancing. People sing, play music, exercise, or just take fresh air via this small space. APL 167 SIX-FEET BALCONY argues too narrow balcony is not usable and is wasted. People feel safer with recesses balcony because of its enclosure. APL 192 WINDOWS OVERLOOKING LIFE suggests that a room is more pleasant with no less than 25 percent of window areas because of its connection to outdoor space. To combine these two patterns with a context of refugee housing, balcony may be as small as 4 x 6 ft which is adequate small seats or stretching while maximizing outdoor connections to a street.



Figure 4. Street Facing Balcony

Left: Diverse uses of balconies (source: PAVA architects)

Right: Life on the balcony during Coronavirus pandemic (source: tass.com)

Therefore:

Refugee housing should incorporate street facing balcony to help activate the street while promote indoor-outdoor connections. Balconies should be partially enclosed with canopy and side wall to provide safety and climate protection. The dimension can be as small as 24 sq. ft. but six-foot depth will allow more activities in this space.



Within a living unit, pattern CONVERTIBLE ALCOVE (RPL 7.9) and pattern CULTURAL DISPLAY RPL 7.10) extract from physical and psychological needs of refugees. **RPL 7.9 CONVERTIBLE ALCOVE** suggests a space that can be adjusted for working corner, hosting overnight guests, worship space, etc. within a compact housing unit. For example, Agate apartments, a student housing at the University of Oregon, provide an alcove space in a living area to accommodate various needs of graduate students. This convertible alcove should be distinguishable from the main part of the room to create a sense of separation with features such as lower ceiling, screening, or framing. The dimension of this space should be larger than 5 x 7 ft to fit a working desk, guest mattress, or pray rugs. **RPL 7.10 CULTURAL DISPLAY** promotes an expression of self. Many refugees have psychological impacts from their escape and need to reinvent themselves in their new surroundings. The cultural display can be as simple as a soft wall that allow residents to paint, hang photos, built an altar for worshipping and so on. This minor spatial modification allows refugees to maintain or rediscover their identity as well as create attachment and belonging to a new home.

Additionally, **RPL 7.11 CONNECTABLE UNITS FOR EXTENDED FAMILY** emerges from characteristics of refugee families. Many refugees come from clan culture or collective society. These people tend to prefer living with their extended and multigeneration family members. Therefore, designing housing with options to connect units for an extended family help these refugees maintain their family dynamic and social ties. This feature can be rather relevant when families settle down in a new land and reunite with other family members that join from the homeland still in war and peril.

CONCLUSIONS

Either locals or alien, natures of human lives are similar; however, refugees and migrants need social and spatial assistances to reestablish their lives. This paper presented 12 Refugee Pattern Language from the Refugee Housing, Living, and Live-Work Chapter for integrating refugees in the 21st century cities. They are organized into three levels: 1. housing approach that connects with the neighborhood level; 2. housing program that extends quality living and working networks; and 3. housing unit that promote social interactions and self-rediscovery. Together with APL and RPL, these patterns provide socio-spatial solutions within a context of human lives and refugees conditions of limited resources, broken networks, and regaining their lives. Housing for refugees then becomes more than functional and financial efficiency and sheltering space but also a symbol of restarting a new capable life and being visible and becoming part of a host society. All individual patterns have been created with more specifications to unique culture of the ethnic groups of refugees, migrants, and host community.

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