

RE-CONCEIVING REFUGEE SITUATIONS FROM A DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE: PROVIDING DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES THROUGH DEVELOPMENT

RE-CONCEBER SITUAÇÕES DE REFUGIADOS A PARTIR DE
UMA PERSPECTIVA DE DESENVOLVIMENTO:
SOLUÇÕES DURADOURAS PARA REFUGIADOS ATRAVÉS
DO DESENVOLVIMENTO

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This paper examines the changing character of forced displacement and its impact on the lives of refugees and their host countries. The paper proposes the need to re-conceptualize the issue of refugees from a development perspective, recognizing that the forced displacement resulting in refugee situations is both a product and cause of development (or lack thereof). Conceiving of refugee situations within a broader development perspective provides a constructive path for the international community to provide truly durable solutions that can expand people's freedoms, opportunities and capabilities to achieve a fulfilling life and reduce global inequalities and instability. The first section discusses the failure of states to facilitate the three durable solutions in the face of the changing character of refugee movements. The second section proposes reconceiving refugee situations as a development issue, the need for bridging the humanitarian-development gap, and the need for counteracting the negative discourse surrounding refugees in order to build on the opportunities that refugees present. The third section provides examples to demonstrate how refugees are creating livelihood solutions for themselves, the contributions they are making to their host societies, and how development-led solutions can help support refugees and better manage the long-term developmental consequences of protracted refugee situations.

Keywords: refugees, protracted displacement, development-led solutions, durable solutions, livelihoods.

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Este artigo examina as transformações dos deslocamentos forçados e o seu impacto na vida dos refugiados e nos seus países de acolhimento. O artigo propõe re-conceitualizar a questão dos refugiados a partir de uma perspectiva de desenvolvimento, reconhecendo que o deslocamento forçado é tanto um produto quanto uma causa do desenvolvimento (ou a falta dele). Conceber a situação de refugiados dentro de uma perspectiva de desenvolvimento mais ampla constitui um caminho construtivo para a comunidade internacional fornecer soluções realmente duradouras capazes de expandir a liberdade, oportunidades e capacidades das pessoas para alcançar uma vida plena e reduzir as desigualdades e instabilidades globais. Na primeira parte, discute-se o fracasso dos estados em facilitar três soluções duráveis diante do caráter mutável dos movimentos de refugiados. Na segunda parte, propõe-se encarar a situação dos refugiados como uma questão de desenvolvimento, a necessidade de colmatar a falta de desenvolvimento-humanitário e a necessidade de contrariar o discurso negativo sobre os refugiados, de forma a dar a devida importância às oportunidades que a presença de refugiados apresenta.

Na terceira parte, fornecem-se exemplos para demonstrar a maneira como os refugiados criam soluções de subsistência para si mesmo, as suas contribuições para com as sociedades que os recebem e como as soluções conduzidas pelo desenvolvimento podem ajudar o apoio aos refugiados e a gestão a longo prazo da presença prolongada de refugiados.

Palavras-chave: refugiados, deslocamento prolongado, soluções guiadas pelo desenvolvimento, soluções duradouras, meios de subsistência.



0. Introduction

Forced displacement and the issue of refugees is not a unique or new phenomenon.¹ Historically, people have been forced to seek refuge in other countries for hundreds of years; within the last century alone there

1 For the purpose of this paper, a refugee is defined as a person who, “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [or herself] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his [or her] former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (UNHCR 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol Relating to The Status of Refugees, 14). While there are valid arguments for the need to expand this definition to include, for example, persons forcibly displaced due to climate change, food insecurity, or state fragility, these arguments are beyond the scope of this particular paper (Betts, 2015).

have been huge numbers of refugees fleeing their homes including Jews and other persecuted minorities during WWII, Palestinians from Israel, Bosnians during the Balkan War, and Tutsis from Rwanda. What is new is the scale and spread of forced displacement and migration within the past two decades, and the significant length of time refugee populations spend waiting for one of three durable solutions: repatriation, resettlement into a third country or local integration into their host country (Crawford, N.; Cosgrave, J.; Haysom, S. & Walicki, N., 2015). The long-term impacts of forced displacement are profound for refugees, their host communities, and the regions in which the majority of these displacements occur (Betts *et al.*, 2014; UNHCR, 2016b). These impacts are twofold, both of which contribute to and reinforce each other. Concretely, refugee populations face challenging and vulnerable livelihood positions, often lacking access to basic services (health, education, housing) and the right to work, which in turn results in a loss of human potential and development (including regional development) as refugees remain stuck in legal limbo, unable to return home and unable to progress with their lives (Aleinikoff, 2015; Christensen & Harild, 2009; Loescher *et al.*, 2008; Loescher & Milner, 2011). Discursively, refugees are viewed as costs and burdens; disrupting the environments they come bursting into, unwelcome. The negative and often xenophobic discourse surrounding the issue of refugees results in efforts to control and restrict their movements as countries of asylum create inhospitable environments to dissuade refugees from arriving and staying (Chimni, 1998 & 2008; Milner, 2009; Zolberg, 1989). In turn, this contributes to the bottlenecking of refugees in developing countries, placing the responsibility for dealing with refugees largely on developing countries that are already struggling to meet the needs of their own citizens. Clearly, none of these situations present permanent, legal, or feasible solutions for both refugees and host countries.

This paper proposes the need to re-conceptualize the issue of refugees from a development perspective, recognizing that the forced displacement resulting in refugee situations is both a product and cause of development (or lack thereof). As Zolberg 1989 highlights, “it is precisely the control which states exercise over borders that defines international migration as a distinctive social process”; this calls for an analysis of the forced migration-development nexus, as neither a natural or linear process, but one that is shaped by people, institutions, and structures (p. 406). The vast majority of problems leading to forced displacement are not innocuous or transitory; they are outcomes of the long-term political, economic and social

structural inequalities that exist in developing countries, leading to poverty, inequality, conflict, and instability. Conceiving of refugee situations within a broader development perspective provides a constructive path for the international community to provide truly durable solutions that can expand people's freedoms, opportunities and capabilities to achieve a fulfilling life and reduce global inequalities and instability.

This paper is structured into three sections. The first section discusses the failure of states to facilitate the three durable solutions in the face of the changing character of refugee movements. The second section proposes reconceiving refugee situations as a development issue, the need for bridging the humanitarian-development gap, and the need for counteracting the negative discourse surrounding refugees in order to build on the opportunities that refugees present. The third section provides examples to demonstrate how refugees are creating livelihood solutions for themselves, the contributions they are making to their host societies, and how development-led solutions can help support refugees and better manage the long-term developmental consequences of protracted refugee situations.

1. Setting the Current Context of Refugee Situations

The Changing Character of Refugee Situations

Within the last ten years refugee numbers have significantly increased, from 11.5 million people in 2004 to 17.2 million in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016b). This escalation is partly due to the increased number of conflicts that have forced people to flee their countries, with 15 new or reignited conflicts recorded in the last five years (UNHCR, 2016a). However, the other main contributing factor is the protracted character of forced displacement that has developed as a result of the failure to implement the three traditional durable solutions (Crawford et al., 2015). Based on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) definition of a protracted refugee situation, two thirds of refugees are currently in a protracted situation (Betts, A., Loescher, G., & Milner, J., 2012).² The average length of time refugees spend waiting for repatriation, resettlement, or local integration has risen to a staggering 22 years (Crawford et al., 2015). Moreover, the distribution of refugees has changed: while the majority of refugees (84% in 2016) remain hosted by

² Protracted refugee situations are ones in which refugees "have been in exile 'for 5 years or more after their initial displacement, without immediate prospects of implementation of durable solutions'" (Loescher & Milner, 2011, p. 15).

developing countries (UNHCR, 2016b), major shifts have taken place in the movements of refugees from predominantly camps to urban settings where estimates indicate at least 59% of all refugees currently live (Crawford et al., 2015). In addition, recent trends in refugee movements reveal that many refugees are moving on to second or third countries in search of better resettlement options (Crisp, 2014). Reasons for these onward movements, in which refugees effectively resettle themselves, is linked to the “poor quality of protection, limited livelihood opportunities, limited freedom of movement, and the limited access to durable solutions such as local integration” in the first country of refuge (Betts, 2009, p. 9).

Since the majority of refugees end up within the region of their country of origin, this places a great responsibility on neighbouring, mainly developing, countries that are least equipped to handle the hundreds of thousands to millions of refugees crossing their borders. This has strong implications for regional security as forced displacement increases situations in which people are subjected to extreme or chronic poverty, pushed towards criminal or illegal activities in order to survive, and which may contribute to extremism, conflict, and instability, particularly impacting state fragility (Christensen & Harild, 2010; Zetter, 2014). The perceived burden and negative discourse around the costs of refugees on their host societies contributes to protectionist policy decisions that, conversely, “push solutions for displaced persons further away and incur even greater costs” (Crawford *et al.*, 2015, p. 5).

The Failure to Achieve The Three Durable Solutions

Given the dominant Westphalian perspective through which the responsibilities of citizens and states are conceived, the three durable solutions are all meant to be achieved through nation-states, and are consequently all political in nature.³ This political aspect, highly influenced by the negative discourse and perception surrounding refugees, has stymied progress in effectively implementing these solutions. While major repatriation opera-

³ This perspective conceives of nation-states as sovereign, with complete control over their territories and in their domestic affairs (Betts 2015, p.). This conception of the modern state, in which the boundaries of the state designate who is counted as citizen and who is not, is particularly important because it is through the imagined social contract, between citizens and state, that citizens obtain their rights and entitlements (and consequently life opportunities) (Gibney, 2014, p. 2).

tions occurred in the past, the trend towards repatriation has been steadily declining over the past two decades. In 2014, the lowest number of returned refugees in over three decades was recorded, with only 126,800 refugees repatriated to their home countries (UNHCR, 2014, p. 42). In some cases, the reason for this trend in declining repatriation is because the conflicts or reasons for fleeing are ongoing. In other cases, refugees are dissuaded by the uncertainty of returning and the numerous obstacles to reintegrating into their country that has been devastated by civil war, with weak institutions and a lack of public infrastructure and services (Christensen & Harild, 2010).⁴

Over the past two decades, resettlement intakes have remained at similar levels, around or below 100,000 refugees resettled per year, with 20-25 countries offering to accept UNHCR screened refugees (Betts *et al.*, 2012; UNHCR, 2016b). However, the number of refugees resettled each year is consistently lower than the number of refugees waiting for resettlement. Resettlement numbers have been steadily declining over the past two decades despite the overall rising numbers of refugees each year (*ibid*). Reasons for this partly include the increased administrative and screening restrictions of resettling states due to perceived security risks, especially after the events of 9/11, and the countries of origin of many refugees in recent years (largely from the Middle East or Muslim countries in Africa or South East Asia) (Crisp, 2014).

Historically most host countries have heavily resisted local integration, arguing that they lack the capacity to cope with refugee populations as well as their own citizens (Betts, 2015; Dryden-Peterson & Hovil 2004). Reflecting states' reluctance to implement this third durable solution, in 2014 only "27 countries reported the granting of citizenship to some 32,100 refugees" (UNHCR, 2014, p. 46). In sum, hosting states, the international community, and humanitarian agencies are unable to implement the three durable solutions for the vast majority of refugees. The broader implications for this failure are that more refugees remain in protracted situations for longer lengths of time.

⁴ Afghan refugees, for example, have returned home on multiple occasions only to be forced to leave again due to the ongoing instability and shifting livelihood opportunities available to them (Monsutti, 2008).

Outcomes of This Changing Character of Refugee Situations: Nation-State Responses and the Negative Refugee Discourse

The ways in which refugee situations are conceived, as negative or positive forms of development, has broader implications for what ‘solutions’ are recommended to address them: those towards more exclusionary and restrictive policies that can lead to further stratification and inequalities, or those towards more inclusive policies that can expand people’s freedoms, opportunities and capabilities to achieve a fulfilling life and reduce global inequalities (Sen, 1999). Despite the responsibilities of states to protect refugees under international law, the reactions of states to the changing character of refugee movements have largely been negative, in many cases contradicting the fundamental principles of the 1951 Convention around non-discrimination, non-penalization, and non-refoulement (UNHCR, 1951).⁵

The majority of refugee-hosting countries tend to view refugee situations from this negative point of view, resulting in protectionist policies that unintentionally reinforce the very burdens and costs they are meant to reduce. These protectionist policies force refugees to make difficult and risky livelihood choices around employment, education, health, and nutrition (Buscher, 2013; UNHCR, 2007).⁶ Instead of helping refugees build up their human and financial capital in order to become self-reliant and facilitate their realization of a durable solution, these protectionist policies have the perverse effect of increasing the vulnerabilities, marginalization and poverty of refugees. In the long-term, the lack of social, human and economic capital tends to reduce the likelihood that refugees will repatriate, as demonstrated by the residual Liberian refugees left in Ghana “who had no resources to return with and no new skills that would make them marketable upon return” (Buscher, 2013, p. 20). Left unaddressed and unsupported by protectionist policies, protracted refugee situations can develop into sources of conflict and instability themselves, contributing to further displacement (Loescher, G.; Milner, J.; Newman, E. & Troeller, G., 2008). Moreover, by trying to protect themselves from the perceived burdens

5 The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees is “the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention” (UNHCR, 1951).

6 Examples abound around the world, including the (attempted) restriction of refugees to camps and denial of the legal right to work in Kenya, refugees forced to work in the informal sector due to their denial of the legal right to work in India, the off-shore detention of refugees by Australia, or the arrest, detention and deportation of refugees in Thailand (Buscher, 2013).

and costs of refugees, hosting states lose out on the potential benefits that refugees can bring to their host society (Betts, A.; Bloom, L.; Kaplan, J. & Omata, N., 2014). While states are the main vehicles through which any of the durable solutions can be found, their current responses to refugee movements are, conversely, resulting in the prevention of durable solutions.

2. Reframing the Issue from a Development Perspective

Reconceiving Refugee Situations From a Development Perspective

Traditionally, refugee situations have been conceived of from an emergency, temporary, and humanitarian lens (Loescher *et al.*, 2008). This predominant humanitarian perspective is due to a failure to understand the broader picture of why people seek refuge in the first place. If we conceive of refugee situations from a development perspective, it becomes clear that the structural political, economic, and social problems within refugee-sending countries converge and create environments in which conflict, discrimination, inequality, and instability force people to make the difficult choice to flee their homes (Christensen & Gomez, 2010; Christensen & Harild, 2009).

The choice to seek refuge is itself a livelihood strategy. This is increasingly reflected in the way refugee movements have changed over the last two decades: from rural and/or camp settings to urban areas; from staying in the first country of asylum to moving on to second or third countries with more welcoming environments; from the huge numbers of refugees who choose not to repatriate to their war-ravaged countries once conflicts have subsided (Crisp, 2014). From this development perspective it becomes clear that the choices made by hosting states and refugees create push and pull factors that both actors react to in turn. The outcomes of these choices contribute to the protracted character of refugee situations, which in turn have their own long-term consequences for refugees, host countries, and regional development outcomes (Loescher *et al.*, 2008). Recognizing that refugees are important actors whose choices impact wider development processes is a critical step towards improving our understanding of how development actors (states, development and humanitarian agencies, international community) can intervene to ensure that forced displacement does not result in negative cycles of poverty, vulnerability, instability, and conflict (Christensen & Gomez, 2010; Christensen & Harild, 2009).

Durable Solutions From a Development Perspective: Bridging the Humanitarian-Development Gap

Given the prevalence of protracted refugee situations, it is clear that current humanitarian programming, while playing a crucial role in dealing with emergency crises and in providing displaced persons with security and protection, is insufficient to deal with the long-term consequences of displacement. Since humanitarian relief conceives of displacement as temporary, the programs tend to be short-lived and focused on meeting the immediate basic needs of refugees (Loescher *et al.*, 2008). The funding cycles are equally short-term and cannot be relied upon by refugees as international attention and funding priorities continually shift to newly displaced persons and crises (Betts *et al.*, 2012; Chimni 2003; Loescher & Milner 2011). The majority of refugees, especially those in urban settings, end up having to develop their own livelihood strategies largely unsupported by any government, UNHCR, or NGO program (Loescher & Milner, 2008). Currently, refugees are eking out lives for themselves, often without access to public services, the legal right to work, or support from outside organizations (Crawford *et al.*, 2015). This increases the likelihood of refugees living in poverty — potentially intergenerational poverty — and effectively means a loss of human capital and potential as refugees grow up without the opportunity to build their skills and assets that in the long-term will facilitate their final settlement through one of the three durable solutions (Christensen & Harild, 2010; Zetter, 2014).

By shifting our perspective away from thinking of protracted refugee situations as temporary events and towards reconceiving them as long-term outcomes of structural social, economic and political problems, we are much better placed to find truly durable solutions to these complex issues (Loescher & Milner, 2008). Truly durable solutions, as conceived in this paper, are understood as the capabilities of refugees to obtain sustainable livelihoods, including their security, ability to find legal employment, access to economic opportunities, public services, and social networks (Christensen & Harild, 2010). This conception draws on a transnational human rights framework, which emphasizes that “human rights must remain the overriding rationale for generating durable solutions” (Loescher *et al.*, 2008, p. 5). States are the main vehicles through which citizens and non-citizens attain their human rights; therefore, the achievement of truly durable solutions is dependent on states to uphold their responsibilities towards fulfilling refugees’ human rights (Gibney & Skogly, 2002).

While the traditional durable solutions represent permanent solutions for refugees, we need to recognize that this permanence rests on the capabilities of refugees to be durably self-reliant, in terms of their own abilities and the conductivity of their environment to achieving sustainable livelihoods. While conflicts and violence may eventually become resolved, this does not mean stability and security will automatically follow; indeed, returning to one's home country is not equivalent to re-establishing one's life. In the end, no matter which durable solution refugees end up eventually accepting, only by ensuring that they have the capabilities to achieve a life worth living, and not simply surviving, will the cycles of poverty, vulnerability, and instability be broken (Christensen & Harild, 2009).

Counteracting the Negative Refugee Discourse

Undeniably, refugees place substantial strains on their host populations, infrastructure, public services, and natural environment. However, refugees also bring benefits to their host countries. These include the skills and assets they possess, the employment opportunities they bring through humanitarian and development program delivery and infrastructure, the expansion of local markets to meet the purchasing power of refugees, their access to remittance flows, and, although not frequently discussed, their contribution to multiculturalism (Jacobsen, 2002; Zetter, 2014).⁷ Recent research on the different ways in which refugees make positive contributions to their host communities calls for a more balanced perspective on the impact of refugees on their host societies (Betts, 2009; Buscher, 2013; Crawford *et al.*, 2015; Jacobsen, 2002). It is therefore critical to engage both government and civil society in discussions around how refugees are contributing to their host environments, not as burdens (unless state policies reduce refugees to this position), but rather as stimulants of economic and social development (Aleinikoff, 2015; Zetter, 2014). In particular, when refugees “do not live in camps, but are self-settled amongst the host community, they provide economic inputs in the form of new technologies and skills, entrepreneurship or needed labour”; this in turn can produce economic and social stimulus whose effects expand local economies and revitalize communities (Jacobsen, 2002, p. 585).

⁷ For example, in Uganda, refugees in Kampala purchase 97% of their goods from Ugandans (this is significantly higher than in camps where refugees still buy about 70% from Ugandans, “reflect[ing] the simple but important observation that the daily economic life of many refugees directly benefits Ugandan businesses” (Betts *et al.*, 2014, p. 16-17).

Studies undertaken in Kenya, which is host to millions of refugees (many of whom are in protracted situations), demonstrate that refugees can bring positive impacts in both camp and urban settings (Crawford *et al.*, 2015). The infamous Dadaab refugee camp, itself an outcome of Kenya's restrictive and protectionist encampment policies that deny refugees the legal right to work and freedom of movement, nonetheless has been shown to bring positive economic impacts with "annual benefits for the host community totall[ing] US \$82 million in 2009 through increased trading and business opportunities, camp-related employment, [and] improved infrastructure" (Zetter, 2014, p. 5). In addition, a 2013 survey of Dadaab camp found that only 2% of refugees were entirely dependent on food aid, indicating that despite the lack of opportunities provided by the Kenyan government, refugees are nonetheless implementing their own livelihood strategies through alternative income generating activities (Crawford *et al.*, 2015).

3. Towards Comprehensive and Inclusive Durable Solutions

Refugees Are Creating Livelihoods for Themselves

Despite the generally restrictive and unwelcoming hosting environments they face, combined with lack of long-term support from humanitarian and development agencies, refugees are finding or creating livelihoods for themselves. In Malawi, for example, "Eritrean refugees penetrated nearly all the economic sectors in Kassala, displaying a high degree of integration into the city's daily life despite being unregistered, largely unaided and subject to legal restrictions" (Zetter, 2014, p.5). For the most part these livelihood strategies are largely unknown to humanitarian and development agencies and host governments due to a lack of recognition and research in this area. Recent research exploring questions around what strategies and how refugees are supporting themselves demonstrates the incredible resourcefulness of refugees as they diversify their income-generating activities: a recent Ugandan study identified "some 70 different types of livelihood activities" being implemented by refugees as they spread risk through livelihood diversification (Betts *et al.*, 2014, p. 22).⁸ Many refugees are

⁸ These activities "rang[e] from farming and animal husbandry to specific types of livelihood activities that fall under the categories of food-related businesses, beauty care, transportation, accommodation, entertainment, clothing, manual work and manual technical services, communications, finance, specialised services, professional services, and institutional employment" (Betts *et al.*, 2014, p. 22).

aware that humanitarian aid is short-lived and so endeavour to become self-reliant as soon as possible (*ibidem*).

Refugees are finding their own ways of filling social protection gaps, such as through community-lending initiatives where they collect, lend and borrow credit amongst themselves, since access to formal credit is nearly impossible (*ibidem*). They draw on their own skills and social networks to support themselves and the most vulnerable members within their own refugee groups (Buscher, 2013). However, in terms of the success of refugees to become self-reliant and achieve sustainable livelihoods, the significant diversity within and between refugee groups indicates that there are multiple driving factors for achieving durability that are highly context specific (*ibidem*).

A Development-led Approach to Protracted Refugee Situations

An integrated development-led approach (one in which refugees are socially and economically integrated into their host society, and which seeks to improve development outcomes for both refugee and host populations) is critical for counteracting the negative long-term consequences of protracted refugee situations. This paper defines a development-led approach as one that “provides a comprehensive and systematic response to displacement crises, which seeks to mitigate the negative impacts of displacement, improve strategies to tackle the economic costs and impacts of displacement and maximise the developmental opportunities and potential of displacement situations” (Zetter, 2014, p. 2). While there is no agreed upon definition of a development-led approach, it is often characterized by the inclusion of refugees in development programming and service delivery alongside local populations and by “training refugees to become ‘agents of development’” (Betts, 2009, p. 5).

Some past development-led approaches include the Ugandan Self Reliance Strategy (SRS), which offered settlement land to Sudanese refugees and included them in service provision, and the Zambia initiative, which de facto locally integrated Angolan refugees (Betts, 2009). It is noteworthy that both of these approaches from the early 2000s were joint efforts involving the UNHCR and the host governments. Equally noteworthy were the long-term impacts of these two approaches for the outcomes of refugees and their host communities: in Zambia after the repatriation of Angolan refugees, “agricultural productivity in the Western Province declined markedly and the local people regretted the departure of Angolan refugees” (Betts,

2009, p. 8). In contrast, while still considered a ‘success’ the SRS approach in Uganda was criticized for providing Sudanese refugees with poor quality land, withdrawing donor support too soon, and the restriction of refugees’ movements to the settlement lands (*ibid*). Moreover, the SRS narrowly conceived of integration as service provision and consequently did not provide Sudanese refugees with the opportunities to socially and economically integrate, which “la[y] the foundation for antagonism by maintaining notions of ‘otherness’ inherent in the settlement structure” (Dryden-Peterson & Hovil, 2004, p. 35). While arguably better than not providing any solutions for refugees, these examples highlight the impacts of different development-led approaches, indicating that the more socially and economically inclusive, the more likely refugees and host communities can achieve positive outcomes.

Supporting Refugees Through a Development-led Approach

Development-led approaches have the potential to benefit both refugees and host populations through local development (Betts, 2009). Instead of creating parallel institutions for refugees that are costly and that “almost by definition leads to segmentation and differentiation” of refugee populations from their host societies, an integrated development-led approach aims to build up local development by providing universal services for host and refugee populations (Mkandawire, 2005, p. 7). Higher demands for public services opens up the potential for the international community to channel development funding towards building up public infrastructure, providing better long-term development outcomes for host and refugee populations and improving international cooperation and aid effectiveness (Betts, 2009; Betts *et al.*, 2014; Jacobsen, 2014; Milner, 2009; Zetter, 2014). Critically, development-led approaches should aim to support refugees’ own livelihood choices and aspirations, rather than imposing these from the standard ‘top-down’ perspective.

Since the responsibility for dealing with refugees lies with nation-states and the international community, it is from this top-down perspective that the ‘problem’ of refugees is generally conceived (Elie, 2014). This perspective ends up narrowly viewing the issue of refugees as something exogenously impacting states, rather than an endogenous process in which sending states, hosting states, and refugees’ choices combine to produce certain development outcomes. Indeed, the neglect of numerous other perspectives, in particular those of refugees, means we are only aware of and

understand a small part of the much larger development processes involved. It is imperative, therefore, that the perspectives and voices of refugees are included as partners in development. The power of the 'refugee voice' is that it "challenges established national narratives", questioning the legitimacy of arbitrary borders that define the boundaries of citizenship, entitlements, and the possible difference between a life of poverty or opportunity (Elie, 2014, p. 6).

Refugees present a particularly salient challenge to the Westphalian state model. The increasingly globalized and transnational world in which we live complicates the issue of obligations and responsibilities between state and non-citizens who are protected by international human rights instruments (Adamson, 2012; Betts, 2015; Gibney & Skogly, 2002). Nation-states who are signatory to the 1951 Convention are ultimately responsible for protecting refugees (non-citizens) within their borders and to facilitate the realization of durable solutions for these refugees. Even states that have not signed on to the 1951 Convention or 1967 Protocol have some responsibility towards refugees located within their borders based on the human rights obligations afforded to all human beings. Thus, durable, transnational solutions to dealing with refugee situations have the potential to be used as blueprints for future engagement with the broader issues around mobility and migration.

4. Conclusion

The character of refugee movements and situations are changing at an unparalleled rate: more people are being forcibly displaced, stuck in protracted situations for excruciating lengths of time, and hosted primarily in developing countries that are struggling to cope with their own developmental issues. The response of states and the wider international community to the challenges that these new refugee situations present have not kept pace with these changes. Additionally, the predominantly negative perception and discourse surrounding the issue of refugees paints a picture in which building barriers (physical or administrative) is the only way to stop the tides of refugees flowing across borders. Many refugee-hosting states fail to uphold their responsibilities to protect these vulnerable groups, restricting their right to work, access to services, and mobility. Consequently, refugee populations face challenging and vulnerable livelihood positions, which in turn results in a loss of human potential and development, and reduces

the likelihood of achieving one of the durable solutions. Left unchecked and unsupported, situations in which refugees remain stuck without any foreseeable durable solution “erodes human capital and increases poverty amongst people who could be productive; weakens the fragile social fabric of displaced communities, radicalises dispossessed people, underpins the emergence of regional and global security threats and can destabilise host governments; [and] increases the burden on international donors” (Zetter, 2014, p. 1).

By reflecting on refugee movements within larger developmental processes and recognizing the benefits that refugees bring to host societies, it becomes clear that only through concerted efforts by the international community to implement development-led approaches can truly durable solutions be achieved for refugees, their host societies, and neighbouring countries. A discussion of the many forms in which these approaches can be achieved is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is critical that these development-led approaches reflect the increasingly transnational world in which we live and seek to be comprehensive, cooperative, and collaborative (Loescher *et al.*, 2008). This includes context-specific programs and policies developed and implemented in partnership by states, international actors from the humanitarian and development communities (UN bodies, the World Bank, NGOs etc.), the private sector, civil society in hosting states, as well as refugees themselves.

While a development-led approach is more akin to achieving positive development outcomes than emergency relief, there are significant research gaps in this area. There is also a lack of coordination and consensus around so-called refugee ‘burden sharing’ between developed and developing countries that are necessary for the adoption of integrated development-led approaches to protracted refugee situations (Betts, 2009). Moreover, further research is necessary to understand the changing character of refugee movements, what refugees are looking for in trying to attain sustainable livelihoods (how they are achieving this, with or without the help of outside actors) and how states, development agencies and the international community can better support refugees in terms of their sustainable livelihoods as critical first steps towards finding permanent durable solutions.

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