Recommendations for transforming the Syrian humanitarian crisis

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Abstract

This position paper presents a set of recommendations, advocating that all stakeholders concerned with tackling the Syrian humanitarian crisis should adopt a new scheme for emerging from this crisis. It draws the initial features of a proposed mechanism for easing the immense burden of the Syrian humanitarian crisis, leveraging the resources of the international community.

Keywords: Syrian humanitarian crisis; relief; refugees;

1. Introduction

The conflict in Syria has reached a critical moment and caused a serious humanitarian crisis, which has been considered the biggest tragedy after World War II. Efforts of the international community have failed to stop blood shedding in Syria and displacing more innocent people inside or outside the country. Millions of Syrians are suffering in refugee camps and living under poverty line since the beginning of the conflict. Leaders of the world have achieved a big failure in terms of effectively managing this crisis, especially, as time progresses, the number of displaced Syrians is on the rise and these displaced persons become a source of huge pressure on societies and economies of the host countries. In our opinion, the United Nations should adopt new mechanisms for dealing with humanitarian crises. Simply collecting grants of money has proved that it is not effective at providing refugees with their necessary needs. When massive crises emerge like the Syrian crisis, the international community cannot depend solely on collecting and distributing grants for dealing with them. Rather, the community should search for more effective approaches. Thus, integrating large scale systematic plans is an inevitable process for dealing with such serious issues.

2. Global Center for Managing & Transforming Humanitarian Crises

We suggest that the UN establish an international center for studying all types of humanitarian crises our world faces over time through a huge humanitarian laboratory whose task is to generate novel and practical solutions to each crisis. It should be composed of different departments (department of the Syrian humanitarian crisis, of Nepal humanitarian crisis, of health issues in Africa, etc.). Specialists of different fields of knowledge will work together on answering the following question: how to transform the current humanitarian crises effectively. It is of vital importance having Syrian specialists in the work team of the Syrian Crisis and Nepal ones in the team of the Nepal crisis, etc., simply because they have deep knowledge about their societies.

1 Bringing seasoned experts and young minds to such a centre will make its environment a broad experimental platform, where creativity of talented minds gets employed in the humanitarian domains.

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and countries. A kind of cooperation will be possible between the departments and failures or successes of any department will represent lessons to the others. The major task of these specialists and inventors lies on transforming the crises via Innovation. They should invent practical solutions that can address different aspects of the crises. For example, often in war zones, many people die after getting injured because they cannot get the appropriate health care. Therefore, it is highly probable that hospitals there lack doctors, medicines, and health professionals. Let's imagine that such center can invent a software, machine, robot, artificial doctor or artificial arm which can do a surgery to the injured people inside war zones under control and supervision of other hospitals that exist outside these zones. Let's suppose that such a center can invent special kinds of displacement shelters, which can use renewable energies and recycle the waste to produce electricity, clean water and heat; or it can even turn water vapor (H₂O) that exists in the air into potable water. Such shelters are absolutely eco-friendly solutions. We think that in the future, the world might face a big humanitarian crisis due to the global climate change and pollution that exists in industrial countries. Hence, the importance of having such center specialized in responding to humanitarian crises creatively stems from the need to work on crisis prevention and preparation in the pre-crisis phase and managing and transforming crises in the post crisis phase. The same center should use Social Media Networks to present its solutions to the public and to benefit from their recommendations or even out-box ideas on critical issues. Such center should be sponsored highly like any prestigious research center. Its members are scientists, inventors and humanitarian experts who will dedicate their expertise, inventions and novel solutions to serve the people who are suffering from humanitarian crises.

3. Studies of the Syrian Crisis

Raising the awareness of the international community and educational organizations on the importance of creating a new field of study, called "Studies of the Syrian Crisis" is an important step for bringing this topic to different educational environments.

Such field of study should be based on analyzing the roots of the crisis and studying it in the light of different fields of knowledge (politics, economics, sociology, religious and ethnic studies, etc.). Building practical theories on managing this crisis and drawing plans of reconstruction period represent the core schema of this field.

Undoubtedly, creating practical theories on this immense crisis requires integrating multidisciplinary approaches. For example, we can combine fields of informatics, sociology and psychology in "a video game designed for studying the psyches and behaviors of Syrian refugees in host countries".

It is known that most of the people who lived in war-zones might suffer several social and psychological problems. Integrating them in a new society requires great efforts. Sometimes, host societies might bear fear of refugees because they think that refugees can endanger the security of their countries and bring violence or terrorism to their stable environments. For this reason, if host countries could have inside look into the psyches, ways of thinking and behaviors of refugees, they will become able to help these refugees integrate effectively into their societies and contribute positively to their countries. That will certainly reduce the gap between both of them and the level of fear of refugees. Through this game, host countries will get answers on several questions, such as : to what kind of backgrounds these refugees belong, why did they choose to settle in certain countries and what are the reasons of their social or behavioral problems shown in the host societies, etc.

This game will make the Syrian refugees enter the settings of the war in a virtual world to encounter again the situations they faced there- all of this process will be done under supervision of specialists who will monitor the phases of playing. Such game will show the conflict, destruction, social rupture, injured people, blood, explosives, weapons, lack of food, money, poverty, lack of water/health care, politicians, friends, ISIS, relatives, prison, sea, manifestations, feelings (happiness/sadness, feeling of victory, despair, fear, pain, loss of feelings), psychiatric and other health problems (depression, anxiety, loss of weight, nightmares), thoughts (hope, returning, reconstrucation the country, losing the trust, violence, terrorism). A large scale for the assessment of thoughts, emotions, social communication will be conducted to cover all the possible emotional, mental and behavioural states any human being might have. Each individual will decide freely his/her strategy of playing the game. Some might choose escalating the conflict till they kill their enemies. Other individuals might decide to leave the country and not to return in the future, while others might think about sacrificing their lives for saving other people. Others might get scared and get damaged psychologically due to the violence witnessed there. Some might show the will to play as a member of a group while others might prefer to play individually or to isolate themselves completely.

The participants should deal with these items freely and play the game till the end. They should play it several times then the results will be collected after each time. Their ways of playing and their reactions through the game will give the experts insights to the psyches of these persons and their ways of thinking. Besides, they will get to know what kind of conditions refugees passed through before reaching the host countries and the impacts of the war on them. For example if a refugee lost members of

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2 This game is mainly designed for Syrian Refugee children and teenagers. However, it can be applied in a wide range of age groups and in any host country.

3 Besides, the experts can understand through this game the relationship between the work of refugee's emotions and political, economic and social decision making.

4 The settings of the game will be mainly Syria, camps of refugees in the Middle East and other countries, as well, where refugees exist or pass.
his/her family, experts will know how he/she felt and reacted to such occurrence. In addition, if a participant chose to engage in fighting specific religious or ethnic groups, this will give predictive insights to a probable violent behaviour in the future which should be addressed early. Such individuals should attend a special practical program on “Anti- Extremism & Anti-Discrimination”. This program should be designed by religious scholars, sociologists and psychologists. It should focus on the peaceful principles of the religions of these refugees, and combine them with the societal principles of the host countries to create an atmosphere of cohesion among the refugees themselves and between them and the host society in general.

4. Global Association for Employing the Syrian Workforce

It is known that the grants of money spent on refugee camps in the Middle East do not cover all the essential needs of the Syrian refugees. Because they are suffering in these environments, they started to march towards EU. If we could address the troubles that exist there, they will not risk themselves and ride the sea for entering EU. Rather, they will remain in the Middle East and their presence there will contribute positively to the host countries economically and socially speaking. What we should do is to create an organizational frame for refugee communities there. For this reason, refugees should be seen as the primary actor in the process of crisis management and transformation. Let's change the way of looking at them from vulnerable refugees to capable people. Let's look at them as a huge amount of energy, potentials, minds and hands. We are in front of latent qualities and abilities that should be used and developed in a proper manner and that will smooth the way of emerging from the crisis. Turning them from consumers of the resources of host countries and dependent on humanitarian aids to producers and contributors to these societies and economies represents the key to transforming the crisis.

Indeed, private sectors can play a vital role in humanitarian actions. They should act as key partners of humanitarian organizations in the process of managing and transforming crises by bringing investments and money making projects to the countries that host refugees. They can fill the gap that governments and international organizations could not fill during the five years of the Syrian crisis. Thus, refugees should not be seen as grant seekers, rather as individuals who deserve to be given many opportunities. Founding a global association for employing the Syrian workforce is an important step for integrating owners of capitals into the process of transforming this humanitarian crisis. The most important task of its specialists in economics lies in creating studies of projects that can attract entrepreneurs, business people and owners of capitals to the host countries.

If a database of economic projects could exist, that will give many entrepreneurs the chance to participate in transforming the Syrian humanitarian Crisis by choosing the study that best suits their investment plans. Such an association should concentrates its work in two directions: on the first hand bringing investment projects to the countries that host Syrian refugees and establishing links between the Syrian workforce and regional or international labour markets agencies, on the other hand. Turning from Random to Purposive Relocation of Refugees Because of the huge number of refugees in the Middle East, Greece and Italy, it has become important to distribute them among other countries. However, countries that face financial crises will have difficulties in receiving refugees. This is why we suggest distributing them depending on the requirements of labour markets of host countries. Conducting statistical studies on ages, educacional levels, skills and professions of refugees and the needs of labour markets of host countries and the fertility rates of their societies will make the process of relocation of refugees advantageous for both sides.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, managing the Syrian humanitarian crisis requires combining huge efforts of governments with those of private sectors, individuals and organizations of civil society to pave the way of emerging from this crisis. It is of great importance to bring this topic to experimental research domains and to infer practical theories and new mechanisms of managing humanitarian crises.

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5 Physical and intellectual potentials
6 They should work on Reaching the Rich.
7 If they do making money projects where refugees exist, such step will afford the Syrian refugees the opportunity to be employed and absolutely these projects will generate profits to the entrepreneurs.
8 Given the fact that the biggest number of refugees exists in the Middle East, this makes us think that transforming the Syrian humanitarian crisis should be done through transforming this environment first. We propose turning refugee camps into modern cities that can attract capital investment from numerous sources. Integrating three city models: eco-friendly, touristic, and industrial ones into camps of refugees can bring capital to this region.