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Displacement profiling in urban areas

Methodological approaches for collecting and analysing data on
internal displacement in cities

Joint IDP Profiling Service

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Background paper to the main report

Displacement Profiling in Urban Areas

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INTRODUCTION

The increased attention placed on displacement in urban areas within global discourse in recent years, for example through the UNHCR 2018 High Commissioners Dialogue focused exclusively on urban displacement, is merited and long overdue.

While there is general agreement that “displacement can have significant impact on cities and their populations”², evidence on the experience of displaced populations in cities remains sparse. This includes both the specific protection risks they are exposed to as well as the new opportunities they gain access to. This gap exists in part because of the difficulties of collecting and analysing information on urban populations, limiting effective humanitarian and development responses in such settings.

While obtaining up-to-date and representative data on IDPs is a challenge in most contexts³, urban settings pose particular operational, political and technical constraints⁴. Continued work analysing displacement in urban areas demonstrates that these can, however, be overcome through careful planning, flexible methodologies, bringing partners together under one transparent process, and incorporating a deep understanding of the urban context. These are key elements of the collaborative data collection process known as displacement profiling.

This paper focuses on the technical side, specifically how to overcome certain methodological challenges of analysing internal displacement in urban settings. Three recent profiling exercises of urban internal displacement situations illustrate how profiling exercises can adapt to produce relevant and useful evidence for responding to internally displaced and displacement-affected populations living in cities. The strategies used include mapping informal areas and conducting an enumeration to update statistics on internal displacement, using an area-based approach to distinguish between problems entire areas are facing and those unique to displaced populations, and finally using a comprehensive analytical framework to model how a city is and is not functioning to highlight gaps in service provision in displacement-affected areas. These case studies have been selected to demonstrate progressive learning, ultimately showing that displacement profiling can be applied in different types of crises in cities.

These exercises - carried out in Mogadishu, Somalia (2015 - 2016); Erbil, Iraq (2015 - 2016); and various cities in Syria (2018 - 2019) - were implemented by humanitarian, development and government partners with support and technical advice from the interagency Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS).

¹ JIPS is an interagency project that provides support to governments, humanitarian and development partners to conduct profiling in displacement situations. For several years they have specialized in urban settings and produced guidance on profiling in these contexts. JIPS includes UNHCR, UNOCHA, UNDP, DRC, NRC, NRC-IDMC and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs in its Executive Committee. See www.jips.org. For follow-up discussion related to this paper, please contact Melissa Weihmayer (Weihmayer@jips.org).

² “High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges: Protection and Solutions in Urban Settings.” 2018. Background Paper. Geneva: UNHCR, p. 5. <https://www.unhcr.org/5c0fd0954>.

³ Baal and Ronkainen (2017). Obtaining Representative Data on IDPs: Challenges and Recommendations. UNHCR Statistical Technical Series 1/2017: <https://www.jips.org/jips-publication/unhcr-technical-series-obtaining-representative-data-on-idps/>.

⁴ Operational issues include logistical challenges such as resource constraints and security risks for data collection teams, while political issues relate to the strategies needed to bring stakeholders together and enable trust in the results. Technical issues are the methodological decisions that structure and guide the data collection.

JIPS was established in 2009 by IDMC and other partners in order to bring humanitarian, development and government stakeholders together to undertake displacement profiling for agreed-upon evidence on displacement situations⁵. JIPS has invested its expertise in urban displacement situations for several years.

Adapting Displacement Profiling to Urban Contexts

Displacement profiling has been undertaken in urban areas for some time given the increasingly urban nature of displacement⁶. A recent publication from the ICRC⁷ illustrating the importance of focusing on internally displaced populations in cities highlights the benefits of displacement profiling. It describes displacement profiling in urban settings as a way to build responses around reliable data and analysis that helps to “uncover the full picture” of the diversity of situations among the displaced populations as well as the host families and communities affected by the displacement living around them:

“...Profiling of urban displacement situations, which provides a methodology that suits dispersed, less visible populations and enables a comparative analysis between different population groups residing in similar areas, is extremely useful in this regard - and human and financial resources must be allocated for it.”⁸

To give a more concrete idea on the types of methods used in displacement profiling, an exercise typically spends time on a detailed review of existing data on population statistics in order to establish a baseline on the magnitude of displacement in a given area. Data collection methods used to complement this usually include an enumeration, a sample-based household survey, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and a review and triangulation of existing secondary data, depending on the main objectives of the exercise. This mixed methods approach has proven more effective than any one method on its own for obtaining an in-depth understanding of the various challenges that IDPs in urban situations face⁹. The results thus go beyond the numbers, thereby producing a ‘full picture’.

Displacement profiling, however, is much more than the methods it uses for data collection. This is because profiling tailors its methodology to each context and the specific information needs of the partners engaged in the displacement response. Displacement profiling therefore evolves as a concept and approach as a result, as the different approaches described in this paper will demonstrate. Yet the ultimate goal remains the same in any profiling context: to create an agreed-upon evidence base to inform policies and programs in support of durable solutions for displaced populations.

Displacement profiling tailors its methodology in two ways, both of which are equally important: 1) by adapting the content of a profiling exercise to specific information needs in a situation of displacement (meaning what is being collected and why is this type of information and analysis needed) and 2) adjusting the process to the stakeholders in that context (meaning identifying who will need to jointly use the information for the response and how partners come together to build trust and transparency throughout).

The content of a profiling exercise must fit the purpose of profiling, which is to inform durable solutions for displaced persons. But how is this done in practice? The Durable Solutions Analysis Guide¹⁰ explains that this is done by clarifying the extent to which IDPs are able to enjoy their human rights without

⁵ Specific information on the history of the term “profiling” can be found on its JIPS Essential Toolkit (JET): Joint IDP Profiling Service (2017). What Is the Profiling Process? Guidance document: JIPS Essential Toolkit. Online: Available at: <https://jet.jips.org/tool/guidance-what-is-profiling/>.

⁶ Lessons learned based on urban profiling exercises in several refugee situations, for example, resulted in guidance for profiling in urban areas, suggesting that the process was already well-adapted to cities because of its collaborative process and flexible methodology: Jacobsen, Karen, and Ivan Cardona. 2014. “Guidance For Profiling Urban Displacement Situations: Challenges And Solutions.” Geneva, Switzerland: Joint IDP Profiling Service. Available at: <https://www.jips.org/tools-and-guidance/urban-profiling-guidance/>.

⁷ Grayson, Catherine-Lune, and Angela Cotroneo (2018). Displaced in Cities: Experiencing and Responding to Urban Internal Displacement Outside Camps. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Available at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/4344-displaced-cities-experiencing-and-responding-urban-internal-displacement-outside>.

⁸ Ibid. p. 66.

⁹ Baal, N., Jacobsen, K. and Chemaly, W. (2016) Forced Displacement - Go figure! Shaking the box of profiling IDP situations. Joint IDP Profiling Service and International Feinstein Center, p. 60 - 67. Available at: <https://www.jips.org/jips-publication/go-figure-idp-profiling>.

¹⁰ Joint IDP Profiling Service (2018). Durable Solutions Indicator Library and Analysis Guide. Online: <http://inform-durablesolutions-idp.org>.

discrimination and challenges linked to their displacement, how they perceive and prioritise durable solutions to their displacement, and how its stakeholders can support these immediate and long-term goals. For this, a comparative approach is needed that collects information on the conditions and challenges experienced not just by displaced households but also the non-displaced households living in the same areas. Looking at both together helps to assess which vulnerabilities exist in general within a certain context and which vulnerabilities are more likely to be linked to a household’s displacement history¹¹. This approach thus provides the basis for an analysis of durable solutions.

The results from this type of analysis highlight challenges and capacities of displaced populations specifically as well as challenges and capacities of the populations as a whole, suggesting some interventions which should target the displaced or specific subgroups of displaced populations (women, men, youth, elderly, etc.) and others which should be applied to all populations living in an area for stronger cohesion in the communities overall.

In addition to the content (data collected and sources used), profiling places equal weight on the process through which it is carried out. This goes beyond how to collect the data and encompasses the various steps taken to situate the data collection into a much larger workflow. The goal is to make the data not only robust but also relevant, worthwhile and usable. Bringing stakeholders together in a collaborative and transparent process to make decisions throughout the exercise builds local ownership, prioritises local expertise, incorporates a deep understanding of the context, and encourages trust in the results. It also ensures that the evidence produced through a profiling exercise meets the common information needs of stakeholders and can be incorporated into the appropriate planning mechanisms (e.g. development plan, working group policy, etc.) to inform concrete decision-making. This is indeed key for setting the stage for the results to be used effectively by all the stakeholders engaged in the response, thereby overcoming potential political hurdles in the design and implementation of strategies in support of durable solutions for internally displaced populations¹². Reaching agreement on a few basic elements from the outset is especially important for creating a shared starting point and vision that guides discussions in a diverse group of partners and helps to drive the process forward¹³. The six phases of the profiling process included below help to illustrate how these various steps fit together¹⁴.



Figure 1: Six phases of the profiling process, as described on the JIPS Essential Toolkit (JET) at www.jet.jips.org.

¹¹ By “displacement history” we mean such details as, for example, how many household’s members were displaced, when they were displaced, what event triggered displacement if a specific event took place, how many times they have been displaced, where did they displace from or where did they displace to.

¹² Baal, N., Jacobsen, K. and Chemaly, W. (2016) Forced Displacement - Go figure! Shaking the box of profiling IDP situations. Joint IDP Profiling Service and International Feinstein Center, p. 76 - 98. Available at: <https://www.jips.org/jips-publication/go-figure-idp-profiling>.

¹³ This is especially establishing the need for new information, and the goal of collecting information, in other words the main objective of the exercise overall and what that means in practice for data collection and analysis: Joint IDP Profiling Service (2017). “Initiating the profiling process.” Guidance document: JIPS Essential Toolkit. Online: <https://jet.jips.org/phase/initiating-the-profiling-exercise/>.

¹⁴ See the JIPS Essential Toolkit (JET) to explore the six phases of the profiling process and download tools to implement each: www.jet.jips.org.

The displacement profiling process and content must thus always be adapted to the local conditions, priorities, and contexts, as no two situations with internal displacement are the same. The same applies to cities and their unique contexts¹⁵.

Common features of displacement in cities that require consideration in developing an appropriate profiling methodology include the following¹⁶:

- Different population groups (for example internally displaced and urban poor) living together in similar conditions, with many of them invisible, hard-to-reach, and/or highly-dispersed in dense urban settings;
- Different types of population movement, with a mix of people displaced from different parts of the city (intra-urban), from different cities (inter-urban), or from rural areas;
- Marginalised groups, often including displaced populations, living in Informal urban environments (i.e. slums) linked to rapid urbanization and/or lack of urban planning;
- Level of access to existing services differ by population group and by location within a city, calling for a combination of both population-based and area-based analysis;
- Mix of stakeholders whose information needs should be considered, including humanitarian assistance providers, local government, civil society, built environment professionals, and the private sector.

The following case studies demonstrate some ways in which displacement profiling has adapted to various types of displacement situations and urban contexts, evolving towards a more integrated analysis of the city and its people, in particular the displaced.

¹⁵ Campbell, L. (2018) What's missing? Adding context to the urban response toolbox. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI. Available at: <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/whats-missing-adding-context-to-the-urban-response-toolbox>.

¹⁶ Other characteristics of urban internal displacement are mentioned in IDMC's 2016 report: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2016). Leaving no one behind: Internal displacement and the New Urban Agenda. Briefing Paper. Geneva: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/leaving-no-one-behind>.

Case study 1: Informal Settlements with Mixed Populations in Mogadishu, Somalia

Background and purpose of profiling¹⁷

Protracted conflict and cyclical disasters have driven displacement in Somalia for decades. Thousands of IDPs have arrived in the capital city of Mogadishu over the years, settling in the informal urban settlements around the city. At the same time, labour migrants from elsewhere in the country are also moving into the city in search of new opportunities, and have settled in the same areas. Given the mixed population in the settlements and the oftentimes difficult security situation, little information existed on how the situation of IDPs was different from that of the non-displaced population in the same settlements. At the same time, continuing evictions of people living in the settlement areas complicated the understanding of the displacement situation, making it difficult to even determine how many displaced persons resided in the city.

In 2014-2015, government partners at federal and city levels as well as humanitarian partners carried out a profiling exercise to gain a thorough understanding of the displacement situation in the city and to inform planning for durable solutions policies and programs¹⁸. Specifically, the objective of the profiling exercise was to provide an agreed-upon update of the IDP figures in the city based on an analysis of people's displacement history, and to provide an in-depth analysis of the needs, capacities and coping mechanisms of all populations living in the so-called IDP settlements.

Technical challenges and solutions

In the context of Mogadishu, the partners highlighted that most urban residents had been displaced from their home at some point in time. Given that it was not possible to include the whole city in the scope of the study, the profiling exercise limited its focus to IDPs in the settlement areas, as the humanitarian situation there was known to be dire. A number of factors meant that the settlements across the city, which had grown informally for decades, had never been officially mapped, meaning that the people living in them were very much 'off the grid'. Indeed, no comprehensive and up-to-date information on the locations and delineations of the settlements themselves existed, let alone who lived within them. Therefore, mapping these settlements was a necessary first step in the exercise. Secondly, there were different opinions among the partners providing assistance to the populations in the settlements on the existing population estimates. This was due to the remote management of most data processes and suspicions that reported numbers were regularly inflated in order to acquire more assistance. Thirdly, the settlement populations comprised not only IDPs, but also other groups such as economic migrants, refugees, non-displaced people, etc. A thorough mapping of the settlements therefore included not only a mapping of the spatial boundaries of the settlements, but also an enumeration (counting) of all the households. Using a short questionnaire, the enumeration aimed to distinguish internally displaced persons from the overall settlement population by collecting the migration history of all households in the settlements. Based on the migration history, the households were then categorised into: IDPs, economic migrants, host/local populations, returnees, refugees and international migrants using definitions discussed with and agreed to by all partners.

The mapping and enumeration made it feasible to then draw a sample for the household survey that was representative of the larger population living in those specific informal settlements. Based on the survey data, a comprehensive analysis was done on the access to services, tenure security, the livelihood situation, and the perceptions of safety and security amongst other topics. The situation of IDPs across

¹⁷ Internal Displacement Profiling in Mogadishu (2016). Profiling Report. Somalia Protection Cluster, Somalia Disaster Management Agency, and Banadir Regional Administration. Available at: <https://www.iips.org/uploads/2018/10/Somalia-Mogadishu-profiling-report-2016.pdf>.

¹⁸ The exercise was led by an IDP Profiling Working Group supported by numerous actors, namely: the local authorities (the Somalia Disaster Management Agency of the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs, the Banadir Regional Administration), the Somalia Protection Cluster, as well as UN and NGO agencies (UNHCR, DRC, IOM, NRC, Save the Children, HINNA, Elman, DBG, UNICEF, UNOCHA, REACH, SSWC, Mercy Corps, Concern, IRC, ORDO, and the Somalia Shelter Clusters). REACH provided technical support for the mapping of informal settlements discussed in this section.

the settlements was compared against the situation of the rest of the settlement residents, thus enabling an understanding of which challenges were linked to their status as IDPs and which challenges were shared among the settlements' residents¹⁹. This analysis demonstrated, for example, that all inhabitants of the settlements included in the study were at risk of evictions, with slightly more (37%) of IDPs expecting to be evicted within the next six months as compared to economic migrants and local populations. But despite this similarity, the options for IDPs for what to do in the event of an eviction is less secure, with the majority expecting to simply move to another settlement with likely the same risks and potentially worsening conditions.

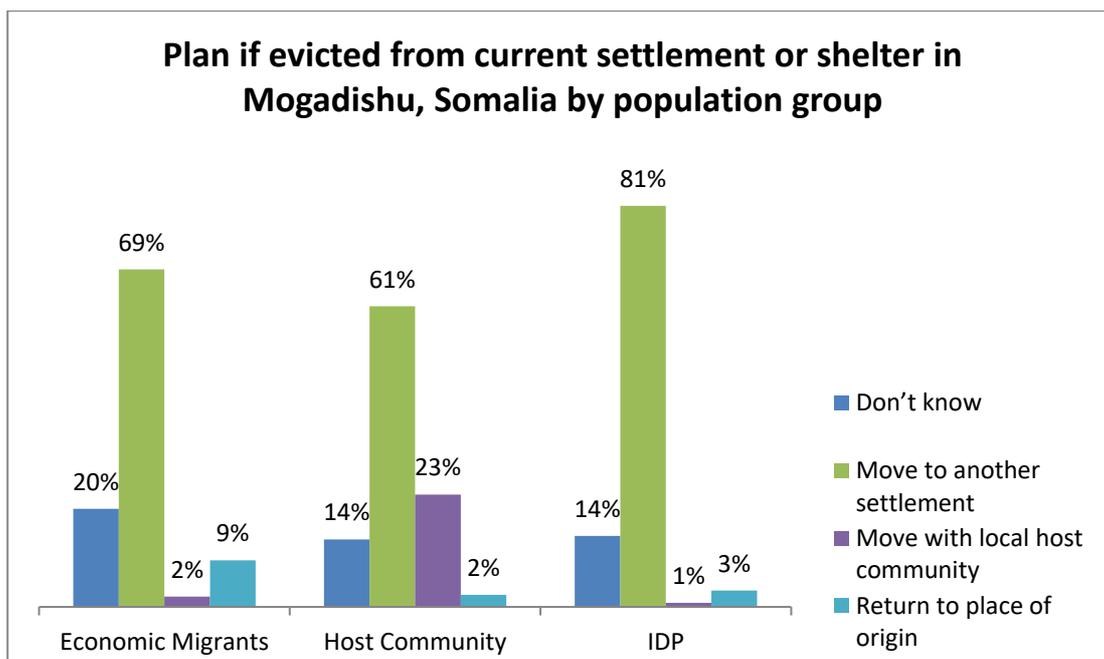


Figure 2: Source - Internal Displacement Profiling in Mogadishu, data collected September - December 2015, report published 2016.

Summary of lessons learned

The mapping and enumeration significantly added to the resources and time required to undertake this profiling exercise, partly also due to the security and access constraints faced. That said, a major lesson learned is that this step was worth the investment for this exercise and context. The mapping and the enumeration served a dual purpose: even though these steps were discussed during the planning phase of the study mainly as requirements to undertake the subsequent household survey, the mapping and enumeration results were important stand-alone outputs that identified and delineated the settlements across the city, while also creating reliable estimates of the magnitude of internal displacement there. As IDP figures were commonly cited in advocacy and planning discussions, this created the opportunity for a shared starting point for discussing the response activities needed.

Subsequently, the mapping and enumeration enabled the design of a robust sample-based household survey that allowed for an in-depth analysis of the situation of the populations in the settlements, which highlighted the particular challenges that IDPs in Mogadishu faced in comparison to other groups - also vulnerable in many ways.

The mayor of Mogadishu raised this during his remarks at the recent UNHCR High Commissioner's Dialogue in Geneva, Switzerland, in December 2018, demonstrating the continued relevance of the

¹⁹ The dataset from the Mogadishu, Somalia 2014 - 2015 profiling exercise can be explored in the Dynamic Analysis and Reporting Tool (DART): www.dart.iips.org.

results. The profiling results ultimately built both a strong case for inclusion of durable solutions to displacement into local and national development planning and for addressing specific protection concerns of the displaced. As the Director General of the National Statistics Ministry stated, the profiling results were not only used by the Ministry of Planning in the formation of policy, but were also a springboard for discussing a durable solutions chapter in the National Development Plan²⁰. Supporting durable solutions, most notably through the IDP Durable Solutions Initiative shaped under the advisory role of former Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs Walter Kälin, continues to be central to response priorities in Mogadishu today²¹.

To summarise, the profiling exercise in Mogadishu exemplified the benefits of an extensive mapping and enumeration when baseline population estimates of the displaced are required, including the identification of displaced persons based on their migration history. These methods are often needed in the case in cities where displaced populations live outside of the official urban plans, and remain generally overlooked or invisible.



Image 1: Launch of the Profiling Report in Mogadishu, Somalia on May 15 2016 featuring the Banadir Regional Administration, the Government of Somalia's Disaster Management Agency, the UN Resident Coordinator and the former UN representative on the human rights of IDPs.

²⁰ Joint IDP Profiling Service (2016). Profile at a glance: Somalia, Mogadishu. Available at: <https://www.iips.org/iips-publication/at-a-glance-somalia-mogadishu-2016/>.

²¹ More information on the IDP Durable Solutions Initiative is available here: <https://www.uninsomalia.org/pros-cal-success-story-1/2018/2/19/durable-solutions-initiative-is-looking-on-the-way-forward-to-recovery-and-resilience-for-the-most-vulnerable>.

Case study 2: Informing area-based approaches in Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Background and purpose of profiling²²

The Erbil Governorate, with a total population of around 2 million people, hosts the capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The governorate, like the rest of the Kurdistan Region, has been deeply affected by recent waves of displacement resulting from the conflicts in Syria and the rest of Iraq.

By 2016, the urban population in the Erbil Governorate had increased by approximately 25%. This, combined with the pervasive financial crisis, greatly exacerbated the strains already placed on local communities. On-going responses to the displacement situation at the time was informed by evidence that generally kept analyses of the refugee and internal displacement situations separate.

In this context, the Governorate authorities in Erbil, together with UN partners, decided to conduct a profiling exercise comparing IDPs, refugees and non-displaced population groups in different urban areas in order to bring closer together the analysis of the IDP and the refugee situations, while also informing a more coherent longer term planning process for the Kurdistan Regional Government authorities as well as the humanitarian and development community²³. This was to be achieved through an area-based analysis of the displacement situation in areas with high concentration of displaced populations living out of camps in urban settings.

Technical challenges and solutions

The profiling partners had different but related data needs. The governorate actors were interested in understanding the impact of displacement in different parts of the city in order to inform their planning, whereas the humanitarian actors, who are more likely to target specific marginalized groups, were more interested in understanding the impact of displacement on the displaced populations as such. All actors involved in the profiling agreed that the out-of-camp IDP population was not one homogenous group, but rather included some households that were self-reliant, and others less so. Neither the focus on areas of the city, nor the focus on exploring differences within the displaced population (e.g. different vulnerabilities of refugees as compared to IDPs) was adequately addressed through existing data sources.

Through partner discussions, it became clear that the following questions were the priority in order to better plan interventions:

- To which degrees are different areas able to absorb and accommodate the displaced populations? Which types of areas are more under strain and why?
- How are people affected differently both between and within different population groups (for example: are some IDPs better off than others and if so, how and why)?
- Based on these two approaches, how can responses best target beneficiaries: by population group or by area?

The challenge was therefore to capture diversity linked to location in addition to diversity linked to population groups under one single methodology. With little guidance on how this has been done in other contexts, the approach to this urban displacement profiling exercise was not clear. The technical solution proposed for addressing the profiling objectives was to stratify the analysis not only by population groups present in the city (IDPs, refugees and non-displaced), but also by area types. This

²² Erbil Refugee Council and UNHCR (2016). Displacement as challenge and opportunity - Urban profile: Refugees, internally displaced persons and host community, Erbil Governorate, Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Available at: <https://www.jips.org/jips-publication/profiling-report-erbil-iraq-2016/>.

²³ The profiling exercise was led by the Erbil Refugee Council - the governorate organisation responsible for displacement response, and UNHCR while receiving significant input from the Steering Committee set up which also comprised: OCHA, IOM, HABITAT, UNFPA, the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre of the Governorate and the Erbil Statistics.

allowed for a comparative analysis of the different populations, as well as of the populations in different types of areas.



Image 2: Collaboration between the Erbil Statistics Office and profiling partners to review existing data and develop methodology for urban displacement profiling exercise.

The identification of the ‘types of areas’ (classifications) resulted from extensive discussion with partners and an iterative technical process of trial and error. Three approaches were discussed:

The first approach was to establish neighbourhood classifications based on the general standard of living, as defined by a number of selected indicators linked to quality of housing, rent prices, reported security incidents, and capacity of public services. All neighbourhoods would then be rated on a scale and categorised into neighbourhoods with high, medium or low standards of living. The total number of neighbourhoods included in the profiling scope exceeded the 500 and the collection of the aforementioned indicators via key informant interviews, mainly at the municipal level, proved too resource-intensive to implement. This approach would have required more time and expertise borrowed from urban planning approaches²⁴.

The second approach entailed using rental price ranges and the overall character of the built environment (based on detailed satellite imagery) to create a classification that would allow for a comparison of ‘newly built residential neighbourhoods with higher rents and good to very good quality housing’ and ‘old residential neighbourhoods/mixed with commercial/industrial areas with medium and lower rents, and medium to poor quality housing’. However, this typology did not reveal any meaningful pattern in terms of socio-economic differences and thus did not capture the actual differences in the neighbourhoods.

The third (and final) approach was to apply classification of the neighbourhoods based on the distance to the centre, as that was linked to connectivity with the main services and access to jobs. The categories agreed to by the partners were: the Erbil city centre, the Erbil urban periphery (all neighbourhoods around the centre, closely connected with the city), and some smaller towns in the governorate. See the figure below depicting how the classification was used for the stratification of the survey sample.

²⁴ This is now being explored and piloted in Syrian cities (see later case study for more information).

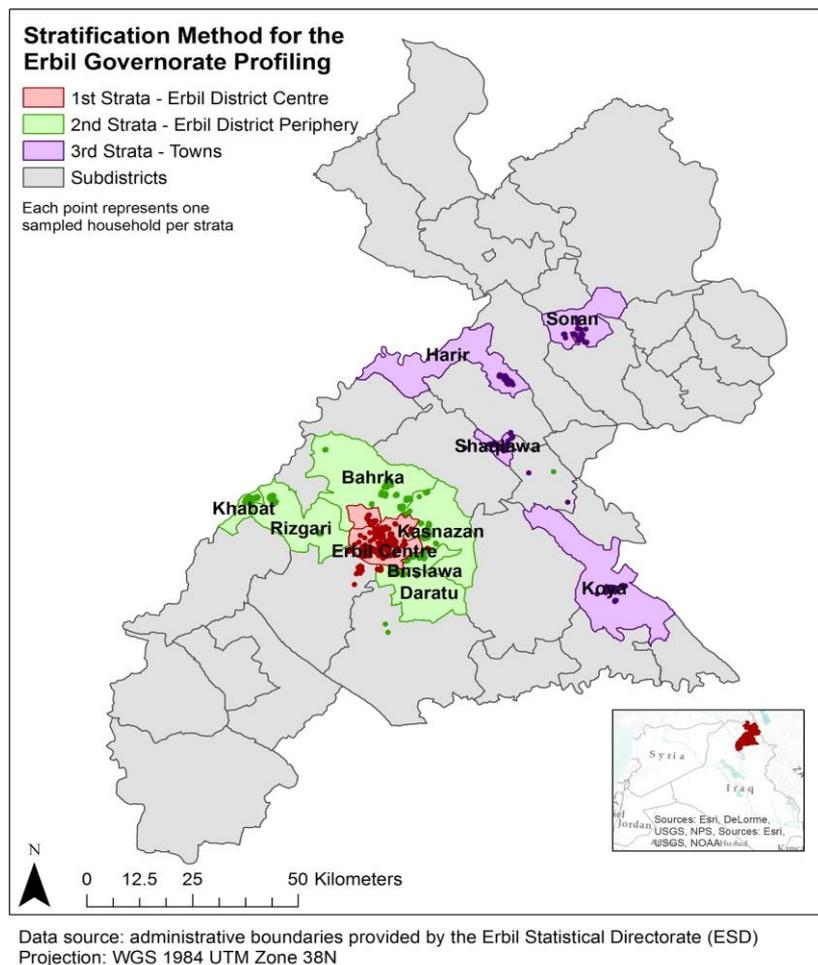


Figure 3: Geographical stratification of the target areas/sample by Erbil city centre, periphery and towns.

Summary of lessons learned

The profiling results provided a holistic analysis of the urban displacement in Erbil looking at the IDP as well as the refugee situations, which had been previously addressed through separate approaches. Furthermore, the comparison of the displaced populations with the non-displaced was of great value not only to the Governorate authorities, who needed information on the urban population in general to inform their planning of service delivery in the city, but also for the humanitarian community. For the actors engaged in humanitarian responses, they now had evidence to support the need to also include the host communities in their responses.²⁵

Beyond the results, the profiling exercise produced valuable lessons for the development of better tailored profiling methodologies in urban settings. The profiling exercise in Erbil offered a comparative analysis not only of the displaced and non-displaced populations in the city, but also of the different urban areas. However, identifying the most relevant way of including the area-based stratification in the household survey proved very challenging as classifying areas (whether neighbourhoods or districts) relies on extensive mapping of infrastructure and services. Such a mapping exercise requires urban planning expertise as well as additional resources and time.

This process revealed that creating area classifications may be a practical approach to addressing potential constraints pertaining to sample size and resources (when for example it is not possible to sample all administrative units in a city). However, identifying classifications that are meaningful and relevant for urban planning purposes can be a challenge. In Erbil, the classification based on distance to the urban centre (as opposed to combined indicators related to standards of living or quality of housing)

²⁵ The dataset from the Erbil, Iraq 2016 profiling exercise can be explored in the Dynamic Analysis and Reporting Tool (DART): www.dart.iips.org.

proved not only more feasible, but also more relevant to the governorate actors, who planned their work by area in the city (rather than by cross-geographical categories of neighbourhoods).

A last but important lesson relates to the partnerships in this exercise, as these are what made the technical solutions possible. The leadership of the local authorities was critical, and helped to pave the way for evidence that was more relevant and useful for the context. Represented by the Erbil Refugee Council, the partners were effective in liaising with other local government offices such as the Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office and the Ministry of Planning and bringing them into the process. The collaboration with these local partners for technical work and strategic decision-making was sustained throughout, and led to a truly jointly-owned evidence base. As Serwan Mohamed, Director of the Kurdistan Region Statistics Office said, “This study shows the importance of joining efforts between Government, including Statistics Offices, and humanitarian organisations to avoid multiple data collection with different methodologies and objectives.”²⁶

Building off of the technical lessons from this case study, the need for a more extensive integration of urban mapping and analysis in shaping an area-based profiling analysis is reflected in the subsequent work done in Syria.

²⁶ Joint IDP Profiling Service (2016). Profile at a glance: The use of profiling in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Erbil, Duhok & Sulaymaniyah). Available at: <https://www.iips.org/iips-publication/at-a-glance-the-use-of-profiling-in-the-kurdistan-region-of-iraq-erbil-duhok-sulaymaniyah-2016/>.

Case study 3: Understanding Displacement in the Context of Damaged Cities in Syria

Background and purpose of profiling²⁷

Conflict in Syria has led to a profoundly urban crisis. Damage, destruction and displacement are indeed concentrated in major urban centres and cities. The majority of Governorate capitals and secondary cities have been damaged since 2011, with many hospitals, schools, water supply and sanitation systems, electricity grids, industries and markets destroyed, as well as hundreds of thousands of homes and buildings damaged. The scale of those in need of humanitarian intervention remains immense: the UN estimates that there are about 13.1 million people in need inside Syria, with 5.6 million experiencing acute needs²⁸.

Accordingly, displacement has taken place on a massive scale, both within and outside of Syria. Displacement in Syrian cities is characterized by a mix of inter-urban displacement (people displaced from one city to another), and intra-urban displacement (people displaced to different parts of a city as it became besieged or occupied). This recent and on-going displacement comes on top of Syria's history of rapid internal migration to cities taking place before the crisis. But the crisis has significantly exacerbated the situation: by 2016, cities were estimated to be hosting at least 75% of the Syrian population, in contrast to roughly 55% in 2010²⁹.

Because of the complexity of the Syrian context and the need for a stronger focus on the urban dynamics of the crisis, the Urban Analysis Network Syria (UrbAN-S) was founded. This consortium brings together partners with complementary expertise, and is comprised of iMMAP, JIPS, Mercy Corps Humanitarian Action Team (HAT), and the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) as well as urban development experts working in the Syrian context. After piloting the approach in different Syrian cities through 2019, the methodology will be published as a toolkit for adaptation in other regions³⁰.

The main objective of urban profiling in Syrian cities is to provide an integrated snapshot of the current physical and social conditions of the city and its populations in light of the conflict and displacement context. This includes identifying gaps between the population needs and the capacity of the city to provide for those needs. The goal of this urban analysis is to propose priority areas of intervention that contribute to responsible and sustainable urban recovery inclusive of displaced populations' specific needs. As such it helps urban development actors to determine exactly where to prioritise reconstruction of key city services such as the reinforcement of water networks, rebuilding of government offices, or clearing roads of explosive remnants of war, as well as the need to develop and tailor policies to safeguard or restore housing, land and property rights, to name a few examples.

Technical challenge and solutions

Following discussions with local experts, the main questions for weighing interventions became clear:

How have conflict dynamics affected or continue to affect the city?

How have population movements affected or continue to affect the city?

How and to what extent does the city provide an adequate standard of living for all its populations?

While all case studies presented in this paper are from contexts with widespread displacement, Syrian cities differ from the other two case studies because of the death toll and heavy damage sustained by the urban infrastructure. This is because the cities served as both sites of conflict as well as refuge³¹. This

²⁷ More information on JIPS' support to the Urban Analysis Network Syria, available at: <https://www.iips.org/iips-country/syrian-arab-republic/>.

²⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (2018). 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview Syria. Available at: <https://hno-syria.org/>

²⁹ Aita, S. et al. (2017) State of Syrian Cities: 2016 - 2017. Project funded by the European Union: p. 13.

³⁰ The toolkit will be made available through the UrbAN-S web portal: www.urban-syria.org.

³¹ Categories for displacement-affected cities in the Middle East and North Africa region can be found in the following Policy Note: World Bank Group (2017). Cities of refuge in the Middle East : bringing an urban lens to the forced displacement challenge. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/922371511267498593/Cities-of-refuge-in-the-Middle-East-bringing-an-urban-lens-to-the-forced-displacement-challenge>.

means that IDPs living in Syrian cities were likely to be facing similar and similarly acute challenges as those of the local residents that remained in those areas. For the most part, the services that were damaged during the conflict remain so and plans to restore them are unclear. In this case, identifying whether displaced populations have particular needs that differ from the population as a whole, or face discrimination in accessing certain services, requires first an assessment of the capacity and quality of the services themselves, and an analysis of the areas of the city that face more or less damage than others. In other words, the analysis must first establish what the city is able to provide given the impact of the conflict, and then assess whether this is reaching areas of the city and populations equitably.

The technical solution proposed for bringing these pieces together is to create an analytical framework that models a city, including its systems and populations, to capture the full picture despite the city’s inherent complexity. The framework combines different types of information to analyse the impact of the Syrian conflict on urban areas and their populations, including large-scale displacement and physical damage of infrastructure and services. Ultimately, the analytical framework and resulting analysis helps to enable local and international response actors to start their planning from a shared understanding of the city’s current conditions. The analytical framework has a corresponding list of indicators and data sources to guide the secondary and primary data collection, featured in the online Urban Profiling Toolkit.

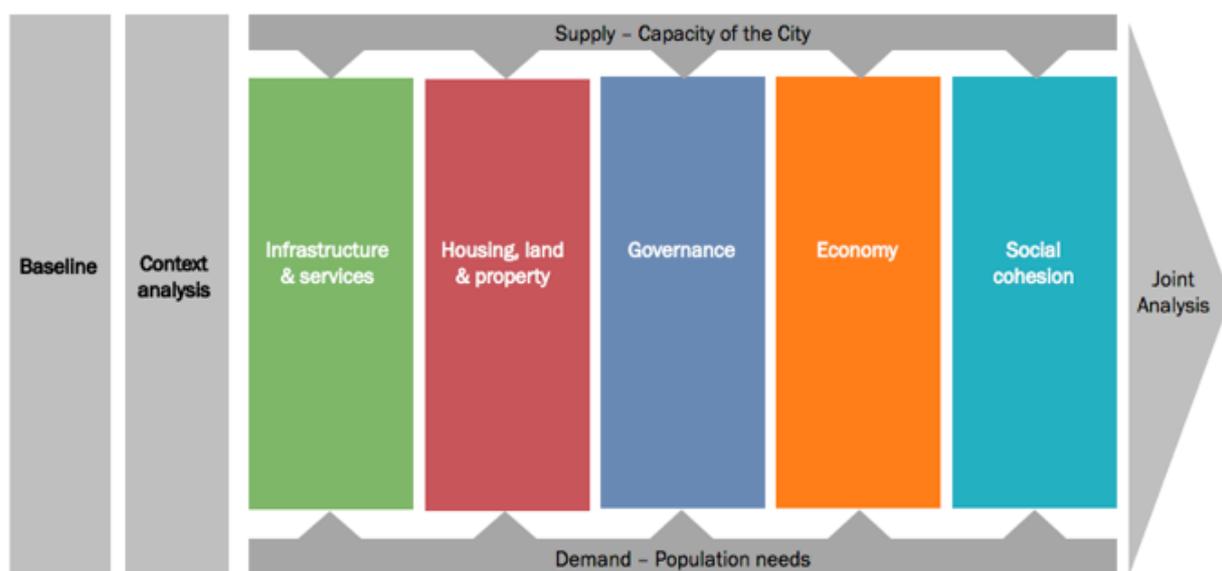


Figure 4: Overview of Analytical Framework for Urban Recovery

The framework incorporates an analysis of the context, as seen in the figure above. Syrian cities do not exist in a vacuum and the current situation in Syrian cities builds, at least in part, from urban development trends that existed before the crisis. Therefore, the first step of the approach is to undertake a context analysis that gives an overview of the city’s urban development, and generally how conflict and stakeholder dynamics affected this at a city and regional level. This approach gives a historical dimension to the urban analysis to better understand why conditions have deteriorated in some ways but not in others.

The framework then draws on information on the city’s current conditions and its populations. It collects information on levels of damage, functionality, operational capacity, quality and accessibility of different urban services. These urban services are organised and presented as the five urban pillars, as seen in the figure above, to help show how damage in one pillar could have an affect, for example, on quality of services in another. The information collected can generally be categorized as focusing on the population’s perspective (what basic services or functions the population needs) and the city’s

perspective (what services or functions the city has the capacity to provide). The gap between the two flags a need for intervention.

Like with most profiling exercises, urban profiling in Syria relies on a mixed methods approach. But a second technical solution introduced through this methodology are new techniques for data collection borrowed from approaches to damage assessments and conflict analysis. The particular data collection tools necessary for capturing the various components of the analytical framework are as follows, and are best carried out in collaboration with partners who have expertise in these methods:

- conflict-sensitive stakeholder mapping to capture the role that different stakeholders have in urban governance,
- satellite imagery to capture levels of damage to buildings and housing,
- a field survey to verify the damage of assets and provide the operational status of key infrastructure (whether it is functioning or not),
- interviews with specialists from urban sectors (from education to waste management), interviews with focal points from each neighbourhood within a city,
- in-depth interviews with high-level stakeholders working on urban governance, and
- focus group discussions with displaced populations and local residents.

The analysis that follows is conducted by area (in this case neighbourhoods of Syrian cities)³², and by population group where feasible. Then those findings are compared with each other to assess how they interrelate, and how this reflects underlying challenges for the city as a whole.

Summary of Lessons learned

A major lesson learned is that a comprehensive analytical framework is necessary to guide the different types of information needed in a conflict context that has sustained heavy damage. Two urban profiles piloted aspects of this methodology in 2018 in the cities of Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa³³, and the resulting analysis was deemed extremely relevant by strategic-level partners for informing funding decisions to help the cities accommodate population needs through reconstruction efforts. Discussions with operational partners for adapting their programming are forthcoming.

These exercises demonstrated, however, that because this methodology relies on a complex combination of various data collection methods, it is not always feasible to implement in full in all cities. In a context such as Syria's, there are restrictions on the use of household surveys in some parts of the country for collecting information on the needs of the population. To make up for this, networks of key informants are relied upon to summarise the situation of the urban populations in general. While this has been deemed a "good enough approach" in this type of conflict context, and has been used widely by other data providers in the region, it limits the possibility for collecting in-depth data on households and individuals that would enable disaggregation by displacement status as well as other key variables such as age, sex and diversity characteristics. This type of information is critical for: 1) humanitarian programming to be tailored to different groups such as displaced and non-displaced, or populations returning from displacement, 2) humanitarian assistance to target specific people or households, and 3) also ensures that the needs of underrepresented groups within the population are taken into account. The limited possibility to collect disaggregated data on populations in this context means that humanitarian partners risk losing sight of the most vulnerable among the populations.

That said, this methodology still produces a comprehensive snapshot of the situation that can be complemented with updated population statistics or more in-depth data collection on the populations at a later date. In addition to assessing and compiling recent population statistics, the perspectives of

³² Selecting neighbourhoods as the units of analysis for the area-based approach in this case is important because it provides the granularity needed to assess the coverage of most services across the city. Using the official neighbourhood boundaries also matches the administrative units used by local authorities for their own planning. In the Erbil Governorate, the neighbourhoods were grouped into larger categories for the area-based approach; this may also be necessary for larger cities in Syria like Aleppo and Homs.

³³ Expected date of publication March 2019. To be made available on the UrbAN-S web portal (www.urban-syria.org).

displaced populations living in different areas of the city can and should be captured through qualitative methods, which can deepen the understanding of the coping strategies used in the absence of functioning services, and the possible challenges faced in restoring trust in governance structures and social cohesion among urban communities. These give further contextual information which can guide both urban development and humanitarian interventions to improve the support available for seeking durable solutions to displacement.

Despite the constraints on data collection methods, the information that results from this uniquely urban analysis in Syrian cities still helps to guide strategic decision-making on policies and humanitarian programs in these areas³⁴ as well as urban planning interventions.

³⁴ As an example, risks to losing housing, land and property (HLP) rights is a major concern in this context. An HLP Security Index shows levels of HLP risk per neighbourhood in a city, one of the key outputs of the analysis. The information on the HLP services provided by the city and who can access them, in conjunction with the levels of damage to the stock of available housing in the city and changes to market prices of housing, already gives a detailed picture of the challenges that populations returning from displacement would face in that city.

Summary of case studies

A summary of the challenges, technical solutions, and limitations from each of the case studies is found in the table below³⁵:

Case studies	Mogadishu, Somalia (2014 - 2015)	Erbil Governorate, Iraq (2015 - 2016)	Cities in Syria (2018 – 2019)
Priority information needed	Populations	Populations and urban areas	Populations and urban areas
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No existing baseline information on informal settlements Mix of internally displaced and economic migrants Security risk to enter certain informal settlements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to capture diversity of situations within population groups Need to identify challenges linked to location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavily damaged buildings, housing and infrastructure Widespread displacement Minimal access to populations Restrictions on data collection methods due to security risks and/or government policies
Solution	Mapping and enumeration of informal settlements used to create figures for internally displaced living there and served as frame for sample-based household survey	Sample-based household survey compared urban population by displacement status (IDP, Syrian refugee and local residents) and by distance from city center (center, periphery, towns)	Comprehensive analytical framework bringing together contextual analysis with analysis of urban conditions from perspective of what city can provide and what populations need Adapting data collection methods from urban planning Relying on qualitative methods for analysis of challenges of population groups
Limitation	Not able to analyse spatial and social links between informal settlements and surrounding urban areas.	Not able to analyse pressure on city services affected by displacement	Limited access to populations meant unable to produce data on population needs disaggregated by displacement status. As access changes, this can be incorporated into the framework.

³⁵ The table is not intended to be exhaustive, but highlights key points to support the article's overall argument.

Looking ahead: continued learning

Each of these cases benefited from sustained engagement with a wide variety of partners and various degrees of experimentation. Both are critical to the process of developing technical solutions. The profiling exercise in the Erbil Governorate, for example, followed an iterative process of consultation with a group of diverse profiling partners that spanned humanitarian and development divides and brought together international actors with local authorities. They were flexible to the exploration of new methods to make the most of the exercise.

This led to a process that looked as follows: the various data needs of the partners were explained, new methods for obtaining the required information was explored by technical counterparts including by the local and regional statistics offices, some aspects of this data collection was tested in the field in order to assess the practicality and/or operational constraints of collecting that type of information, and then through repeated consultations with the profiling partners a compromise was reached. The end result was a methodology that was both feasible within existing resources and useful for meeting the profiling objectives. In the case of Erbil, it also made appropriate use of an area-based approach, despite the lack of guidance on how this could be applied in practice. Considering the inherent complexity of both internal displacement dynamics and urban systems, this iterative approach to data collection and analysis is key to developing a body of innovative solutions and good practice.

Strategies for adapting displacement profiling to urban settings is especially timely, as new discussions are underway for integrating approaches for analysing crisis situations in cities across sectors and organisations under the broader term “urban profiling”. The multi-stakeholder initiative Global Alliance for Urban Crises developed a guidance note summarising the concept, suggests good practices for its implementation, and calls for continued learning to further refine urban profiling³⁶. The experience gained through displacement profiling in cities has contributed substantially to this collaborative effort.

Conclusion

Despite the high demand for data on displacement, it must be acknowledged that creating a robust evidence-base of displacement data in oftentimes insecure and dynamic locations is difficult to do in practice. It is therefore critical to dedicate time to share lessons and good practice that help partners in need of information to overcome the technical, operational and even political challenges of collecting and analysing it. This paper outlined several technical solutions identified to adapt displacement profiling to urban settings in Mogadishu, Somalia, in the Erbil Governorate, Iraq and in cities in Syria.

The case study from Mogadishu revealed the importance of not only mapping out the locations where IDPs resided across the city, but also enumerating the populations living in specific informal settlements. This was decided because, as in most urban settings, displaced and non-displaced populations resided together, generally used the same services, and faced similar challenges. Such a comparative analysis becomes particularly important in urban contexts in order to investigate the extent to which IDPs face different challenges or have greater needs given their displacement. It also highlights which challenges are shared by all populations living in the same area, demonstrating which issues are linked to poverty and urban planning.

In Erbil, a more area-based analysis was required that covered the whole city and some urban locations beyond. The profiling in Erbil focused on identifying a relevant and feasible way of analysing how the situations of displaced and non-displaced differed by area in the city. The results aimed at informing not only interventions by humanitarian organisations, mainly focusing on displaced and vulnerable populations, but also local Governorate-level planning, which looked at service needs across populations

³⁶ This initiative brings new partners to these discussions that are integral to urban crisis responses, especially local authorities, built environment professionals, and civil society actors. See: Global Alliance for Urban Crises (2019). *Urban Profiling for Better Responses to Humanitarian Crises*. Geneva.

in each area. The need for urban planning expertise, as well as dedicated time and resources, were identified as crucial for working out relevant area classifications and demarcations.

This gap in expertise was addressed in the case study of Syria. In contrast to the profiling of the urban areas in the Erbil Governorate, the methodology for the urban profiling of Syrian cities captures not only a profile of the populations living in the city but also a profile of the city itself. This analysis is also area based because it compares gaps in service provision by neighbourhood, and helps to clarify which services and locations are most heavily damaged. But at the same time it also informs humanitarian interventions by showing the extent to which urban populations are able to access functioning services, and thus where humanitarian needs are likely to be most acute.

The call from IDMC to understand urban displacement and displacement risk “from two perspectives, that of IDPs and that of the cities they flee to”³⁷ remains a tall order, but one that the technical solutions presented in this paper shed light on. In summary it is clear that profiling displacement situations in urban settings requires specific expertise, and a methodology tailored to understanding both how displaced populations get by in cities and how cities cope with their arrival. This deep look at the capacities and needs of the diverse populations coping with internal displacement is a first and critical step towards enabling progress towards durable solutions. However it needs to be combined with a broader analysis of the city, which requires specialised technical expertise and forging stronger partnerships and joint planning by the humanitarian responders and urban technical experts. As this paper has aimed to show, through the lessons learnt from recent displacement profiling processes, this combined approach is possible although challenging in many urban settings.

Experimentation undertaken in collaboration with actors engaged in responses to urban crises in displacement-affected cities will help us progress even more. Continued efforts in this direction are being rolled out through new profiling exercises in contexts as varied as Ukraine, Afghanistan and Yemen, as well as through the activities of the Global Alliance for Urban Crises.

With a growing need for humanitarian response to displacement crises to adapt to urban realities (Wanjiku Kihato et al, 2016; Camillo et al 2017), the machine of data and information production has been relatively slow to catch up. As demonstrated, displacement profiling is a remarkable exception; its adaptability and dual-focus on process and content offers a means for improving the evidence-base. This, in turn, leads to greater agreement on the way forward for effective responses to internal displacement in cities.

³⁷ “UnSettlement: Urban Displacement in the 21st Century.” 2018. Thematic Series. Research Agenda and Call for Partners. Geneva: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), p. 4. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/unsettlement-urban-displacement-in-the-21st-century>.

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