



Protracted
displacement
in an urban
world

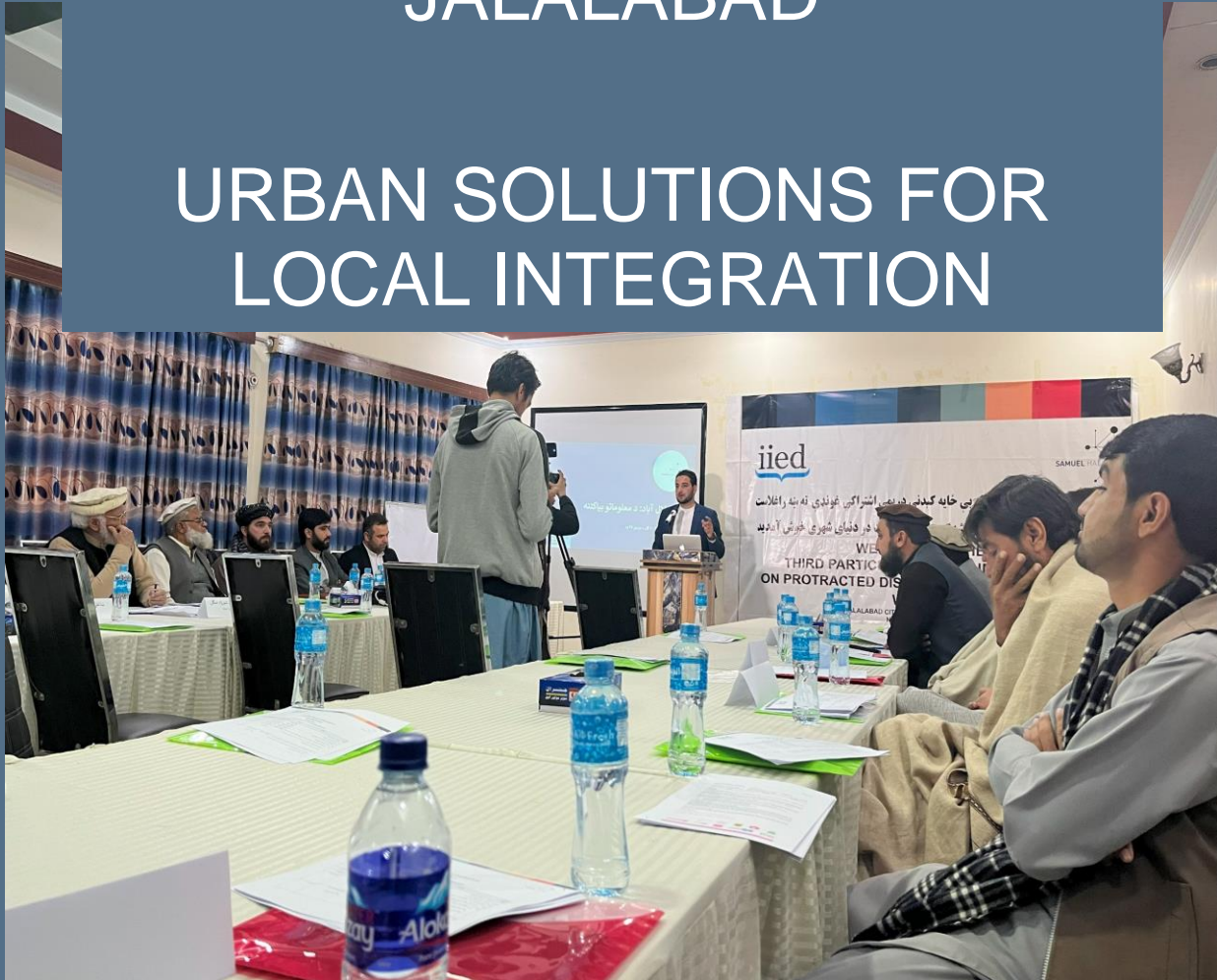


SAMUEL HALL.

CITY NOTE

JALALABAD

URBAN SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL INTEGRATION



Out of camp or out of sight? Realigning responses to protracted displacement in an urban world

This major study runs from February 2020 to January 2023 across four countries: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Jordan. It is funded by the UK Research Institute (UKRI) through the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF).

The research is being conducted by a global consortium - academics joining their research to practise. The 10 partners are: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (lead), Cardiff University, Samuel Hall, Dilla University, Hashemite University, Slum Dwellers International, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Maseno University, ReDSS, the Women's Refugee Commission.

Samuel Hall is a social enterprise that conducts research, evaluates programmes, and designs policies in contexts of migration and displacement. Our approach is ethical, academically rigorous, and based on first-hand experience of complex and fragile settings.

Our research connects the voices of communities to changemakers for more inclusive societies. With offices in Afghanistan, Germany, Kenya, and Tunisia and a presence in Somalia, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates, we are based in the regions we study. For more information, please visit www.samuelhall.org.

Key facts and figures

In 2021, the *Protracted Displacement in an Urban World* research consortium conducted 889 surveys in Afghanistan – 510 in Majboorabad (Jalalabad), and 360 in Barikab (settlement near Kabul). In 2022 respondents were contacted again, and asked about their life circumstances, socio-economic conditions, wellbeing and access to services and infrastructure, following major changes in political and civil life in Afghanistan. Out of the 889 initial respondents, 524 (59%) were reached in the second round of interviews.

This city note presents an analysis of the two rounds of data, and includes feedback from five participatory forums held in Jalalabad between 2021 and 2023. It provides a way forward for policy and practice towards a goal of inclusion and local integration; it also provides a platform through which discussions around inclusion and integration can continue.

Key facts:

- In 2022, despite working more and having more income earners in the household, respondents are less able to cover their expenses with income from work. **Since early 2021, economic wellbeing has substantially deteriorated for all cohorts.**
- There has been **an increase in wanting to work among displaced women** – from 72% in 2021 to 82% in 2022. Urban displaced women are among the non-working respondents who showed the greatest desire to work.
- Meanwhile, finding work in the city is difficult, and **work satisfaction has decreased.** While hosts surveyed in ‘round one’ reported that they were in a somewhat better financial position than the urban displaced, such differences seem to have decreased since then, and both groups are in similarly dire financial positions.
- **Access to the most basic services and key city infrastructure has worsened for both urban displaced and hosts.** There have been substantial decreases in reported access to healthcare and health-related services for both urban displaced and hosts. Another stark fall can be observed in reported access to a community space or a sports centre.
- The proportion of people unable to **access healthcare** in their area has doubled in one year – from 31% of urban displaced to 62%, and from 24% of hosts to 62%.
- The proportion of families unable to **access schooling** has almost tripled for the displaced – from 10% in 2021 to 26% in 2022, and even more so for hosts – from 4% in 2021 to 25% in 2022.
- More respondents were dissatisfied with **access to green spaces** in 2022 than in 2021, with a greater dissatisfaction increase among women. In 2021 68% of women and 86% of men were dissatisfied with their ability to access green spaces, as opposed to 91% of women and 93% of men in 2022.
- **Psychosocial wellbeing has decreased for all groups. But the psychosocial wellbeing of women deteriorated more sharply** than for men.
- Perceived **safety has decreased** in Jalalabad, particularly for women. In 2021 only 9% reported not feeling safe. By 2022 the percentage had risen to 30%.
- The deteriorating situation is further reflected by **worsening psychosocial wellbeing**, and substantial decrease in life satisfaction reported by all groups.

I. Rethinking aid and social inclusion at a time of widespread need

Throughout the participatory forums and interviews, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host community representatives spoke about the need to re-envision Jalalabad city as a space of inclusion – and not of marginalisation. All agreed that **elders and community members should work together for women** as many of them are widows, and that the municipality needs to be able to open its doors to women, to listen to their needs. One participant called on the municipality to set aside one day a week to listen to and address women’s issues. The mayor’s office heard the call, and action is now expected.


Others spoke of the need **to support women to work from home**. According to a community leader in Farm Ada settlement in Jalalabad city, there are over 80 women’s councils or *shuras* who can organise the provision of support to women. In the past, many women attended training courses. While they gained qualifications, they do not have equipment to work with. Participants and respondents call for the provision of equipment for women to be able to build on their acquired skills to secure an income for their future.

Women’s shuras meet twice a week in the IDP settlements of Jalalabad, to align their priorities and plans. However, beyond sitting and talking to each other, they are unable to do more with no links to policy makers and authorities. Representatives expressed their concern that women are no longer allowed into government buildings. According to some of them, they were asked not to come to the municipality again.


IDP representatives and civil society organisations voiced their **fear of being marginalised in decisions around aid distribution**. They demanded more inclusivity in Jalalabad, to not be discriminated against for who they are, whether they dress or speak differently, or have different customs than the local host community. For social inclusion to be achieved, the displaced call for greater trust in their capacity to improve their own situation and that of their neighbours.

For instance, displaced women repeatedly explained that if allowed to take care of livestock, they could keep a link with their rural livelihoods and skills for their benefit and that of city residents. This is relevant at a time where road construction, infrastructure development and other urban planning requirements may push communities to relocate. If forced to move to new localities, on the outskirts of cities, agricultural land could be made available to them. The main challenge women face is their fear of asking for such remedies in an environment where they are no longer allowed to work outside, as they feel it is unsafe for them to do so. They requested opportunities to work from home, while the youth can be given an opportunity to work on government agricultural land. They asked: “Why doesn’t the government let us use their land to farm, grow our livelihood and generate an income?”

Key takeaways

 Request the municipality to set aside one day a week to listen to women, and to welcome IDP and other female community representatives to the municipality for consultations.

 Include civil society organisations in decisions on aid distribution.

 Provide women opportunities to work from home, including equipment for women to practice their skills; while also opening opportunities for them, and the youth, to access and work on agricultural land close to the city.

II. Enhancing urban planning starting with a greener city and dedicated spaces for youth and women

The municipality requires support to draft a city strategic plan that can address the needs of the hosts and the displaced. The need for fiscal and financial planning support was raised, alongside the need for strategic planning, by the municipality in Jalalabad.

The municipality needs support to improve coordination and service planning, to be able to address some of the gaps identified by the data – notably around a cleaner and greener city. The municipality reports that there are currently over 830 municipal workers who are involved in keeping the city clean but their working conditions require improvement. They currently work from 5am to 4pm daily for 5,000 Afghans a month (equivalent to US\$60). Additional support from the World Food Programme (WFP) supplemented the salaries of municipal workers, but the municipality would welcome greater investments in these essential services.

All municipal stakeholders agreed that the issue of **a greener and cleaner city** is among the first priorities to be addressed in Jalalabad. For that to materialise, **city expansion plans are urgently needed** as Jalalabad is overpopulated and informal settlements require upgrading. Three quarters of the respondents were dissatisfied with their ability to access parks and green spaces, and over half were dissatisfied with access to bus stops and public transportation.

The municipality expressed their concerns over the difficulties faced in implementing their plans, complaining about the lack of support from the residents. They said the IDPs come to the city and “occupy our strategic and green areas, and they still require us to provide them with green areas and parks”. They also emphasised the need for awareness programmes for city residents, especially IDPs, as most of them are not sufficiently familiar with city culture. Most of the IDPs have come from rural areas where they have lived as a single ethnic group. Such awareness initiatives could give them a sense of how to live with different people and help them to settle and co-exist in diverse communities in a city environment.

A related issue was the need to **identify new places for IDPs to reside, new spaces for organisations to deliver assistance, and for children, youth and women a place to spend time and feel safe in.**

Organisations in Jalalabad are looking into setting up centres to provide more access to aid, information and counselling, legal advice and access to other opportunities. In the participatory forums, discussions were held around identifying new places where they can provide IDPs with healthcare facilities, clean drinking water, transportation, employment opportunities, training and vocational education programmes for youth and adults, while providing education for IDP children and home-based employment for women.

The municipality is focusing on similar initiatives, such as starting **a market or centre for women near Mia Aslam Park in the east of the city** to allow women to have their own business. But many fear these plans will never materialise due to the lack of funding, or sufficient recognition by donors. The key will be to connect the initiatives – from the UN and the municipality – under one banner, to ensure women’s rights are protected, and monitored. The municipality has envisioned the bazaar to be on two acres (0.8 ha). Although work on the bazaar has been completed, its inauguration is awaiting the decree of the de facto Authorities. This bazaar will be run by women, including in its management, marketing, and supplying of

goods whereas the customers will be women only. In this bazaar, women can sell home-made products and handicrafts such as rugs, carpets and other items.

As for youth, the lack of spaces to allow inclusion in the city and employment opportunities, is leading many to migrate to Iran (at a time when borders with Pakistan are closed). The risks associated with smuggling as well as trafficking are high, alongside the risks of not finding suitable work in Iran due to the prevailing sanctions, political instability and low wages given to Afghan workers. Making Jalalabad habitable for young people is therefore a priority.

The IDP representatives and civil society organisations emphasised the need to include displaced people¹ in city planning, highlighting their contribution as vital. They are the experts of their communities with first-hand knowledge of the culture, norms and ethnic composition. For this to happen, a social media group is to be established comprising IDP representatives and responsible authorities²

Key takeaways



The mayor and the General Director of Transportation and Traffic Administration need to work collaboratively to keep the city clean and well organised.



Jalalabad city will need more financial support to ensure coordination and assistance for IDPs, to purchase cleaning machines for the city, and to expand green and recreational spaces for children, youth and women.



The apprenticeship model is currently not giving young people a chance to integrate in a shrinking labour market, and could be revived for the youth to have a chance to learn new skills.

The IDP representatives should be included in city planning processes to work collaboratively with the responsible authorities for a better and inclusive city.

“The only place available for our men is the mosque. There is no place for women. There is no place for children, either. None for our boys and girls. Only elderly men go to the mosque.” - Community representative, Majboorabad

“We expect the authorities to work harder and make sure to solve the situation of IDPs, children’s problems, including poverty, unemployment, education, healthcare, and housing.”

- IDP representative

“The city of Jalalabad is designed for 200,000 people, but currently two million people reside in this city. We are not able to keep this city clean. Jalalabad city has 105 tons of dirt to be taken care of on a daily basis. We need a process for recycling, to have a cleaner city. You can see there is rush hour all day long. We are doing everything we can, but the city is crowded and difficult to manage.” - Municipal representative

¹ UN and INGOs representatives were in favour of having IDP representatives included in the urban development committee, as well as in the provincial integration committee led by governor to help the committee to better initiate their programming and plans.

² Participants suggested that 2-3 IDP representatives per settlement be included in a WhatsApp group to coordinate between the authorities and IDP representatives.

III. Enabling local integration through access to legal documentation and services in displacement

A key concern was the different expectations in devising long-term, practical solutions. **IDPs who have been living in the area for decades want to integrate.** But despite being registered as IDPs, living in Jalalabad, they still do not own land or a house in their own names. Without a home to call their own, they cannot consider themselves locally integrated. One representative explained that: “more important than a passport for me would be the deeds to my own house and my own land. I will only ever feel integrated when I actually can show that I have these deeds and that my children are safe”.

The municipality in Jalalabad – as in other areas of Afghanistan – is emphasising the need to relocate IDPs from their current settlements. Several settlements have been identified in Jalalabad for upgrading, however other informal settlements are located on publicly-owned land, and are being targeted for alternative solutions and forced evictions. ‘Return’ remains the preferred policy by those in power although civil society representatives reaffirmed that after decades spent in displacement in Jalalabad, **IDPs demand a pathway for local integration.**

Participants requested that, regardless of the solution, legal requirements be fulfilled, including the provision of:

- **Legal documents in displacement** to facilitate access to documentation, civil registration, as well as business licences and authorisations to travel for trade. Women who used to be able to travel for work are no longer able to, either due to the restrictions on movement or their inability to renew their passports. This has an impact on the private sector’s ability to create jobs locally, as female business leaders explained being unable to travel to exhibits and trade fairs to meet foreign demands for products to be exported from Afghanistan.
- **Legal redress** against issues such as child marriage, forced marriage – as well as a growing reliance on child labour.
- **Safety and security for women.** In Jalalabad, sexual harassment is reportedly on the rise, alongside smuggling, human trafficking and the use and sale of drugs.

Most of the displaced people do not know where to go to register as IDPs. The process requires them to possess an ID card or *tazkira* – which may be difficult, as it takes time and money. However, without this it is difficult to access humanitarian or other support. This is why, in the past, the process was facilitated by NGOs.

However, support has reduced significantly over the past year, with participants mentioning they had not heard of any assistance for months. The exception being some support from the World Food Programme (WFP) which has provided cash for work opportunities for about 80 people in the area.

Key concerns remain the registration and monitoring of IDPs’ rights and wellbeing, as they are either required to return to their places of origin or leave their settlement – which many are scared to do, or cannot afford to do.

On the other hand, business or enterprise registration processes are smooth, as the authorities benefit from registration to collect taxes. Starting an enterprise is not a problem in Majboorabad – but most people do not have the money or capital to open up a shop or start a business. The challenges are greater for women

who do not have the right to education or work. There is no job market for women – no factories or opportunities for them to work. Women’s economic engagement in Majboorabad remains restricted to tailoring at home, or working in animal husbandry to support their families. Very few women are employed, but most want to work.

Key takeaways



Focus on employment in the city, rather than short-term support. Participants recommended the need to establish factories for food processing, shoe production, candy, and bread and other basic needs, to ensure that people can have a stable source of income, and to provide a space for women to work.



Roads need to be asphalted to avoid floods damaging IDPs’ housing and creating unhealthy living spaces, and instead focus on infrastructural development geared towards the establishment of parks and creation of employment opportunities.



Provide legal documentation in displacement to facilitate access to legal services, notably through mobile services.

“We are still IDPs because we have no other solution or information, because we have nothing under our name, because we have not found stability when each government comes here to evict us.”

- Female community leader

“Access to documentation is a long and complicated process. I lost my ID card and reapplied to get a new one. They sent my documents to Kabul, then they were returned to Jalalabad, stating that they had some discrepancies. I have been trying to get a new ID card but have not been able to. It has been one and a half years that I am still stuck in this process.”

- IDP representative, Majboorabad

IV. Key Projects Proposed

Projects being proposed to support urban planning, and durable solutions to displacement

Road construction, infrastructure strengthening & preventing development-induced displacement

The municipality is building a ring road near the river to overcome the overcrowded city and connect peri-urban and urban systems, as well as rural to urban transportation, food and market systems. However, such plans require developing resettlement plans and alternative plans for households being displaced or affected by new urban initiatives and city expansion plans. The municipality requested support with social and environmental impact assessments, as well as with relocation plans.

Public private partnerships (PPP) for legal documentation

All agreed the need to unlock solutions to legal identification to involve all citizens in city development. The participatory forum participants propose developing PPP models to deliver public services such as national registration and identification schemes for internally displaced persons (IDPs). There needs to be a framework developed to implement PPPs to cover citizens' identification, delivering *tazkiras* and passports, along with a duty of care to protect personal information.

Youth recreational space project

The governor and the municipality have discussed plans for a park for youth in PD7, to create safer spaces for youths from the area and from other provinces, notably those who travel to Jalalabad in the winter. The estimated cost communicated during the participatory forum is 130,000 USD. The forum further discussed replicating youth spaces in displacement-affected communities to increase social cohesion and improve interactions between groups.

Waste management project

At the moment, 120 trucks of garbage are taken to the Daman area, where displaced people live. There are two requirements: purchasing a waste processing machine, and protecting the people who live in the area and who could be exposed to health hazards.

*"We need a campaign to educate people."
- Private sector representative*

*"What will happen to our youth? At some point we thought we had a future here, we have realised there is no future for us. I don't mind staying even under these circumstances, but I mind it for the next generation. How long will we be ignored?"
- Female community leader*

V. Looking ahead

This city note is the consensus document that emerged from a three-year participatory forum process in Jalalabad city, with municipal stakeholders, including municipality representatives, De facto Authorities, civil society and IDP representatives. International organisations joined the conversations. All representatives listened to each other and learned from each other, setting disagreements aside to focus on a consensus approach to city planning with displaced communities.


Five participatory forum sessions were held in total between February 2021 and July 2023. Each forum focused on a specific topic, detailed in this city note. The final city note was validated at the July 2023 participatory forum by all participants.

The forums resulted in an emerging city plan for the inclusion of the displaced, including establishing public private partnerships, centre-based approaches, and infrastructure improvement for local integration. It resulted in commitments to provide adequate spaces for women, children and youth, to work towards a greener city, and towards a system for civil society organisations and municipal stakeholders to be more involved in the plans of international organisations.

Technical support is needed to develop and fund these plans, to discuss and develop additional initiatives for the displaced and for returnees to contribute to the city, and to assess the social and environmental impacts of these initiatives.

The discussions were grounded in the data collected through the *Protracted Displacement in an Urban World* consortium, using evidence to enhance awareness, coordination and capacities, and to build a platform for advocacy, joint planning, and learning.

The key objective now is to sustain the forum beyond the project life cycle. Discussions are ongoing with potential organisations who could take this forward. Key recommendations were made during the final participatory forum where the participants were in favour of sustaining the forum beyond the project life cycle. Participants stressed the need to have one special government authority assigned for organising the forums and to allocate responsibilities to other involved NGOs/stakeholders – both in terms of running and funding them. They also stated that a proper plan should be developed and shared with the government authorities and UN/INGOs, in which each organisation's role is clearly specified.

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