

Resettlement: Regional Solutions and Humanitarian Assistance

EMN Norway's National Conference, Friday 12 June 2015

Report

The Conference program is presented in Annex 1, and Annex 2 is a list of speakers and commentators. Annex 3 is a list of registered participants at the conference.

Welcome: State Secretary Jøran Kallmyr, Ministry of Justice and Public Security

Mr. Kallmyr started by outlining how resettlement policies are formulated and implemented in Norway, explaining that it is the role of local municipal authorities to ensure the actual settlement and integration of resettled refugees. The absorption capacity of the municipalities thus is a key factor in determining the size and the composition of the resettlement quota for a particular year. He also stressed that the high costs of resettlement in Norway is a strong argument for limiting the resettlement quota to the most vulnerable persons who cannot be given a reasonable degree of protection in the neighbourhood of the country of origin. However, the integration potential into the Norwegian society, in terms of employment qualifications as well as cultural values (e.g. on the role of women), should also be important considerations in the selection process.

Introduction on Displacement in the 21st century: Jan Egeland (presentation available)

Mr. Egeland stressed that this is a momentous time for the world, comparable to the human tragedies accompanying the independence of India and Pakistan from colonial rule, and that the gap between the wealthiest and poorest countries in the world has never been wider. Together with modest wealth improvements in the poor countries this provides a very strong migration pressure towards the richer countries, even in the absence of conflicts, human rights abuses or natural disasters. He also stressed that conflicts are leading to more internally displaced persons (IDPs) than persons seeking international protection, partly because internal conflicts have 'replaced' international ones, and it is the poorest people that are suffering most. He then described the current IDP and refugee consequences of the civil war in Syria, for that country and the neighbouring countries where the absorption capacity has been exhausted even with the (limited) international support that they are receiving from governments and through NGOs. In this situation it is worrying that the gap between the needs and international assistance is widening. This development has been accompanied by a larger number of persons being displaced by natural disasters, partly caused by climate change. However, he concluded by stating that the current situation is not hopeless provided that the now rich European countries would demonstrate wisdom and solidarity.

Changing environment of resettlement

The evolution of resettlement as an instrument of protection and its potential for meeting the challenges of the 21st century: Vincent Cochetel

Mr. Cochetel started by saying that the term 'resettlement' is not easily understandable: Why should anyone who is already settled be settled once again? The term is not included in the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees, neither is it in the statutes of UNHCR. It came first into use with the Hungarian crisis in 1956, which generated a major exodus from that country to Austria and Yugoslavia. Many of those fleeing their country were then 'resettled' in other European countries. It was essentially regarded as an instrument for burden sharing, rather than for protection. In this situation all current issues related to resettlement were raised, and different schemes were created to

satisfy the requirements of different receiving countries, demonstrating the need for flexibility in the arrangement for resettlement in different countries. Resettlements can serve as a form of burden sharing by demonstrating solidarity with the first countries of arrival and providing assistance for the most vulnerable of the refugees. He also stressed that a good resettlement scheme requires good screening procedures to ensure its legitimacy, representing a challenge to both UNHCR and the receiving country, and that it is important to have effective housing, employment and education arrangements for the resettled refugees soon after their arrival.

In his **comments Mr. Frode Forfang**, explained that Norway has had a tradition of resettlements quotas for many years. These have not been part of the (sometimes quite heated) debate on refugee policies, because the number of asylum seekers has been much larger than the quotas, and because the status, identity and need for protection of the resettled refugees have been established before they arrive. While it is important that the size of the annual quota is stable: because it has advantages from a political and administrative perspective, but it does mean that special measures are needed in times of crisis, both politically and administratively.

Researching resettlement: Past, present and future: Alexander Betts (presentation available)

Mr. Betts pointed out that research (beyond government evaluations etc.) on resettlement has been limited and the results from the research that *has* been undertaken has not really responded to the need not only for knowledge based formulation, but also for effective implementation of policies. He asked whether the existing research might at least provide a useful frame for the debate on resettlement policies. One lesson is that regarding resettlement and protection in the region as alternatives is too crude a point of departure for any useful debate. In this debate the efficiency arguments depend e.g. on assumptions about substitutability between the two strategies and similar consequences. Among the claims that existing research seems to have relegated to ‘myths’ he mentioned:

- that the possibility for resettlement attracts migrants to host countries within the region,
- that humanitarian assistance in neighbouring countries can substitute for and is more cost effective than resettlement outside the region for the same vulnerable persons,
- that resettlement reduces the number of asylum seekers outside the region, and
- that without resettlement, the norms of the current refugee regime will be undermined.

The use of different (support) schemes must be related to what one wants to achieve, and must be related to concerns with

- solidarity,
- protection,
- strategic use,
- public understanding, and
- mass influx

Research can throw light on the effectiveness of resettlement in order to address these concerns. The existing research has focused on the development of resettlement policies, integration of resettled refugees (country specific mostly, revealing the importance of networks and language training for employment) and cultural dimensions. There has been limited research on politics (resettlement industry as a driver for resettlement, power and interest involved, economic trajectories from region to resettlement), economics (variation in economic outcomes, trajectories), anthropology (refugee choices of resettlement and their experience of the process as well as the interaction between the resettlement staff and refugees), ethics (resource allocation and efficiency, proximity v. distance in our responsibilities, virtue: contexts of judgements). For all these issues mixed methods and multidisciplinary approaches are needed, as are multi-sited fieldwork covering both countries providing the initial protection and countries where refugees are resettled.

In her **comments Ms. Kristin Sandvik** stressed that research is also needed on the resettlement processes, including the selection processes as well as the impact on the UNHCR and those not selected. It is also necessary to get a better understanding of the structure of budgets and cost

difference: is resettlement comparatively expensive because of the high wages of the actors involved in the process? **Managing resettlement expectations within refugee populations**

The impact of resettlement in refugee camps: Cindy Horst (presentation available)

Ms. Horst presented lessons from her research in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, which in April 2015 sheltered more than 400 000 refugees, mostly from Somalia, stressing that (i) resettlement is just one of the futures that they envisaged. Among the others was (ii) repatriation, (iii) staying in Dadaab, (iv) local integration outside the camp, (v) going to Nairobi or (vi) relocation to another camp. Resettlement, was, however a preferred option for many. As long as real alternatives do not exist for the many ‘in limbo’ in camps, such as: finding a durable solution, getting an education, achieving self-reliance and obtaining food and economic stability as well as experiencing security/peace, freedom and human rights. She stressed that:

- Comprehensive solutions are required for protracted displacement situations: resettlement is a crucial element in an ambitious package that also includes local integration and repatriation
- Resettlement remains a crucial element of responsibility-sharing requiring more than financial commitments
- Responsibility-sharing rather than burden-sharing: the potential of resettlement and the resources that the resettled refugees bring with them needs to be explored more

In her comments Ms. Tonje Øyan stressed that her comments would focus on the future of resettlement, and that resettlement of Syrians would pose a new challenge with the need to focus on security issues and identity as this could potentially undermine the entire resettlement process and the public’s willingness to offer resettlement places to vulnerable Syrians.

She also observed that although it has been claimed that the resettlement schemes may represent an incentive for the applicant to appear more vulnerable, or become more vulnerable, in order to “better” qualify, the indications are that while this may be an issue, there is nothing to indicate that this is a numerically significant one.

Resettlement as part of comprehensive solutions

Strategic resettlement:

What do we mean by ‘strategic resettlement’: Vincent Cochetel (presentation available)

Mr. Cochetel stressed that resettlement must be used to ensure benefits beyond those received by the refugees who are actually resettled. He presented as examples of reasonably successful resettlement projects those of Bhutanese in Nepal and Burundians in Tanzania even though they did not meet all of their objectives. They succeeded only as a resettlement program, but failed to achieve integration or return, and thus failed in achieving important strategic goals. Other even less successful projects involved the resettlement of Afghans, Columbians, Iraqis, Somalis and Congolese. This was because of various levels of inadequate international coordination and limited dialogue with first-line host governments. He stressed that to be successful, a resettlement programme needs to be sustainable and success must be assessed in the long term. Obstacles to success include negative perceptions, failure to engage first-line host countries, (unwarranted) confidence in other solutions, lack of coordination between the relevant actors. To succeed, resettlement programmes need a political will and convergence between foreign policies, humanitarian development as well as an identifiable population of candidates for resettlement.

Examples of successful/unsuccessful strategic resettlement – the Swedish perspective: Oskar Ekblad

Mr. Ekblad underlined that more time and effort should be spent on understanding the resettlement processes and consequences. The resettled individuals need to be better involved in the process. Through its resettlement programme Sweden aims to invest in the UN-system, support front-line host countries, save individuals and restore their life and dignity. It is imperative that we have a strategic approach to resettlement; doing so will hopefully enhance the refugee programmes' effectiveness. Core groups serve as platforms for keeping momentum, increased operational cooperation, and as a vehicle for dialogue with initial host state(s). The Swedish cooperation with UNHCR has established mechanisms for individual emergency interventions when called upon by UNHCR, ad hoc missions, because in the Swedish programme there are unallocated pools of resettlement places. The resettlement strategy should support the creation of durable solutions, but not be conditional of such solutions. He stressed that field experience will assist resettlement staff to obtain an understanding of the need for and role of a strategic approach.

Strategic resettlement and linkages to humanitarian/development policy– the Norwegian experience: Johan Kristian Meyer

Mr. Meyer stressed that pay-checks are important but not sufficient for resettlement projects to have a positive impact on those affected directly and indirectly: a more strategic approach is needed. One needs to ensure an enduring improvement for those not resettled as well. He pointed to Iran as a 'good' first-line host country as well as representing an example of a pilot effort to establish a programme through multi-national cooperation with UNHCR. He also said that Eritreans in Sudan have one of the most difficult situations, were an effort had been made to combine refugee and development support. Lack of support from the first-line host government meant that the efforts were not successful, however, while similar efforts involving Rwandans, South-Sudanese and Congolese in Uganda had proved more successful. The most important factor for success would seem to be the positive support of the first-line host government. The active involvement of development agencies such as WB and UNDP has also proved to be important, but not always easy to obtain.

In his comments Mr. Pål Nesse said that resettlement policies should run parallel to policies for migration, first-line host countries' integration and return possibilities. He pointed to the seeming contradiction between the ease (some claim) of absorbing a large number of immigrants not able to speak Norwegian and the claimed problems of receiving a much smaller number of resettlement refugees.

EU policies regarding cooperation with third countries of origin and transit and programmes for development and protection in the region: Aleksandar Romanovic (presentation available)

Mr. Romanovic described the plans for the EU Regional Development and Protection Programmes (RDPP) for North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, (Libya), (Niger), (Mauritania)), and the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan). They aim to achieve both protection and local development, by addressing the situation of people in need of protection, by establishing capacity providing relief and by providing support to the local communities that are hosting refugees: all this to avoid migrants' life-risking journeys. The aim is to achieve this through an integrated approach. The programmes are to be financed by EU's budget and national contributions. The aim is to have integrated approaches, partnerships, complementarity, non-duplication, and local ownership, and still be realistic in terms of what can be achieved. The RDPPs will be monitored and evaluated.

Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) in the Middle East. Challenges and achievements: Thomas Thomsen (presentation available)

Mr. Thomsen described an on-going RDPP programme in Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan which is managed by Denmark. Its objective is to establish and implement a coordinated framework for addressing problems arising from the Syrian displacement crisis, addressing not just the humanitarian challenges. The programme aims to support social-economic development in the first-line host countries to benefit both refugees and host populations; and to ensure that refugees are able to avail themselves of a durable solution if and when it emerges. Included in the programme is research on the impact of displacement, improved capacities for protection of refugees, advocacy and political dialogue, as well as socio-economic development to enhance opportunities for vulnerable populations. Developments since the RDPP was initiated have meant, however, that the protection space, access to basic social rights and capacity to handle socio-economic vulnerability have become much more limited given the present increase in demands due to the increase in Syrian refugees. The current situation in Lebanon is critical, in Iraq it is even worse with the IS insurgency, but it is slightly more sustainable in Jordan. A resettlement component may be a positive contribution, even though a small symbolic one.

Both Mr. Romanovic and Mr. Thomsen stressed the need for thorough evaluations of the RDPP activities and results. They did not, however, describe the steps that have been taken to ensure that the administrative registrations for the programmes will provide the data necessary for carrying out such evaluations, nor did they describe any other data collection activities envisaged.

In his comments, Mr. Magne Holter said that to the Norwegian government these RDPP programmes seem to be very relevant and timely given current situations on the borders of Europe. Hopefully they may prevent or limit mass movements towards Europe, as they may provide more than mere protection. They may also provide livelihood and opportunities for self-reliance. There is still a need, however, to include resettlement as a possible exit from the current refugee situation and to encourage host countries to give access to the formal labour markets. **Among the issues raised in the concluding panel discussion** were:

To what extent can resettlement contribute to burden/responsibility sharing, and what other measures should also be involved? One class of such other measures consists of those enabling the refugees to take control of their own destiny, and integrate in the local economy (wherever that is) as well as the global economy. Private sponsorships or relaxed immediate standards for housing etc, with or without government involvement, should be considered as a form of ‘resettlement light’ (in Norway). Granting student or work permits, directly or as a change from the protection track should also be considered.

For what would/should UNHCR spend the funds corresponding to the national costs of resettlement if they were allocated to its budget? Strengthening educational capacities might be one priority. Enhancing the capacity for refugees to become self-reliant, where they are currently located or elsewhere, would be consistent with the obligation to share burdens. However, resettlement may not be as costly as depicted with reference to the public budgets: it is the costs and benefits for the whole society that need to be considered. The human costs of not resettling must also be considered in cost/benefits analysis. To be resolved, protracted refugee situations may need non-protracted thinking for the situations to be significantly reduced or resolved.

How can one justify selecting 1 percent of a refugee community for resettlement? With a focus on those refugees who are particularly vulnerable it is important to be present in the UNHCR registration

and need identification phase, and to have transparent, unambiguous and defensible selection criteria. Not being able to help everyone is no excuse for not helping some.

In his **concluding remarks the moderator Mr. Øyvind Jaer** thanked all speakers and commentators, as well as the audience, for their informative and thought provoking contributions to this conference on a topic which had turned out to be even more timely than originally envisaged. He wished all visitors a pleasant stay in Oslo and a safe journey home.

Annex 1

Resettlement, Regional Solutions and Humanitarian Assistance

08.15 – 08.45: Registration

09.00: Welcome by State Secretary Jøran Kallmyr, Ministry of Justice and Public Security

09.10: Introduction:

Displacement in the 21st century: Jan Egeland.

09.30: Changing environment of resettlement

- a. The evolution of resettlement as an instrument of protection and its potential for meeting the challenges of the 21st century: Vincent Cochetel.

➤ Comments: Frode Forfang.

Coffee

- b. Researching resettlement: Past, present and future: Alexander Betts 30 min.

➤ Comments: Kristin Sandvik 5 min.

11.30: Managing resettlement expectations within refugee populations

- a. The impact of resettlement in refugee camps: Cindy Horst 20 min.

➤ Comments: Tonje Øyan 5 min.

11.45: Lunch

12.45: Resettlement as part of comprehensive solutions

- a. Strategic resettlement:

- i. What do we mean by ‘strategic resettlement’: Vincent Cochetel 15 min.
- ii. Examples of successful/unsuccessful strategic resettlement – the Swedish perspective: Oskar Ekblad 20 min.
- iii. Strategic resettlement and linkages to humanitarian/development policy– the Norwegian experience: Johan Kristian Meyer 15 min.

➤ Comments: Pål Nesse 5 min.

Coffee

- 14.00:** c. EU policies regarding cooperation with third countries of origin and transit and programmes for development and protection in the region: Aleksandar Romanovic 25 min.

- b. Regional Development and Protection Programme in the Middle East. Challenges and achievements: Thomas Thomsen 20 min.

➤ Comments: Magne Holter 5 min.

15.00-16.00 Panel discussion: The Way Forward

Pål Nesse, Oskar Ekblad, Vincent Cochetel, Alexander Betts, Kristin Sandvik

Annex 2

Speakers and commentators

Name	Function	Title; Organisation
Betts, Alexander	Speaker	Director; Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford
Cochetel, Vincent	Speaker	Director; UNHCR Bureau for Europe
Egeland, Jan	Speaker	Secretary general; Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
Ekblad, Oskar	Speaker	Head; Swedish Resettlement Program, Swedish Migration Board
Forfang, Frode	Commentator	Director General; Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)
Holter, Magne	Adviser	Assistant Director General; Department of Migration, Ministry of Justice and Public Security
Horst, Cindy	Speaker	Research Professor, Migration and Refugee Studies, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
Jaer, Øyvind	Moderator	NO EMN NCP coordinator; Department of Migration, Ministry of Justice and Public Security
Kallmyr, Jøran	Speaker	State Secretary; Ministry of Justice and Public Security
Meyer, Johan Kristian	Speaker	Refugee Policy Director; Department for UN, Peace and Humanitarian Affairs, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nesse, Pål	Commentator	Adviser; Norwegian refugee Council (NRC)
Romanovic, Aleksandar	Speaker	Policy Officer; DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
Sandvik, Kristin	Commentator	Senior Researcher; Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Director; Norwegian Center for Humanitarian Studies
Thomsen, Thomas	Speaker	Chief advisor for Humanitarian Policy and Assistance; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
Øyan, Tonje	Commentator	Head of Resettlement Unit; Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI)

Annex 3

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