

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL OF DATA IN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT SITUATIONS

Submission of input to the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement
by the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)¹
May 2020

TABLE OF CONTENT

0. INTRODUCTION	1
1. THE ROLE OF DATA IN INCENTIVIZING AND CULTIVATING POLITICAL WILL, RESPONSIBILITY AND LEADERSHIP	3
2. THE ROLE OF DATA IN CATALYSING AND DRIVING EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT SITUATIONS	11
3. LEVERAGING NATIONAL DATA SYSTEMS AND RESPONSIBLE DATA MANAGEMENT	19
4. DATA AND URBAN DISPLACEMENT: LINKING PEOPLE TO THE PLACES THEY SETTLE IN	21

0. Introduction

In response to the call for submissions by the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (hereinafter ‘the Panel’), the Joint IDP Profiling Service (henceforth JIPS, see info box) is delighted to provide actionable and forward-looking input that can feed into the Panel’s work and specifically its final outcomes. Therefore, this document provides recommendations for stepped-up action by all actors involved in addressing internal displacement, with a particular focus on data and evidence.

The cornerstone of the below key messages and recommendations is the transformative power that data processes can have in internal displacement situations, which JIPS has witnessed throughout its 11+ years of supporting data-related, collaborative efforts in over 25 different contexts around the world. The role of data in addressing internal displacement should be seen as cross-cutting and can, and *should*, go beyond the need to provide evidence for policy and response. Data, when

¹ Corresponding authors: Dr. Isis Nunez Ferrera, nunez@jips.org and Corina Demottaz, demottaz@jips.org. The authors thank Kathrine Starup, Martina Caterina, Andrés Lizcano Rodríguez and Devora Levakova for their review and inputs.

designed, collected and analysed collaboratively, has the potential to transform attitudes and contribute to incentivizing buy-in and political will; build trust among actors that often have competing agendas; foster long-term collaboration; maximize local knowledge, build local capacity and promote capacity sharing and complementarity. This transformative potential is particularly important in internal displacement settings where data and analysis are often highly sensitive and divisive. “International and national actors alike have varying interests that underline a certain discourse around IDP figures.”² Data produced by one actor may not easily be accepted by another or be interpreted differently leading to diverging conclusions and set of priorities. In addition to political sensitivities, there are also numerous operational and conceptual constraints to collect representative data on IDPs, such as IDPs’ possible fear of identification or stigmatisation, lack of access, limited capacity and resources, the use of varied definitions, and different levels of application of international standards. This results in information that is inadequate or insufficient and/or that is not trusted by key stakeholders, and often leads to responses that are uncoordinated and unsustainable.

So why is a collaborative approach to data and analysis a game-changer in internal displacement situations, given the above-mentioned diverse issues that surround it? And what is needed for IDP data and analysis to achieve maximum positive transformation that can span across the different areas outlined by the High-Level Panel (government leadership, working effectively at the nexus, solutions, IDP participation, and innovative financing)? The following sections provide concrete answers and highlight practical approaches built on JIPS’ rich field experience, to feed into the Panel’s recommendations.



About the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS)

Set up in 2009 in Geneva, the [Joint IDP Profiling Service’s \(JIPS\)](#) primary mission is to support governments and humanitarian and development actors, to come together and create a shared and locally-owned evidence base on internal displacement situations. Working first and foremost to build capacities and data systems on the ground, support is provided mainly through a process known as profiling and in the form of technical and coordination assistance in the field, capacity building, strategic advice, tools and guidance. Building on its interagency governance structure³, the Service acts as an “honest broker” and strongly emphasises an impartial, collaborative approach in order to establish consensus and to produce agreed-upon data and analysis that can inform joint responses to internal displacement.

Since its inception, JIPS has received 190 requests for support, and has been able to support over 100 exercises in more than 25 internal displacement contexts around the world. Specialising in protracted internal displacement situations, durable solutions analysis, and urban settings, JIPS promotes sharing of experience between local and global levels, and provides guidance tools for displacement data processes and their use for evidence-based policies and action.

² UNHCR Statistics Technical Series (2017): “Obtaining Representative Data on IDPs: Challenges and Recommendations”, <https://www.iips.org/uploads/2018/11/UNHCR-techseries-Obtaining-representative-data-on-IDP-2017.pdf>

³ As an interagency body JIPS is governed by an executive committee consisting of both UN agencies and NGOs. It includes the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of IDPs, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

1. The role of data in incentivizing and cultivating political will, responsibility and leadership

There is a need to ensure governments as the main duty bearers of IDPs' rights and protection. JIPS' support has also observed an increased demand from national and local governments – both to help improve an already existing evidence base, or to generate a first baseline to underpin the official recognition of internal displacement in a country – who are taking the lead in improving the evidence base in their own internal displacement contexts.

Catalysing political will and responsibility cannot be achieved through a quick or one-time-off effort. Instead, it is a long-term process that can be supported and leveraged by external actors but must always build up from within a country. **While data is not the only determining factor, JIPS' experience has demonstrated that it can be a powerful vector of change if treated as a collaborative process. Through the process of producing, analysing and using the data, relevant authorities can be empowered to step up and take on a central role** in addressing internal displacement.

A transformative data process should create government's sense of ownership and trust around the data; allow relevant authorities to not only understand the data, but have the capabilities to use it and operationalise it across different entities and levels of government in their programmes, policies and day-to-day activities; and engage governments in multi-stakeholder discussions around data in collaboration with other international and national actors that can hold them accountable and increase transparency of the data process, which can also ensure its adequate interpretation and use.

Notably, the existence – and even abundance in certain contexts – of evidence is not enough in itself to bring about change in government attitudes and discourses around internal displacement. Instead, for data to have such a transformative impact and to effectively incentivize political will and responsibility in internal displacement situations, it **must be seen as a process and requires concerted action, as described below in JIPS' recommendations:**

- 1) *A collaborative approach to data and analysis that meaningfully engages government and national statistical offices should be prioritised and adequately funded, in order to build government leadership, capacity and responsibility, and to counter misconceptions and politicisation of data on internal displacement.*
- 2) *Government ownership and production of data and analysis on internal displacement, should go hand-in-hand with a comprehensive capacity building and capacity sharing approach. One that includes a combination of conceptual, technical, and operational elements and peer-to-peer exchange that allows governments to put the evidence into action and that is in favour of durable solutions for the displaced.*
- 3) *The Panel should critically examine past and current use of data on internal displacement for policy and programming. Data must only be a means to an end, and must above all be utilised and put to action, particularly by governments, for improving IDPs' lives and finding durable solutions to their displacement. This requires better documentation of the impact of data and frameworks to improve evidence-based decision making and practice.*

We offer the following recommendations aimed primarily at donors and international actors working on IDP issues in cities, and to regional government platforms, that can contribute to catalysing political will and responsibility through data.

Recommendation 1.1: A collaborative approach to data and analysis that meaningfully engages government should be prioritised and adequately funded, in order to build government leadership, capacity and responsibility, and to counter misconceptions and politicisation of data on internal displacement

Too often data on and analysis of internal displacement are done by international partners to inform humanitarian decision making and lack the meaningful engagement and buy-in from national and local authorities. It is therefore often delinked from national and local development and planning processes, and fails to help governments to assume their role as primary duty bearers in internal displacement contexts, even when the political will may be in place.

JIPS' experience supporting governments in conducting collaborative data processes, including through profiling, durable solutions analysis and capacity building, has demonstrated that data, when collected and analysed collaboratively, has the potential to catalyse change in government attitudes, build their leadership and capacity, counter misconceptions on internal displacement, and help align government and the international community's agendas.

The example from the collaborative profiling exercise in Mogadishu, Somalia, illustrates how evidence that is produced and trusted by both government (national and local) and the international actors can help transform the narrative around internal displacement and catalyse action across several government levels ([see case study I](#)). National and local authorities were engaged in the profiling exercise from the start, and their buy-in was built and sustained throughout the process – from agreeing on the data collection objectives, to defining the methodology, collectively analysing the findings, through to jointly producing and endorsing the recommendations. **The shared ownership achieved by the profiling process through its collaborative and inclusive nature, continues to yield fruit today** as they are still referenced as the trusted source of baseline information for Mogadishu.

Nonetheless, making a truly collaborative data process **more widely practiced and effective**, requires a concerted effort to **question current data practices** around internal displacement, **revisit current timeframes** imposed by funding and programme cycles, and question current approaches to engaging with governments. Therefore, JIPS' recommendations are expanded to include the following lessons learned from its experience supporting governments on data processes on internal displacement:

- **Take collaboration around data seriously and professionally.** Establishing, and most importantly **sustaining collaboration** throughout a data process in **highly sensitive** internal displacement contexts goes beyond facilitating one-off multi-stakeholder workshops. It takes time and effort to initiate such a process, and commitment and skills to sustain it. Specifically, this requires the **right combination of technical, soft, and political skills**, including, but not limited to, conflict resolution, sound analytical capacities, and knowing how to articulate complex technical terms and concepts to audiences with diverse levels of data literacy.

International data producers, in particular, need to ensure these skills are present or available to their teams when working with governments on data processes in internal displacement contexts. Established and tested methodologies such as **collaborative profiling and durable solutions analysis** need to be made available to those embarking in such processes, while also **evaluated and improved periodically** based on lessons learned and innovation to adapt to different types of internal displacement situations.

- **Due diligence and ethical practice when engaging the government are imperative for a truly transformative and inclusive data process.** ‘Government’ is not a monolithic entity. Before embarking in collaborative data processes, international actors should be aware and understand the institutional landscape and how it relates to different mandates, responsibilities and ongoing political discussions and sensitivities around internal displacement in the country. This will ensure the right entry point to establish a collaboration, avoid creating or exacerbating detrimental divisions and competition among government agencies and institutions, and ensure all relevant entities are represented. This will also contribute to building accountability and maximising the use of the resulting data for different purposes and by different entities and levels of government. Particular attention is needed to the challenge of short political cycles and quick turnaround in national and local authorities in many of the affected contexts, as well as competition and political sensitivities between different institutions, or between the central government and local authorities.
- **Donors and international actors need to adjust funding schemes, timeframes, and project cycles to allow for such collaborative processes engaging and/or led by the government.** Such a collaborative approach may come across technical, operational, or political hurdles along the way, such as lack of access due to political instability, elections, or unexpected change in government. A flexible and agile approach to funding and project cycles is needed to accommodate the latter, as well as the adequate mechanisms to report, measure and evaluate the impact of collaborative processes on decision making and policy (this is explored further in recommendation 3.3).

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

Mogadishu, Somalia – Changing the narrative for durable solutions in Somalia through incentivising government ownership and use of IDP data

Protracted conflict and cyclical disasters have driven displacement in Somalia for decades. The capital city Mogadishu has been drawing thousands of IDPs and labour migrants over the years. Settling in the informal urban settlements around the city, these vulnerable groups are oftentimes victims of forced evictions and face challenges different from the non-displaced population in the same settlements. Given the limited evidence on the experience of displaced populations 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 programs**⁴. The purpose of the profiling was to provide disaggregated estimates of the number of IDPs living in the informal settlement, analyse their displacement history, and based on [IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs](#) examine the families’ skills, capacities, specific needs and coping mechanisms that affect their decision-making for the future.

The results informed the establishment of the Somali IDP Durable Solutions Initiative and crucially, they informed the inclusion, for the very first time, of internal displacement in the country’s **National Development Plan**.⁵ The profiling process also prompted dialogue with development stakeholders, who came to recognise displacement as an impoverishment factor and understand the importance of municipalities’ role in implementing durable solutions. The relevance and impact of the results from this exercise can still be seen today. The profiling informed the creation of a task force led by the Mayor of Mogadishu to develop the city’s Urban Durable Solutions Strategy in line with his commitment to end displacement by 2024. The results were used as the much-needed baseline for the recently developed **5-year Durable Solutions Strategy (2020)** of the Benadir Regional Authority (BRA) / Municipality of Mogadishu. As the BRA states:

“The profiling exercise demystified some of the assumptions and speculation surrounding displacement and outlined the inhibiting factors preventing durable solutions, and in particular, local integration in Mogadishu”.

BRA, Durable Solutions Strategy for Mogadishu⁶



Partners working together to develop an enumeration strategy to identify IDPs in the informal settlements, and the launch of the profiling report in Mogadishu, Somalia, on May 15th, 2016 featuring the Benadir 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.

⁴ 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 Benadir 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.

⁵ <https://www.iips.org/news/changing-narrative-internal-displacement-mogadishu/>

⁶ <https://dsu.so/2020-2024-strategy/>

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

Building government leadership and making internal displacement visible through collaborative data processes – Honduras 2014 - 2020

Forced displacement in Honduras was officially recognised by the government in 2013, resulting in the creation of the Inter-Institutional Commission for the Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence⁷ (CIPPDV in Spanish). Given the lack of evidence on the phenomenon, a first profiling exercise⁸ on internal displacement in Honduras was coordinated by the CIPPDV in 2014. The study provided the country's **first displacement estimates in urban areas** in twenty municipalities between 2004 and 2014 and offered insight into the causes and dynamics of displacement in order to support the development of a law for the comprehensive protection of the displaced population.

The results of the profiling **kick-started the process for the development of a legal framework** on internal displacement. In the process of drafting of this proposed legislation, the CIPPDV decided in 2017 to carry out a new profiling exercise, this time on a national scale, to provide relevant data for the adoption and implementation of public policies for the prevention of internal displacement and the provision of assistance and protection to those affected, thereby enhancing the proposed law's future effectiveness. This profiling exercise⁹ aimed to provide an estimate of people affected by internal displacement at the national level disaggregated by gender, age and location. It also sought to identify development issues in regards to the impact of displacement on livelihoods and the need for better protection and access to services to enable continuation of the economic activities of the displaced population.

“The [impact of the collaborative profiling] has been the recognition of the issue of internal displacement in this country from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective and to put this in the discussion table of the authorities. Because it allows us to respond to the phenomenon through different capacities and channels, including a State response, a community-based response, and a municipality response.”

Quote from an international NGO that took part in the exercise, during the evaluation of the collaborative profiling

Overall, the profiling exercise, conducted through a collaborative process with strong government leadership, has had a great impact on the ability of the government to take action on the issue. The first profiling helped to make the internal displacement situation visible in the country and to engage actors interested in the topic. As a result, it contributed to the development of guidelines for the assistance to internally displaced people, most notably a draft bill for the Prevention, Assistance and Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons which was presented to congress in March 2019 in view of responding to internal displacement in the country. The results of the second profiling will, therefore, feed directly into the planning of the government response

⁷ The CIPPDV is mandated to promote the adoption of policies and measures designed to prevent internal displacement caused by violence, to provide assistance and protection, and to support solutions for displaced people and their relatives.

⁸ An inter-agency coordination body oversaw the exercise, including representatives and experts from civil society organizations, academia, international bodies and the United Nations System. Data collection was conducted by the Jesuit Reflection, the Investigation and Communication Team (ERIC-SJ) and the National Statistics Institute (INE). UNHCR and JIPS provided comprehensive support throughout the process.

⁹ The project is guided by the technical working group, made up of government organisations including the [National Statistics Institute \(INE\)](#), representatives from international organisations and civil society organisations (also members of the CIPPDV), and with UNHCR and JIPS providing technical support.

including for development priorities. In addition, the collaboration proved to be invaluable at all stages of the process and maintained the engagement of stakeholders throughout and beyond.



Images of a workshop with representatives from the Municipality of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to jointly discuss the preliminary findings and analysis, and an image of the presentation of the law on IDPs to the National Congress from March 27, 2019. Credit: ACNUR / CIPPDV.

Recommendation 1.2: *Government ownership and production of data and analysis on internal displacement, needs to go hand-in-hand with a comprehensive **capacity building and capacity sharing** approach. One that includes a combination of **conceptual, technical and operational** elements and **peer-to-peer exchange** that allows governments to put the evidence into action and that is in favour of durable solutions for the displaced.*

Data on IDPs is often the first step in acknowledging internal displacement and proving the relevance of addressing the phenomenon as part of policy and decision making, as well as to ensure adequate allocation of resources for action. However, **capacities on data production and management**, and **evidence-based decision making** are often limited. In addition, existing standards and guidance on IDP data management mainly focus on international actors’ needs for operational data.

The recognition of the need to invest in developing adequate capacities among national and local governments to inform effective and longer-term responses to internal displacement is not new. However, JIPS’ recommendation aims to go a step further and provide the High-Level Panel with guidance on what capacity building with governments may entail in internal displacement contexts. Based on lessons learned from JIPS’ experience working with and supporting local and national governments on data processes¹⁰, **capacity building and capacity sharing efforts can significantly incentivise and enhance political will, if done at different government levels, throughout the different stages of a data process, and on aspects that go beyond data-specific technical know-how** by also looking at internationally agreed concepts and frameworks and linking those to the local stakeholders’ specific policy or operational needs. Thus, we recommend that capacity building should be comprehensive so as to embrace the following key aspects:

¹⁰ JIPS has been implementing a comprehensive capacity building strategy ranging from direct support to stakeholders during the implementation of the collaborative profiling exercises, to capacity sharing with national statistical offices, and the organization of global, regional and country-level trainings (including the Profiling Coordination Trainings (PCT)) to improve relevant skills and competencies of targeted humanitarian and development actors, and national and local partners to engage and lead collaborative data processes.

- At the practical/operational level, international actors planning to undertake data collection exercises in internal displacement contexts must take the time to **first map available capacities in a country** to make sure not to duplicate but actually build on those capacities. JIPS' experience also includes working closely **on capacity sharing** with national and local governments, and crucially, **with national statistical offices** in internal displacement contexts. Capacity sharing – for example on designing sampling strategies together and applying international definitions and standards to develop context-specific enumeration exercises and household surveys – becomes an important conduit to develop capacity through practice, building government's trust in the data being produced and at the same time helping local actors anchor their ownership and leadership of the process. Undertaking capacity sharing thus contributes to building **longer-term positive impact through the data process, not only by strengthening capacities themselves but by fostering collaboration between stakeholders.**
- At the conceptual level, donors, international actors, and international and regional government platforms **must invest in making concepts, definitions, and frameworks on internal displacement¹¹ available to national and local governments, and support them in translating these into practice.** National and local governments must improve their understanding of internal displacement concepts and standards and the rights-based nature of durable solutions (which is often reduced to the physical movement of relocation or return). This furthermore requires support to make these concepts and frameworks – such as the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs – **operational and relevant to their contexts and obligations across different line ministries and institutions.** This goes on par with ensuring an **adequate understanding of the institutional landscape in a country** (also see recommendation 1.1), and of how different relevant line ministries (such as those related to labour, women and children issues, or housing, land and property) may need to use and align among themselves concepts and standards to adapt and improve their services and programmes that include IDPs among their targets. At lower levels of local administration, understanding of and information on IDPs' rights and entitlements are also critical to ensure access to services and tailored assistance.
- Lastly, at the **regional and global levels, spaces for peer-to-peer exchange** between national and local governments on data and evidence on internal displacement are still scarce, and must be supported by donors and the international community in order to promote government-led efforts to improve evidence, allow governments to learn from each other, disseminate best practices and link them to governments' needs and concerns, and ultimately create incentives for governments to take the lead in the response and search for durable solutions for IDPs. Global and regional government platforms can also **play an important role in providing insights into the capacity building needs of governments** dealing with internal displacement.

¹¹ Including the [International Recommendations on IDP Statistics \(IRIS\)](#) and the accompanying Compilers' Manual, and the [Interagency Durable Solutions Analysis Guide and Indicators](#) providing a comprehensive analysis framework for durable solutions for IDPs that operationalises the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs.

Recommendation 1.3: *The Panel should critically examine past and current use of data on internal displacement for policy and programming. Data must only be a means to an end and must above all be utilised and put to action, particularly by governments, for improving IDPs' lives and finding durable solutions to their displacement. This requires better documentation of the impact of data and the development of frameworks to improve evidence-based decision making and practice.*

- Generic calls for more and better data should come with the need for accountability and transparency on its actual impact i.e. **if and how the evidence base informs decision making and programming and incentivises political will and responsibility**. Over the past years, JIPS has put efforts into monitoring the outcomes of its work as well as of data collection processes it has supported more broadly speaking, including through key informant interviews with governments and their international partners, and systematic evaluation of its field support services. Nevertheless, tracking and measuring this type of impact remains a persistent challenge, especially against the background of often short political cycles, and only little literature and few tools to help improve practice in this area, as well as a lack of dedicated funding. Furthermore, measuring impact in this area is not prioritised enough in the sector, and we encourage the Panel to explore ways to overcome this gap and develop actionable recommendations in this regard.
- Reports, infographics and datasets by themselves are not agents of change when it comes to incentivising political will, responsibility and leadership. **A concerted effort should be made to build the capabilities that allow governments to see the clear link between the evidence needed and the decisions they make**. Evidence-based decision making and practice is widely applied in other sectors, such as health and business management, and lessons can be learned from those to improve practice in this area.
- **Data literacy must be invested in**, as well as the capacity to go from the production and discussion of evidence to decision making and operationalisation of the evidence in every-day practice across different levels of administration. This also includes being strategic on how to disseminate the data among governments and their social constituencies, recognising the different levels of data literacy among national and local governments, and, as mentioned in recommendations 1.1 and 1.2, applying a collaborative and capacity sharing approach to data processes in order to build capacity and data literacy **through practice**.
- **Furthermore, international actors producing data on internal displacement must make efforts in aligning data processes with the development of national and local policies and development plans**, and work closely with national and local governments in doing so. In this way, such data efforts will also contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its commitment to “leave no-one behind” by improving the availability and quality of evidence for decision making on displaced populations and monitoring progress over time.

Remaining challenges

Collaboration is underpinning every single one of the recommendations above. This is understandably more easily achieved in protracted situations than in an emergency stage or fluctuating contexts (i.e. cities during ongoing conflict), where the emphasis is often put on rapid assessments to provide life-saving assistance. Nevertheless, working at the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus and fostering collaboration are equally critical in emergency settings as in protracted situations, to make sure emergency assistance efforts are aligned with local policies and can effectively transition / feed into the local development agenda. **JIPS thus encourages the High-Level Panel to further explore ways how this challenge can be tackled**, including by looking at innovative approaches and good practices from other fields (such as adaptive management practices, flexible and agile approaches), **and include relevant recommendations in its final output.**

2. The role of data in catalysing and driving effective solutions to internal displacement situations

A sound evidence base is essential to inform durable solutions and monitor progress towards their achievement. Achieving durable solutions is a complex process with significant human rights, humanitarian, development, and peace-building challenges, which requires concerted efforts involving multiple actors. Therefore, progressing towards durable solutions to internal displacement requires working at the HDP nexus, bringing humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors as well as national and local governments together to develop and implement adequate policies, strategies, and programming.

Operationalising the HDP nexus has many challenges, including the conceptual, financial, and operational differences across the different sectors. Planning and programming for durable solutions is a paramount example of this. While generally accepted to be a comprehensive concept, including the principles and criteria defined in the IASC framework for durable solutions, in practice governments and international organizations responding to displacement tend to approach durable solutions from their own perspectives. This often translates into simplifying or compartmentalising the concept and preventing comprehensive approaches and opportunities to work with other stakeholders to support displaced populations in resolving the different challenges they face as a result of their displacement.

Based on JIPS' experience, we argue in this section that **overcoming these simplifications and compartmentalization can be supported through a collaborative data collection and analysis process that brings together humanitarian, development and peace actors, to develop a joint evidence base.** Internationally and regionally agreed standards and tools, such as the Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library, provide a good foundation and framework for informing joint efforts towards durable solutions involving all the key actors. But what can make them truly powerful, is the **collaborative and participatory aspect that ideally underpins its application in internal displacement contexts.**

In addition, a people-centred approach is also needed to inform solutions that are truly sustainable and that build on evidence that accurately represents the experiences, capacities, preferences and

intentions of IDPs, as well as the situation of the host communities and the capacities of the places they settle in. This means **engaging IDPs and host communities as stakeholders in the data process**. Nevertheless, significant political and technical challenges remain for IDPs and host communities to have meaningful participation in the data processes beyond being passive providers of information.

Finally, data collection exercises informing solutions often focus on IDPs, and increasingly also on host communities. But what we know is that IDPs do not live isolated from their environment. Whether in cities, camps or villages, they interact with informal economies, service providers, grassroots and religious organizations, different population groups, local businesses, and other community actors, that in many cases also constitute their support networks. This social context is more than a background and can be leveraged for anchoring locally-led interventions to build IDPs self-reliance, foster social cohesion and contribute towards efforts of (re)integration. The below recommendations build on the argument that **data collection efforts must go beyond IDPs and hosts communities, and engage with the social landscape** that constitutes the places where IDPs settle or wish to return to, and they offer examples on which actors need to be engaged, what results this data can elicit, and the skills and partnerships needed to collect and analyse it.

Based on JIPS' experience in measuring progress towards solutions through the use of the Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library in various contexts and direct support to governments and their international and local partners, we recommend:

1. *Prioritise and invest in a collaborative approach to **data collection and analysis as the starting point to bring humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors together and help operationalise the HDP nexus for durable solutions at scale.***
2. *Embed a **whole-of-society approach to the production and use of data** to contextualise durable solutions and inform interventions that build conducive environments for (re)integration.*
3. *Solutions cannot be sustainable without taking IDPs' views, knowledge, and lived experiences into account. **We must strive for making community engagement an integral part of the data process informing solutions.** For this to happen, capacity and partnerships need to be built among data producers to drive this process professionally and ethically.*

Recommendation 2.1: *Prioritise and invest in a collaborative approach to data collection and analysis as the starting point to bring humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors together and help operationalise the HDP nexus for durable solutions at scale.*

The international community and local actors alike have emphasised that integrated, whole-of-society, and cross-cutting approaches are needed to effectively address the short-term needs and long-term resilience in displacement contexts. **This is of particular importance for supporting durable solutions at scale.** The need for relevant, reliable, and agreed-upon data continues (and even increases) in protracted displacement situations where the potential uses of data become more extensive – covering not only humanitarian information needs but also those of development actors. Despite this recognition, significant challenges remain in translating the HDP nexus into practice. The recent successful roll-out of the Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library and Guidance in North

Darfur, Sudan ([see country highlight 1](#)), and its scaling-up to other areas of the country, demonstrates that the operationalization of the HDP nexus is more feasible if anchored in sustained collaboration and a shared understanding of durable solutions, which often starts with a **collaborative data collection and analysis process**.

There can be several entry points to catalyse effective collaboration across the nexus for durable solutions, but we argue in this section that without a shared starting point – such as a joint evidence that HDP actors understand, trust, and have built themselves – it is much more difficult to bring partners together at the later stage of policy making, planning or programming. Conversely, joint programming and development planning for durable solutions and integrated response are highly challenging if humanitarian, development, and government actors can't agree on the basic information they build their priorities on.

The above may sound unrealistic given the ongoing challenge to operationalize the HDP nexus in many internal displacement contexts. Nonetheless, the following case study of Sudan is an example of how this approach can be piloted, evaluated in both its technical and collaborative components, and eventually improved and scaled-up to mainstream the HDP approach in the country for informing durable solutions at scale.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHT

A collaborative data process contributing to the operationalisation of the HDP nexus for durable solutions at scale in Sudan

Since conflict broke out in Darfur in 2015, 1.85 million are still internally displaced with a majority living in camps and relying on humanitarian assistance. The Government of Sudan and the UN country team (through the Durable Solutions Working Group) have recognised the need for a comprehensive strategy to address the protracted displacement situation and work towards solutions. As part of these efforts, the [Government of Sudan](#), the UN Country Team, and the wider international community represented by the Durable Solutions Working Group (DSWG, including UNDP, IOM, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, OCHA, UN-Habitat, INGO Steering Committee and donors), initiated a durable solutions profiling exercise in El Fasher, in 2017. The exercise was done in collaboration with the [World Bank](#) and with participation from IDPs in Abu Shouk and El Salam camps.

This collaborative effort aimed specifically to **analyse the progress towards local integration of IDPs** residing in the camps of Abu Shouk and El Salaam, neighbouring the city of El Fasher. Such analysis was required both at the local level to inform the plans of the city to integrate the two IDP camps, as well as at the federal level where a national level durable solution strategy is being shaped. The exercise provided a joint analysis of displaced persons' demographic profile, displacement history, current conditions and needs, and preferences on durable solutions, and actionable priorities for durable solutions, specifically with regards to removing barriers related to access to services, livelihoods, documentation, and security of tenure.

Although the results were launched in January 2020, the exercise is already considered a landmark due to its interagency – government joint collaboration implemented for the first time in Sudan. The results informed programming in the two IDP camps and the local integration plans by the local authorities; and it informed a common framework for data collection and analysis on durable solutions that will now be applied in the rest of Darfur and other areas of the country, promoting joint efforts and coordination on data for DS. In February 2020, JIPS started supporting the DSWG in the scaling-up of this approach to 8 localities across 5 states in Darfur to inform durable solutions programming for the implementation of the Peacebuilding Fund.

The exercise has been referenced by the **UN Joint Steering Committee in New York** as a good practice for **strengthening humanitarian-development-peace collaboration** in Sudan and recommended its scale-up in other areas of the country. **The Sudan example** has also been included as good practice in the upcoming **GP20 compilation on IDP participation**, due to the role communities played throughout the process.¹²



Different phases of the durable solutions analysis in North Darfur, Sudan, including community engagement, data collection and the joint analysis session with government officials and the UN country team.

Based on the case of Sudan, JIPS recommends the following steps that made it possible to start operationalising the nexus for informing solutions, through a **transformative data process**:

- The durable solutions analysis was **anchored in the existing coordination mechanisms**, with leadership of the Government, the Resident Coordinator Office, and the Durable Solutions Working Group.
- The pilot was tested in the town of El Fasher, in North Darfur Sudan, i.e. a manageable geographical area that allowed for a whole-of-government approach with the involvement of both national and local governments, and different levels of administration.
- It utilised a **comparative analysis between displaced and non-displaced populations and an area-based approach** with findings relevant to both humanitarian and development actors, the Ministry of Urban Planning in charge of service delivery, and local authorities that were developing a local integration plan.
- It was **aligned** to inform local integration plans of the local authorities, and the durable solutions strategy at national level, contributing to long-term development goals.
- It included a **capacity building and capacity sharing** component throughout the data process. For example, by basing the urban analysis that was undertaken on the local knowledge and expertise of the Ministry of Urban Planning and by sharing it with other partners. **Joint analysis and joint discussions** around objectives, indicators, methods, and findings helped bring together and build consensus among HDP actors, ultimately ensuring that the results would be relevant and actionable by all.
- Upon completion, **an external evaluation** of the process was conducted, that examined the technical and information management components, and crucially, also the effectiveness of the collaboration across HDP actors and communities.
- Based on lessons learned and national and global recognition, the approach has now been **evaluated, improved, and is being scaled-up** to 8 localities across 5 States in Sudan, with the technical support of JIPS.

These results, achieved in a short time, illustrate how a **collaborative approach to data collection and analysis can help effectively operationalise the nexus and inform durable solutions** at scale.

¹² See more on perspectives from IDP communities informing durable solutions in Sudan <https://vimeo.com/264930762>

Furthermore, its phased approach, starting with a manageable pilot that helps test the collaboration, refine the technical components, and build consensus among HDP actors, various levels of government, and communities, can prove useful for other sensitive contexts where the operationalisation of the HDP nexus for solutions remains a challenge.

Recommendation 2.2: Embed a whole-of-society approach to the production and use of data, to contextualise durable solutions and inform interventions that build conducive environments for (re)integration.

Data collection exercises informing solutions often focus on IDPs, and increasingly also on host communities. But what we know is that IDPs do not live isolated from their environment. Whether in cities, camps or villages, they interact with informal economies, service providers, grassroots and religious organizations, different population groups, local businesses, and other community actors and brokers, that in many cases also constitute their support networks. This social context is more than a background and can be leveraged for anchoring locally-led interventions to build IDPs' self-reliance and contribute towards efforts of (re)integration.

Due to the multi-dimensional nature of durable solutions, responses require willingness and participation from a wide variety of stakeholders with different areas of expertise and capacities, and any data process informing solutions should reflect this inclusive approach.

In this section we argue that **data can have an important role in leveraging the context and communities for the benefit of both IDPs and their broader environment, but data producers need to be willing to engage with different local actors and the wider context in the data process and build their capacity to do so through appropriate methods and approaches.** This is increasingly important in **urban areas**¹³, areas of local integration, and situations of return and (re)integration, where data needs should also be linked to development planning and local action plans. All of this needs to be underpinned by adequate qualitative and participatory methodologies, and a mapping of the social landscape that constitutes the places where IDPs settle or wish to return to. The scale of this challenge also requires partnering with a variety of actors that bring local knowledge or thematic expertise, such as academics and local organisations.

Based on learning from supporting durable solutions analysis in several countries, JIPS has observed the need for a better integration of qualitative approaches to contextualise solutions and complement the quantitative analysis based on the indicator library. The following are examples of areas that need to be strengthened in data processes in order to contextualise evidence informing durable solutions:

- **Community relationships and social cohesion:** for example, examining inter-community perceptions and attitudes in areas where IDPs reside to contribute to an understanding of how sustainable certain durable solutions may or may not be. Underlying issues such as marginalisation, exclusion or discrimination linked to potential root causes of displacement should also be understood.

¹³ See the separate recommendations looking at IDPs in cities and towns, submitted to the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement and formulated by IIED, JIPS and UN-Habitat

- **IDPs’ interests, capacities and contributions:** IDPs’ durable solutions priorities should not equate to the mere quantitative analysis of the three settlement options. A more nuanced approach to understanding displaced persons’ interests beyond their physical location and the actions they are already taking to advance towards these should also be included in a durable solutions analysis, and this requires the use of qualitative methods.
- **Services and built environment:** for example, identifying available services and infrastructure in the locations where IDPs reside and in areas where they may wish to return or relocate. An analysis of the absorption capacity and quality of these coupled with the demographic profile of the non-displaced population will inform how support for durable solutions to displacement can be integrated in urban/development planning. For this purpose, **context analysis tools** are needed, including key informant interviews, mapping of facilities and their operational capacity, spatial analysis, and participatory mapping tools. Partnerships with urban planners and built environment professionals are also encouraged.
- **Generational differences in aspirations and intentions:** for example, the desire to return may be very strong among older IDPs who have been waiting for years for the opportunity to move back to their lost home. Meanwhile, younger generations who have lived most of their lives in the city of refuge may have developed job skills for their urban life that are not needed in a rural area of origin.

USE CASE

Community profiling exercise to inform the IDP legal framework in Honduras: A comprehensive qualitative exercise was designed to understand how criminal violence affected different population groups, and to what extent these experiences made them prone to displacement. Methods were developed with input from local NGOs and UNHCR youth/child protection experts, in order to adapt to different vulnerable groups, including women, youth at risk of forced recruitment, small-scale business owners at risk of extortion, as well as with community actors that constituted their support networks such as teachers, church leaders, and community service providers. Furthermore, an effective collaboration with a local NGO (World Vision Honduras) made it possible to establish trust and have better access to communities at risk.



An abandoned house in the La Era district of the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa, where gang violence is forcing out residents. Displacement is particularly affecting communities that have been traditionally marginalised and excluded.

Additionally, more **in-depth studies on host communities are also required**, particularly on drivers of solidarity and successful community-based interventions, as well as on factors that have triggered social tensions and instability. This type of knowledge can help strengthen the support given to host

communities, increase understanding on how to better build conducive environments for local integration or reintegration, and improve methodologies to assess social cohesion and inform peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts, among others.

Finally, we recommend that processes of action planning are considered part of the data cycle in order to ensure and enhance the use of results for durable solutions and encourage locally-led processes and interventions. As we have made clear throughout this submission, data becomes powerful only if it is used for advocacy, programming or policy that benefits IDPs and other displacement-affected populations. In order to enhance the use of the results for durable solutions planning and programming, qualitative tools are needed to engage stakeholders, including displaced and host communities, **in inclusive prioritisation processes and action planning**. JIPS will be implementing this approach in the upcoming durable solutions profiling in Sudan, engaging local authorities and the communities in the use of the results to formulate area-based action plans that can be locally led, complemented by efforts from humanitarian and development actors.

Recommendation 2.3: Solutions cannot be sustainable without taking IDPs' views, knowledge, and lived experiences into account. We must strive to make community engagement an integral part of the data process informing solutions. For this to happen, capacity and partnerships needs to be built among data producers to drive this process professionally and ethically.

In line with its [commitment to advance community engagement](#), JIPS has strived to engage IDPs and displacement-affected communities in collaborative profiling processes, with different levels of success. The experience gained has shown that this approach strongly impacts the value and quality of data collected, and also contributes to raising awareness and empowerment of the communities involved. But it is not without its challenges, both technical and political.

Although ensuring participation of communities has many challenges, it is essential for organising a durable solutions process in line with the Guiding Principles and the IASC Framework, and **should not be treated as a mere formality**. Beyond providing data on their situations, **IDPs should also be able to participate at every step of a durable solutions analysis, from framing the analysis based on their priorities, to adequately interpreting the findings**. Furthermore, IDPs and other displacement-affected communities are holders of local knowledge and understanding of their own situations. Therefore, they need to be considered as partners and active agents with capacities and skills that can contribute to their own recovery and decision making, and to the creation of sound evidence that can inform appropriate and longer-term solutions.

Engagement of IDPs and displacement-affected communities at the different stages of a durable solutions analysis process **will increase the relevance and transformative potential of the data**, by:

- informing the identification of indicators in line with their priorities and ensuring that the most relevant topics are addressed in the right way;
- ensuring that the context where IDPs have settled is explored in direct relation to how IDPs themselves are affected by it – this is particularly important for aspects such as community relationships and social cohesion, adequacy and quality of services and built environment, and

conflict analysis;

- ensuring that the evidence produced reflects the diversity between IDPs and within communities, particularly the most vulnerable, underrepresented or difficult to reach;
- ensuring that affected populations **better understand their own situation** and are able to use the results of the analysis **for their planning and decision-making**, contributing to **active citizenship**;
- improving accountability, including building trust in data collection processes, mutual respect and understanding between communities and the relevant authorities, humanitarian, and development actors.

Moreover, in order for IDPs to pursue their preferred durable solution based on an informed and voluntary choice, an analysis of the implications of the different solution options needs to be made available to the displaced communities themselves. Displaced persons themselves should be included in the process of developing recommendations for a way forward.

We encourage the High-Level Panel to highlight the need for data producers to build their technical capacity on this area in order to **drive processes of community engagement professionally and ethically, and to apply to participatory approaches the same methodological rigor applicable to other types of assessments**. While accountability, protection and conflict-sensitivity are usually counted as principles for community engagement, it is rarely acknowledged that sound technical capacity and methodological rigor in the design of tools and in the analysis of the resulting data are also needed. This includes, for example, tailoring data collection tools to the context and to the specific population groups based on gender, age, identity or other diversity characteristics, as well as establishing **adequate mechanisms to capture, process, and disseminate** the qualitative data collected in a format that is also useful to the communities themselves. This also requires partnerships with organizations that bring local knowledge, access and trust among communities, or specific thematic expertise.

USE CASE

Disseminating profiling findings with communities in Sittwe, Myanmar: IDPs were engaged in discussions on the relevance of community participation in the data process. Idea generation workshops were held with IDPs to brainstorm on the best feedback channels and methods, taking into account the low literacy levels and IDPs' inability to understand or engage with printed materials and complex data products. To this end, [alternative methods for dissemination and validation of results \(such as role-play, videos and quizzes, and feedback through phone recordings\) were adopted.](#)



Images of a participatory mapping exercise with communities facilitated by JIPS and CCCM, and the public screening of the videos produced by the communities themselves, utilising role-play techniques to disseminate the findings from the collaborative data process in an accessible format. Each video screening was followed by a quiz and a Q&A session.

To conclude, we identified the following remaining challenges that the Panel can explore further in the area of IDP participation, in this case specifically related to data processes informing durable solutions:

- The need for **more documentation of lessons learned including the positive impacts of IDP participation**, as well as the need to effectively share these lessons at the decision-making level and within countries;
- The need for the **donor community to adapt to allow for more flexible data processes and programmes** that can accommodate the time and resources needed to ensure a meaningful participation of IDPs.

3. Leveraging national data systems and responsible data management

Internal displacement situations are catching up with other emergency contexts with regards to the availability of data and the proliferation of actors, as well as capacities of actors to handle data. The information management field is increasingly urged to not only better link data systems (including effective connections between operational data systems as well as between those and national official statistics), but also to improve data responsibility beyond the legal and technical aspects and prioritise establishing frameworks for enhanced data sharing, increased interoperability, and joint analysis – all conditions to encourage the efficient use of both resources and data.

The following recommendations aim to leverage and ensure harmonisation between operational data and statistical systems, as well as promote progress towards more responsible data management practices:

- **Coordinating with actors producing and using displacement data in a given context from the very beginning of a data collection initiative, is critical to ensure responsible use of data as well as effective integration of different data sources/systems at the field level** for a more comprehensive picture of a displacement situation. As is emphasised in the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics, “data collected in different ways tend to give different parts of the IDP story”.¹⁴ This requires that key actors from the national statistical system, such as national statistical offices, and those from relevant other data systems are brought together and engaged in a data collection undertaking. In cases where this is not possible yet, a **joint mapping of the information landscape in a country** should be conducted, to produce a shared overview of existing data systems and the information they cover, for example against the IASC criteria and relevant durable solutions indicators, thus laying the foundation for effective coordination of data efforts and ensuring that the data collection results add analytical value. This also helps make data collection more efficient and feasible in operational terms, by leading to a more targeted use of resources and by avoiding duplication of data efforts. This may be particularly critical in the early stages of displacement, where operational data might be the only data available, due to the rapidly changing and challenging environments that often prevail in displacement contexts. In some contexts, “a lack of a functioning or highly resource- and capacity-constrained statistical system may also result in

¹⁴ International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (2020), page 86, article 283, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3n-international-recommendations-on-IDP-statistics-E.pdf>

operational data being the only possible source for IDP statistics.”¹⁵

- The humanitarian and development community has put relevant effort in recent years, to advance practices with regards to the responsible management and sharing of data. This means on the one hand, ensuring that personal and sensitive information is protected and that the data collection exercises have protection concerns at their core. On the other hand, it means that the international community, civil society, and governments, have the **responsibility to leverage the evidence collected as much as possible in order to ensure a more efficient use of existing data and to gain better insights as well as avoid duplication of efforts and to allow for the exploration of the full potential** of humanitarian and development data,
- We need to look beyond data anonymisation and **develop a holistic workflow for data sharing and querying**. JIPS has been exploring recently this area through a collaborative innovation project at global level to develop technical solutions and tools for improved data governance, sharing and interoperability, and we aim to be able to offer concrete recommendations in the near future based on testing and further research.

USE CASE

Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq: the central role of the regional statistics office

The displacement situation in Iraq is overall extremely complex and dynamic. In particular, as a result of Iraq’s own crisis and events in neighbouring Syria, by 2016 the urban population in the Erbil Governorate had increased by 25%. This influx came at a time when local communities’ resources were already strained by a pervasive economic crisis. In the context of a lack of information particularly on IDPs and refugees living outside of camps in urban areas and the impact of their presence on the cities and communities hosting them, the Governorate authorities in Erbil together with UN partners decided to conduct a profiling exercise in 2015-16.

The exercise had a number of impacts, including **significant technical capacity sharing amongst profiling partners and importantly with the local statistical office who was engaged throughout the process**. The collaborative nature of the exercise also helped strengthen relations and broaden cooperation between the governorate authorities and the UN agencies involved. The profiling results also helped improve the targeting of cash-based interventions as well as urban planning projected by UN and NGO partners, and ensured an overall shared understanding of the urban dimension of displacement as well as its impact on the host communities in the region.



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

¹⁵ International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (2020), article 303, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/51st-session/documents/BG-item-3n-international-recommendations-on-IDP-statistics-E.pdf>

4. Data and urban displacement: Linking people to the places they settle in

Understanding and responding to internal displacement situations in urban settings remains particularly challenging. The collection of data and response to urban displacement brings added levels of complexity due to the density and diversity of affected populations, different types of information requirements, and the multi-layered institutional environment. Responding to the unique challenges of urban displacement requires combining an **area-based** and **people-centred approach** that link displacement-affected populations to the places they settle in and the wider urban environment. This comprehensive analysis should account not only for the vulnerabilities and capacities of both displaced and non-displaced populations, but also the strengths and weaknesses of urban systems more broadly in the areas where they live.

Over the years, JIPS has become a global actor on urban profiling in internal displacement situations, having accumulated substantial experience working closely with local authorities and national statistical offices in a variety of urban contexts, including [Mogadishu](#) (2016), [Kurdistan Region of Iraq](#) (2016), [Syria](#) (2018-2019), [Yemen](#) (2019), [North Darfur, Sudan](#) (2018-2019), and Ukraine (2019-ongoing). JIPS has also established long-term partnerships with development actors such as UN-Habitat, research centres such as the Feinstein International Centre, and multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, to continue improving methods and approaches based on complementary knowledge and skills and promote global learning and partnerships.

Based on this experience, JIPS has submitted a separate set of comprehensive recommendations, in collaboration with the **International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED)** and **UN-Habitat**. The considerations and recommendations outlined have **IDPs’ rights to a dignified urban life at their core**. They aim to promote a fundamental re-evaluation of how governments (local and national), donors, and humanitarian and development actors can work together to address urban displacement. The recommendations can be found on the Panel’s website as [IDPs in towns and cities – working with the realities of internal displacement in an urban world](#). Submitted by IIED, JIPS, UN-Habitat in May 2020, with main authors: Nunez-Ferrera; I., Aubrey, D.; Earle, L. and Loose, S.

