



Human Urgency and Human Value

Table ronde organisée dans le cadre de l'exposition
« **Urgence Humanitaire: se déplacer et vivre** »
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Introduction by Robert Sadleir

Briefly, I would like to introduce what my aspiration is with the Initiative to Value Human Life, because I think of all the organizations present around this table, this one is perhaps the most abstract. Basically, I am trying to understand better how we value human lives for public policy processes and how we measure that and value them. I want to bring transparency to that process and facilitate discussion on that with practitioners and work on trying to improve methodologies, and then create learning tools so we can improve it. My interest in valuing the human life basically started when I worked in Ethiopia and in the Ugandan desert and an implementing partner of the UNHCR, the Ethiopian refugee association. Unfortunately, one of their local workers accidentally killed their local tribesmen and we had to negotiate a settlement with the local tribes. The settlement which was negotiated was that the tribes wanted one hundred camels and compensation for that life, which I later found out came from shariah law. But it led me to the question to ask myself how actually does one value a human life and I've always pondered on that. And I think the question pertains to the connection between urbanization and humanitarianism. Because we're going through this great phase in the world, where cities are growing at such a rapid rate.

Some people say urbanization is good, some people say it's bad and from an economic point of view it's very good, but from a human point of view, that question is probably still open. Yet, urbanization has a direct connection to a lot of the challenges we confront in life, because when we live in an urban environment, it's very competitive. We tend to see other human beings as competition – a zero-sum game – because what happens tends to be the best and the brightest come to cities, or the people who are more competitive and they want to make a better life for themselves come to cities.

This narrative of the city coincides with the one where people also feel undervalued in the city. They feel they're not paid enough to live in a city. The cost of living and housing, as we've seen, in the last twenty years, has gone astronomically, so that for an average person in the UK to buy a house today, you need an income, a mortgage which is six times the average salary. This is quite unusual, because traditionally we've seen housing as shelter – shelter for protection as one of our basic needs.

And yet what has happened in the last century? Shelter has become a commodity, as we know, to be bought and sold, and we've created new financial models, where we look at return for investment over thirty years. Apartments and buildings are created with this idea of designing infrastructure to last no more than thirty years, because the investors invest for thirty years, but what they want to do is transfer the risk of that investment within ten years to another person.

Now, all this is happening within the context of refugees and migration. On the one hand, the insecurity that urbanization brings, that phobia is also transferred to migrants and refugees. And I think to ourselves, how can we reconnect with the humanity of refugees, because as we've learned today, refugees have been with us since biblical times?

Well, look, the problem that we have with refugees in many ways is that people don't see them as human beings, they see them as a problem that does not go away and that's partly because solutions to refugee crisis take a long time. Like I started working in Nepal in the 1990's when the initial refugee crisis occurred and as of today Rafael is still working on the conclusion of that crisis and that is a relatively simple refugee situation. We should begin to design new systems that can better integrate refugees, create value to their lives, whilst they're in this situation, because often, in a camp situation goes through a cycle of the emergency phase, a care and maintenance phase and then what you call the sort of resettlement or permanent phase, the durable stays phase. In that process, most of the refugees lives are frozen, so I'm looking today not to challenge what has gone on before, but to see how we can improve the situation in the future, with the knowledge we have here around the table and create new approaches to humanitarian, human emergency and human values.

Rafael Mattar Neri

As an architect and a planner with the majority of my experience is in the humanitarian sector, I wanted to react to Robert's introduction, because I found it very relevant. I want to give you a few statistics, so you know where we are. We are talking that today, we have about 65 millions of forcefully displaced people. We refer to refugees, but also to what we call internally displaced populations, which is the people that remain within their own country but who had to move because of a conflict situation or of a natural disaster situation. Then we have stateless "apatrids". In any case, when we look at the issue of cities, just to bring some numbers, we're talking that 29 millions are living in cities, of these displaced people. That's a huge number and if we look at the map, eighty-six percent of those live in low-income countries. Now, on one hand, we have this issue of the refugees, that I want to put on the table, but on the other hand, there is the access to housing as a general need. I read some statistics that talk about 40% of the global population not living in an appropriate house. We have already a crisis there, a housing gap let's say and if we're saying, some of the projections is that by 2050, 70% of the population will live in urban areas. So, today, we know that a fourth of the populations live in informal settlements around the globe. So, I wanted to bring the statistics to prompt the discussions about refugees and about access to housing, which is the subject you are putting onto the table. And I want to invite you to look at this, although the process is not linear, to look at this in a cycle. At the UNHCR our overarching objective is called integration or (put in less difficult words for many governments) social inclusion. What we're trying to do is first of all by supporting these displaced populations and these refugees to access civil rights and therefore housing. So in the cycle, you have a refugee that needs to become a person that is able to work, that is able to move freely, that has rights and that is able then to enter the developmental path and access housing. We can talk about housing and public policies on housing in relation to the private sector, because we know that in many cases, that becomes a big problem: housing is a commodity and it's not necessarily something we are trying to tackle as a right. There are alternatives and Switzerland is quite interesting for that. You have a movement in Switzerland called "production sociale de l'habitat" where the inhabitants themselves, with the support of the government and the authorities, seek a solution for housing, like in Zurich I think, if I'm not wrong, 30% of the housing stock is actually being provided like this. Don't quote me on the 30%, but I know it's very high and you have experiences of course in Latin America. So just to prompt the discussion, I invite you to have in mind that the issue is that refugees are coming on a very vulnerable state, because they left everything; they don't have any means at all! Refugees or displaced, they don't have rights, they are considered "strangers" or foreigners and so they cannot access housing. All the same, they should arrive at that point.

Of course, we have many examples of solutions where people in good faith said "we are developing this housing project: it's self sufficient, refugees can work, can live there". This is not a solution as it may sound. We need to cease with this idea of putting them somewhere. This is an idea of exclusion. I think that the biggest challenge is there. If we see things the other way around, we do know there are also opportunities in this crisis and that refugees bring with them investments and human capital and so on.

In terms of the craft and the work we do, I just give you a couple of views. We know that about 70% of those refugees are living in urban areas and 30% of them live in rural camp settings. This number represents a huge investment for UNHCR as well, because what we are talking about is the development of cities. We end up developing towns with little capacity or very limited capacity, because we are humanitarian experts, but we are not necessarily, and we are trying to do that as much as possible, bridging that gap between that humanitarian face as you put it Robert and that developmental phase. So, when we come to work on a host country that is receiving refugees, our main counterpart is actually the ministry of security, interior, the police, the refugee agency, attached to that country, which is probably being created, fully founded with the support of UNHCR.

But the challenge for us, as technicians, is to find the right counterpart in terms of development planning, strategic planning. So, this is where we are putting a lot of effort nowadays to create linkages, from the beginning of the response with the right ministries, ministry of planning, ministry of work, ministry of infrastructure, we try to complement as much as possible what is there in terms of principles. So, in fact, we are developing new tools and frameworks. Now you have the CRRF, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. This is an instrument the UNHCR developed recently in order to approach bring the planning process already from the start in a long-term vision. This is all very sensitive on a political dimension, because there are many countries where you cannot come and say “let’s build a permanent solution for these refugees, let’s look at local integration as one of the durable solutions”.

So it’s an ongoing process. But we also know that there is a footprint that we create at the beginning of an emergency, say in developing a camp bound to receive four thousand people with infrastructures, services, housing and shelter. That footprint has an inherent capacity to transform over time. It will be very difficult to retrofit that, because there is a huge investment and funds will most likely not be there. So what we are trying to do now is to bring more and more the academia and the professionals into these humanitarian world in order to make, or try to make, decisions that minimize that first overarching objective of integration and inclusion.

Panos Mantziaras

I step in here because this is exactly what we tried to do here in the first place. Our first idea about this exhibition was to contact the HEPIA, the “Haute École du Paysage, d’Ingénierie et d’Architecture”, in order to imagine how prototypes of shelters could be designed by students in collaboration with the “Cooperation suisse”, which is this organization that provides expert staff in extreme situations, in order to both have the students understand better emergency housing, but also help the organizations develop better tools. Of course, this is somewhat naive, many people have tried to do this all over the world. But efforts should never stop. There is always a place for improvement and this discussion led to the assumption that there might be also a situated refugee settlement in the Geneva area, in order also to imagine the urban scale. Should this be close to a square, to the station, to a hospital? Where is the best area to place and disseminate them of course, in order not concentrate them together and therefore create a ghetto situation.

Linda Besharaty

The ICMC works on projects that are founded by the UNHCR and by the US government and other donor governments. We are really working not so much on shelters per se, but in terms of finding alternative solutions for refugees, such as resettlement or transfer to a third country. So, what I can bring to this discussion perhaps that when we talk about refugees, shelters and architecture and urban planning, we have to think who are the beneficiaries, who are the clients. What are we talking about? Are we talking about single males, are we talking about families with several children, about single women with several children? Or are we talking about children? It’s all of the above of course, but what’s pretty astonishing is that if you look at the numbers that UNHCR produces, is that of all the refugees nearly half are children! On top of it, nearly 60% of refugees living in camps are children with remaining 40% of adults. And there are over 2.6 millions refugees in camps. So if you just try to do the maths, out of 2.6 million you have 60% that are children, that’s almost a million and a half. Are we thinking about that when we think about shelter and what we can offer anywhere, urban or non-urban camp?

So, it’s not just the shelter itself and how it is sustainable or how we need to plan. As Robert was saying from the beginning, it’s about an emergency that turns into the situa-

tion that becomes permanent, unfortunately. Many camps have been around for many years. The famous Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya has been there for nearly thirty years. You have three or four generations. So, unfortunately this is the reality and they are in both countries which themselves are very poor, where they are completely resource-drought. And then there is competition for resources. So when we're thinking of planning, we have to also think of what are the services we are providing to not only the beneficiaries and the refugees, but also to the host community, so that we don't aggravate problems. The services that have to accompany any shelter – and I'm coming at this from a protection angle – are for example separating the men from the women when they're not in families.

However, a lot of families are torn up when they are fleeing a conflict. What about children? What about children who have remained orphans or unaccompanied children? Where do we put them? What about the young ones, the older ones, or the adolescents? Access to food, to water and to latrines is something so simple, but if the facilities are far, if they are not well lit, you're creating a situation of potential violence against women and children. So, all of this has to be part of any design. Also, schools. Since 60% of refugees are children, what do we do about schools? Where do we set up schools in refugee areas? Are they take part of the national education and who pays for this? Is it UNHCR, is it the donors, is it UNICEF? Nobody has resources.

Therefore, there are the minimum standards for shelter but also the protection concerns. If there is one thing I can contribute here is that the core of what we should be thinking about is the children.

But, do we design with that in mind, do programs and projects follow that reality? Basically, it is a human right to have housing, even adequate housing. That's defined as having the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity. Of course, states may say we don't have the resources to provide for that and they may very well be right. I mean the world's largest refugee populations, like Afghans, are hosted in very poor countries, i.e. the Dadaab situation in Kenya, and Ethiopia. Most refugees are located in Africa. So, governments of course can't assure shelter for their own population, so how on earth are they going to do it for refugees coming in? So, there's a recognition, according to human rights law, that they should take steps to the maximum of their ability. All of this to say that we have to take the host into consideration and we have to take the core beneficiaries into consideration, and the fact that the refugee situations can linger for many years.

All this raises more questions than answers...

Gerard Doolin

Linda was talking about children services and education. So, this is an important context where about technology and refugees may be considered together.

Obviously, technology has been accelerating and increasing its engagement, but when it comes to the context of refugees, I suggest that its use should be calibrated and employed with care. I've been working with technology for eighteen years. This is an industry that talks a lot about what they do and how they are going to transform the world. But the usual base line in the developed countries is that technology evolves in increments, so you move to the next emerging technology. This is developed and promoted on the basis that it adds a different level of connection between the users and of course it's commercially viable and then there's a lot of story-tellers who beat the drum about the new technologies. But from my experience with technology, it's about really understanding the transformational needs in order to actually design and build technology and implement it to deliver the needed services.

I've seen a lot of failures as well as successes. So, when I look at the needs and uses in the technology deployment for refugees, I think that we need some insight. And I suggest that the mains bulk of the technology provided should go on an educational path in order for it to be distilled in the quite sensitive needs of refugees.

If you're designing in these days a digital business, you have this creative person that comes in with the storyboard, who talks to people, who talks about the work-flow and the experience they want to have and a lot of these services now are deployed through mobile applications.

But if your users are refugees with a high percentage of children, they're on the baseline. Their literacy and conceptual learning may be very low and they come from a traumatizing environment. So, for technology to understand the conditions and needs in order to build some remote education and deliver it to the refugee.

There is also the question of data and how they create a new business model. Thankfully, the Europeans pay attention on the privacy of data. Because from my observation, in the developed countries there's still a really quite a loose conception of data. If I look at the refugees and the engaging the data, particularly if they come from a malevolent government agency who use that data against them to persecute them. So when you put them into a situation where you ask them to use technology either for a public service or a personal service, they naturally have a fear about basic data sharing.

It's all about using technology to lift someone's engagement and education, but being aware of the ability to engage with it as well as its freedom counterparts.

Steve Maslin

I wonder whether it might be possible to take a look at a slightly different headline and that's people in housing stress, or shelter stress, or in need of a home. One of the problems is in the narrative and the persons that we might consider in the equation. We have people in host communities that are in housing stress, one way or another. There are various forms of homelessness, including street homelessness.

In Bristol it has quadrupled since 2012. Now, does Bristol have greater housing needs than other areas? Possibly not. What we know is that the neighbouring local authorities around Bristol are not providing the facilities, they haven't got such a strong infrastructure of voluntary organizations.

So, what do you do if you're homeless? Even the people who are working in the realm of homelessness, working with homeless people in the neighbouring authorities advise people to head towards Bristol. As one person who stayed in one of our shelters said: no one in Bristol goes hungry, nor without clothes. There's so many opportunities to find food, so many sip soup runs, places that open their doors and things like that. But, there is another dynamic, which is unseen in the housing stress. There's a couple I know, it took them six years to get rehoused and one member of that couple is a wheel chair user and I had the couple together a ramp so he could get in and out of his house until they got moved. And the ramp, it had a certain use of parameters of how it was used, because it was too steep for independent use, but it was either that or him being wheelbarrowed down the stairs.

A Master's study and found that on average it took on average be three years for people to get re-housed. In thinking around the issues, we need to think inclusively about people who are in a housing stress, both in the host community and the refugee community. Because again, that's one of the anxieties: why are these people coming from elsewhere getting all this special treatments, whereas my family that has lived here all this time doesn't?

This creates metaphorical blindness to what's going on in one's own community, and I think this one of the risks. On this subject of stress, one area I'm particularly interested in is people with neurological needs in the built environment; in other words, the realm of the mind. I already know that when you move people, displace people, particularly older people, you can get neurological problems, because the brain is so wired to the context in which you operate, you develop mechanisms which we call schemas. From a psychological point of view, these schemas are routines. When I pick up a cup, this is a simple exa-

mple of a schema, I'm not thinking about all the movements to move that, all the things I have to undertake to move that cup. If I had an injury I would probably have to think about it more and it would take me a lot longer. But most of the time, my brain is saying "that schema is pick-up-cup".

We can see that on a bigger level. So one of the things we'll be looking at this dynamic is the mental health aspect of being dislocated from one context to another. And arguably, possibly from rural to urban, so we know that the mind is better attuned to functioning in natural landscapes, the patterns our brains can handle. An academic in Bristol has done a study of proposing urban and rural images through to our perception. He was able to show that the patterns in urban areas are harder for people to understand.

How should we put up with this? There's an increasing prevalence of the incidences of patterns that the brain finds difficult to analyse. This is quite understandable. But what happens if we consider the case people are moving from one context to another? How well will their brain adjust?

I'd like to draw attention to something we're trying to do at the Schumacher institute. Michael Clinton, the director for research (an aeronautical and mechanical engineer) has been a wheelchair user from childhood. He and I are networking with various people in the Bristol region. And housing kept coming up as an issue; together with the poor way that housing is designed. Michael set up a company with the endeavour to design adaptable, accessible, affordable sustainable homes, as a social not for profit enterprise, facing the big housing developers in UK. The economic housing development in the UK is quite different from other countries, because very few people hold the power. So we tried to demonstrate that you can do quality housing and you can [...] link it with economic measures like an investment measure around affordable housing, central workers' housing, among other things, where you prevent it from getting into the open market, so that it can be perpetually used for social benefits. I just feel that this issue is part of that equation when we're talking about, in our approach to housing in general and making sure that we're including refugees in that equation.

Ariane Brillard

Bringing together more or less some of the issues which have been addressed today, I'm taking a psychological outlook on the problem, because I think it's very important that the refugees or that the homeless people do collaborate actively to their insertion. It has to be a bottom-up, top-down collaboration and that's very difficult, because I don't know how we can help that to happen, but if we don't, we are heading into the wall as we say in French.

Linda Besharaty

That's absolutely right. It's actually the heart of the matter. It's how do you integrate refugees so that they become well functioning citizens of any country. This requires efforts on many fronts, for example language classes - so education is key - getting to know the culture of the country where they are going to be living. Being taught how to do the things the way people on site are doing them. For example, the ICMC has a founded by the US, by BPRM, where refugees who have been cleared for resettlement into the USA. These people undergo extensive cultural orientation training, which means we basically train them on the manners and the habits of the US. And it's a huge gap to jump over: how do you train Congolese refugees, who basically don't have any education, with a bunch children who have witnessed the worst traumas, plus the stress of not having adequate shelter or any shelter at all?

So, it is very important to prepare refugees as much as possible for their next step into another country of asylum. We also have a project in Europe; it's called the Shell Project.

We seek to create connections between different cities and collect the best practices of these cities on the integration and incorporation of the refugees in their new environment. And of course we face a lot of antagonism, sort of counter-movements that seek to manipulate these situations for their own political gain. But it's really important to work on these issues, so that you can try to minimize the ways that refugees are perceived in the minds of the local population. So, I think the key tool is really education, on both sides.

Gerard Doolin

I'm based in New-Zealand [...] I give this thought to this issue, like I was also saying about, the integration phase for refugees into a host country, but I'm also worried about the reaction generated by politicians and the media and the host population, is that if the refugees' cultural story can be a key to the problem. I know they're coming out of traumatic experiences, but they have a culture, clothes, music and dance. If the local communities could understand what they have in common with these refugees, then maybe this would bridge the gap easier. And who leads that initiative? Is it the government? Is it charitable organizations in the host countries? It would be refreshing if national or federal governments would lead town halls or public broadcasting initiatives on this subject. I've lived in Australia, in England and New Zealand and I'm a child of an immigrant. And in so many countries, we are children of immigrants and we struggle to deal with the arrival of refugees and those stories. There is a necessity to learn more about them.

Robert Sadleir

I think there is a number of ways this can be done, for example the design of refugee camps. How can we make people living in refugee camps, have conversations with people who are in urban communities, or around the world. So, I've often thought it would be useful to have conversations on a regular basis with refugee children in the local classrooms or something like that, creating the necessary awareness.

So rather than having the old pen-friends that we're used to have when we were children, we could have those conversations with people of our own age and to understand the situation, because what I think is very interesting is that it's often difficult to change the behaviour of older people in a way, because they get this mind just set and they have a lot of turmoil. Because one of the things we have to be aware of is that living in an urban or even rural environment amidst the climate change and increasing inequalities, we don't really have that ability to engage with people. Building that dialogue over time is very important, so if we could somehow build a conversation over time with people of our own age, this could be a small meaningful gesture.

Panos Mantziaras

I just was wondering about Robert's idea about having young people engage as pen-friends with refugees. Today's children, apparently, are under a spell of culture that totally denies not only refugees, but all kinds of realities. It's a Pokemon world for the children. Reality is avoided by children for a series of reasons. They prefer to play with fake colours, fake objects, fake people. If you know what's Fortnite, if anybody has children, a guy that just kills people, sort of lonely Rambo kind of guy that kills people everywhere. Information technology sells dreams that are not reality and that distance people from reality in all ages, including young ages. The main problem is the screen. The interface with reality, which is cold. Everything is far. Even the closest thing is far, it becomes numbers, it becomes spreadsheets and all that denies reality, which on the other hand is hot, it burns, it's bloody, it stinks and all those things that we dislike in everyday life. Our modern world is a world which, through technology, is being officially and with all the blessings of every-

body, even the politicians, de-materialized and banalized. It's simplified in a non educational way. So I think the trouble with the 65 million displaced people out there is that they shouldn't be there. I mean, nobody wants them. The fake world that is being sold to the citizens is a world that is perfect, where there is no fear, no pain, no blood, no sweat. Not even sweating is possible anymore. Everything has to be done as if we were a commercial. Fresh, sun tanned or not, depending on which kind of way, if you are in Japan or here, and so on and that means that these people that bring reality violently into life, they are just impossible to withstand.

Steve Maslin

Just a comment on technology: particularly in the sustainability narrative, there's a call for reducing cars or even banning cars. That doesn't particularly abode well for my colleague, because it's one of his means of mobility. Again, people say "we need to go back to the land and reduce our reliance on the high level technology". Again, Michael, artificial tools made from a particular type of steel help him walk or enable him to stand up without falling over.

I discovered I was presenting in a particularly dyslexic way. Most of the time, I'm not particularly aware of it because I'm using technology. So, digital technology is like a pair of spectacles for me. I've got a visual impairment without my glasses. I put them on, do I think I have a disability? No, because the glasses will help. Similar with the technology and I suppose some of it is about how we use it. But there was a question about whose responsibility it is. Forgive me to use the Bristol example, but there are certain things going on in Bristol which are interesting. One particularly interesting thing is that our elected mayor is of mixed African-Caribbean heritage, which is quite profound in a city that was part of the slave triangle.

One of the things that Marvin, Rees did was to develop a city plan, or a one-city-approach, where he's trying to get all key players to participate, against such situations where we step back in society and go "that's a local authority, that's the city council's responsibilities, not ours".

Going back to the night shelter, several of our guests were of different nationalities. Some of them were extremely well talented in their verbal communication. One particular individual spoke English in a way that you wouldn't realize he was born somewhere else. I identified that some of our guests had no recourse to public fund. So, there's a rather strange thing going on in the UK now. There's a situation where the government takes a view that you have no access to public funds and you just go destitute. So some of our guests were effectively refugees in their own country. It is a bad dynamic to see homelessness and refugees appear within cities, not necessarily the way you expect them to.

Ariane Brillard

Again, from a psychological point of view: we want to stress what we have in common, which of course is absolutely right, and here I'm referring the issue of identities. We also have to stress what we don't have in common or what we think we don't have in common and to do that, we have to be aware of our identities and to be aware of the other people's identities. So there is a knowledge process with the idea that identities are not static and should not be static, because we are living people. And if we enhance the differences and magnify them and see what the other, as the modern French philosophers have created this concept of the Other with a capital "O", if we see that the other has so much to bring to us on different levels, then we start something, we start a real exchange.

Robert Sadleir

In doing my work with this initiative to value human life, is creating self awareness. What do we actually value in life? We never ask that question. How do we value our own life? What gives us value to our own life? Of course, that is contextual, but we never asked ourselves those questions on ourselves. We basically just subliminally go through life and we're cascaded with images from media and we just channel that. So part of the question is also educating people or creating awareness of themselves and once this I done the next question is how do other people value me? Is that the way I want to be valued? And if they're thinking "well that's not right, they don't value me in they way I want to be seen", then you can begin to say or ask why that is the case. And I think this is the idea of empathy. It's that we, ourselves, have to begin to understand the processes by which we value our own life and analyse them. And I think that's part of what we're trying to do in many ways now. But it needs to be part of an education process at a young age, to realize that we, ourselves, should not be influenced by social media, by "likes" or by "emojis".

Panos Mantziaras

I think on an individual level, what Robert says is very important. It's probably one of the basic talents we should acquire little by little. It's understanding our relation to others and how we value things in the moral sense, because I suppose this is what you mean, before we put it into a monetary sense. Because value can have a serious range of contents: monetary, and therefore prosaic, but also very abstract, moral, religious and philosophical. And there is an individual and then there is also a collective level. We know very well, in the history of humanity, that what happens at an individual level gets distorted very quickly on a collective level. For example, no one hates individually another person because of his/her nationality or ethnicity. But when it comes to collective situations, social situations, there is an agent, there is a distortion phenomenon which brings polarization and extremism out of the blue.

For example, something most of us don't know, but I happen to know because I worked in Japan: in 1923, there was a huge earthquake that destroyed, through fire, the biggest part of the city and then, there was a mass slaughter of Koreans in Tokyo, because they were supposed to be the cause of the quake: Korean immigrants, working people that have come from Korea to Japan, were supposed to be guilty for the earthquake. It makes no sense, but there were thousands of dead because of that and this happens again and again in different ways.

This pattern of collective hysteria, of subliminal relation to the collective is something that sociologists and anthropologists probably have studied more than us and they obviously understand that there are repeated patterns of behaviour; because there is the other coming, not as an individual, but as a group and then there is this group phenomenon that creates all kinds of collective fears or phobias.

Can you work this out at an individual level? Of course, there is education, but this education phenomena bridges the gap between the individual and the collective. This is probably the place where the individual and the collective get together somehow: the person and the group. How far can we go with education, given the fact that we have to deal with 65 million people? People with languages, faces, habits that are so diverse, so "non-standard", it's not the standard German going abroad to America, it's the Rohingya. The Rohingya have their one particular culture, which you have to understand in order to work it out on an education level. So you need a system, I suppose, at the UNHCR or at the ICMC or other places. It needs some kind of commando to build that, a "commando population", a group of people that are both educated and well in their nerves. It's like the ones going to the moon, it's the astronaut people to do this kind of work; it's up to the well educated, the well prepared people to work on that.

Linda Besharaty

A lot of countries accept refugees for resettlement (resettlement basically means movement to a second country of asylum, instead of the first country of asylum). The numbers are very small, it's like the top of an iceberg. Everybody's fighting to get the best and the brightest and the most educated. Everybody wants those engineers who speak perfect English, with the credentials, or the doctors, or the architects, etc. And this was shown especially among the Iraqi refugee population, a lot of whom were resettled in the US, or the Somalis, that is not necessarily those who are the most educated, but that might be considered the "commandos" that actually can adapt and integrate the best. It can happen, but sometimes they have very high expectations, which they justly should, but unfortunately they cannot have what they're looking for, because they are just refugees and a doctor may end up cleaning bathrooms. So these people, sometimes, because of their education, they have expectations that "I can do this or I can do that". "What am I doing at the bottom of the packing order here? I should be up there and I was up there and I had a house and I had a chauffeur and this and that." So, conversely, what happens is sometimes when you have refugees who don't have any of those characteristics or skills and yet they're able to motivate themselves and climb higher and high. So you know, it's very hard to sort of draw generalities.

Panos Mantziaras

I'm sorry, I think I expressed myself badly. It's not those people that I thought that should be commando. It's people like those, the ones that run the refugee problem, like yourself, like Rafael. These people, us here around the table, that are supposed to work, to want to work with that. The population dealing, organizing the sheltering both the integration and the development side. There is this "taboo phase" of the problem. Is there a place that we can imagine that women and men get educated and trained to do that? Is there a school for the people working in these situations?

Rafael Mattar Neri

Now I want to react, because it is very interesting. As I was saying before, we do need trained people to deal with the refugees. As a human being you have your sensitivities and you are either able to do this work or not. But having said that, now, just to answer the question, yes, there are training options. Oxford Brookes has a master on humanitarian response to shelter, for example; the University of Barcelona and the University of Melbourne, as well. We see that more and more in the academia, especially for architects. It's very positive that these issue is calling the attention of young students. And you can feel that people are interested. We hope that it's going to help increase our technical capacity. However, now in our teams we have those people that are able to cope with the four thousand people arriving per day that we need to shelter. We need to shelter them in a very difficult context, with a lot of pressure. Historically, the people that work in shelter and settlement are masons or project managers, or quality surveyors. More and more, we are getting trained architects, trained engineers who want to work in this field.

Isabelle Brillard

I just wanted to go back to the refugees themselves or displaced people. I think one of the problems for most of them, maybe some live a few months or years in the same camp. But most of them are there for a very short time. So how can you organize them knowing that they are in a terrible state of mind, stress and all that. So how can you implement education and learning languages, which is of course somehow the basis, especially for children? They definitively have to learn the language, or a language, but they don't even

know where they shall end up, so which language should they choose? They just move all the time. You just said four thousand refugees arrive in a specific place. So what do you do with them? You can not start something, you just deal with the basics. So, on a general level, it's very difficult.

Rafael Mattar Neri

We could separate, what is happening in Europe, from what is happening now in Latin America, which is quite similar in terms of the trend. There, yes, you have people moving and transiting countries, because they have a goal, like in Europe. Actually, it took us a lot of time to understand how to respond to that, because it's quite recent in terms of the way we are used to do things.

In Africa or in the Middle-East, you have refugee populations that will fly away from their country and arrive to a new one. Most likely they already have ties with that country in terms of education and also other services like health, is to... for example, education is to have the same curriculum and to build up on existing infrastructure.

So, there is a school... of course that little school in the town is not able to cope with the new influx. What we tend, the first approach is to go to the education ministry and say "we support the reinforcing of that school and we try to join the curriculum", so children refugees and host children are together. So that's the approach. That doesn't necessarily happen. In many other places, we need to duplicate and it starts with what we call emergency school, very precarious bases where we have double-shift education. It's a progress. Now, in terms of average, we say that a refugee settlement is there from twenty to thirty years average. And we know that a big percentage of that population will remain, because they make a life there. They marry locals and they make families. If the situation goes back to peace in the country of origin, some of them may go back.

Steve Maslin

As architects, we can be a little bit superficial. It is very difficult to find students demonstrating a grasp of diverse human factors in their design and bringing that forward. But I mentioned service design earlier and I'm just reminding that within the realm of those who do service design, there's something called agile working, where they wait until they work out everything. I was just wondering whether there is an element of that within some of these issues. That is, looking at things that are slightly not conventional. I was particularly struck by the subject of how we respond to people as individuals and groups. In Bristol, a Nigerian set up something called a dream network and the aim is to design and build play areas in deprived communities, particularly in African settings. She's looking at other things and she's seeking to do a post graduate study or a PhD on this.

So, everybody has stereotypes, we build stereotypes in our minds, that go back to schemas. They are part of our protective strategy of "is this a person of potential threat or not?". And I need to make a quick decision, I can't analyze it. I defy anybody to think that they don't have a stereotype for second-hand car salesmen, who are supposed to steal your money and sell you a car that's not worth its value or worth the price you've given, you've paid for, but you always have that lingering fear. That's a stereotype. The next thing is, if you let a stereotype run, it develops a prejudice, which can lead to racism and it's at that point where you can keep the thought captive.

Robert Sadleir

Well, thank you very much everyone. It was a very useful discussion. Our first step on our journey to better understand human urgencies and the value of humans. The discussion today started with Rafael, giving us a lot of statistics around refugees. We know that

there is some 65 million forcedly displace out there in the world and that 70% live in an urban environment.

One of the challenges that he raised was that for UNHCR, often there is a question of who do we deal with to actually get effective solutions. Because, often, the government body that's in charge of it may not have the technical skills and the qualifications to assist with the practice. We were very lucky, because Linda raised and made us mindful of the question of the children. They make up 60% of people in camps and we have to take into consideration their needs.

Jerry raised the issue of technology and we have to make a distinction between technology and the people who beat the drum of technology, and the transformational need and the ability of technology and how we can actually better design it for the context.

Steve brought us into the neurological realm and talked us about schemes and understanding how we respond, and that our minds respond better to a rural environment and that we need to be mindful, of course, of the diversity of humanity and how we can accommodate those people.

Again, that question was raised from a psychological point by Ariane, who talked about this issue of the bottom-up or the top-down.

Panos made some very useful insight for conversation on the individual and the collective, which is very important and that was also brought quite nicely I thought with Steve's point about how stereotypes can lead to prejudice and prejudice can lead to racism, which I thought was a very nice way of putting it. And that reminds us, the key issue of the value a human life and that we need to be mindful of that as we design things, so that we do not become desensitized to the very basic human needs.

