

Displaced peoples face numerous challenges in terms of their protection, including access to shelter, food and other basic services. Displaced peoples in urban areas struggle with poverty, the lack of public services and often ambiguity regarding their legal status. Violence, abuse and exploitation often exist alongside their forced displacement. Finding and securing durable solutions for such individuals is challenging. In theory, displaced peoples should be provided with the opportunity to find long-lasting solutions through 1) voluntary repatriation to the areas from which they were displaced, 2) integration into host communities or 3) further resettlement within the country or beyond its borders. These options are mentioned in hierarchical order as they are not equally preferable.

Voluntary repatriation is considered as the first priority; however, reality shows that it is often impossible to achieve this due to political and security reasons. The second option, that of integration into host communities, is based upon the assumption that displaced peoples are willing to remain and are able to start a new life with their rights protected and equal opportunities provided as compared to the rest of the population. In the case of internal displacement, local integration seems to be justified when the repatriation scenario is not possible. The option of resettlement usually applies to cases when the displaced person is not in a position to stay in the place of asylum.

No matter what option is applied, the critical importance of housing for displaced peoples is increasingly acute. Often facing highly limited resources, displaced peoples have to accept substandard housing and conditions which do not provide adequate living conditions. Their housing options tend to narrow over time as they deplete their assets, leading many to join the ranks of the urban poor. IDPs may also resort to living in hazardous or violence prone locations where they have limited or no access to services and are exposed to the risk of secondary displacement. Despite the recognition of the housing problem by governments, international agencies and civil society groups, there is often little practical guidance on how to address this complex and potentially controversial issue.

### UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

The 2014 conflict in eastern Ukraine resulted in the loss of control over the Donbas region and the large displacement of locals who fled to government-controlled territory. The Minsk I and II agreements, signed in 2014 and 2015, did not pave the way to an immediate ceasefire and the gradual return of the disputed territories to Ukrainian control. After years of conflict, the fighting and shelling along the contact line continue to cause loss of life, displacement and damage to civilian infrastructure. According to statistics from the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy, there were around 1.5 million officially registered IDPs in early 2019.\*

With no clear prospects for conflict resolution, displacement is becoming increasingly protracted. Since the start of the conflict, IDPs continue to face various difficulties integrating into host communities. Unsurprisingly, many territorial communities with a large number of IDPs experienced an additional burden on the limited local infrastructure as well as a significant rise in housing and food prices, compounded by low wages and the complexity of the employment situation.

Housing remains the most important type of support with this being provided to 84% of IDPs while monetary assistance from the state and employment are provided to 75% and 66%, respectively.\*\* Regional administrations in Ukraine have provided IDPs with collective accommodations such as summer camp facilities, hotels, dormitories and communal buildings for a small fee. IDPs also live with relatives and friends, in accommodation offered by host communities or in rented housing. As of December 2018, more than 60% of IDPs continued to live in rented premises.\*\*\* Many IDPs report difficulties in finding housing which in many cases stems from the reluctance of landlords to lease a home to internally displaced peoples and also to an increase in rental rates.

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\* Official website of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine: <https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/16534.html>

\*\* *International Organization for Migration*, National Monitoring System Report on the Situation of Internally Displaced Persons December 2018.

\*\*\* *Ibid.*

A large amount of IDPs have been unable to overcome these challenges: 10-12% of them have returned to the non-controlled territory, 16-18% consider returning and 25% fear that they may have to return for economic reasons.\* As some IDPs are not able to afford living in the government-controlled area, they are forced to return to non-government controlled territories. Since 2016, the number of returns has increased, given depleted savings, delays in the payment of social benefits and pensions, and the inability to pay increased utility costs. Further, 85% of returnees explained that their decision was based on the need to pay rent while still having private property in the non-controlled territory.\*\* For those who reside in the controlled territory, housing remains one the sharpest obstacles to integration.

The Government of Ukraine, local administrations, the humanitarian community and the IDPs themselves are thus challenged to find a durable housing solution in order to provide shelter to the many people who fled the conflict and prevent them from further displacement and an involuntary return to the non-government controlled territory. Such housing should satisfy not only the basic needs of the individual but also provide a dignified standard of living. It is especially important in terms of local integration as the people who live in conditions worse than those accepted in the local community are frequently subject to marginalisation. In the Ukrainian context, this means that such housing should at least be equipped with running water, electricity and a gas supply. It should be able to withstand harsh winter temperatures and be geographically available to public services.

### **WHAT WAS DONE: CENTRAL LEVEL LEGISLATION, COLLECTIVE CENTRES, LOCAL PROGRAMMES**

Most of the actions taken by the Ukrainian government were dedicated to providing an immediate response to the affected population such as the provision of a

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\* *Ibid.*

\*\* *Ibid.*

monthly housing compensation (albeit not sufficient to secure payment for rental housing) and subsidies for fuel during the winter. However, no systematic solution was provided to address the challenge of massive internal displacement until the adoption of the *IDP Integration and Durable Solution Strategy* in November 2017. The strategy provides more general directions regarding conflict response development but not concrete actions. The list of such actions was introduced in November 2018 within the *Action Plan for the Strategy Implementation*. Regarding the right to housing, the *Action Plan* differentiates between the right to social and temporary housing and that of access to permanent and affordable housing.

In terms of social and temporary housing, the *Action Plan* provides the following:

1. Annual state budgetary subventions for the creation of IDP temporary and social housing stock is to be provided.
2. The government is to conduct an IDP housing needs assessment.
3. An inventory is to be conducted of the available real estate which can be used to form an IDP housing stock.
4. The creation of registers of potential housing stocks in local communities.
5. The development of vulnerability criteria to insure that the most vulnerable IDPs will be the first ones receiving housing.

The key shortcoming of the state response is that the strategy covers the period until 2020 while the *Action Plan* was introduced only in November 2018. In other terms, most of the provisions of the *Action Plan* can hardly be expected to be implemented in a timely fashion. The other problem is that the social and temporary housing is provided to a vast circle of social groups and not solely to IDPs. Under Ukrainian legislation, 20 social groups are eligible for priority rights to social housing while representatives of 12 other social groups – including war veterans and those disabled during war – are granted the ‘absolute priority’ right to social housing. At the same time, even these latter groups often cannot obtain social housing due to limited housing funds. Under such circumstances, it is clear that nearly 1.5 million IDPs will not be able to access social housing unless provided with a well-funded programme designed to provide housing exclusively to IDPs.

In terms of permanent and affordable housing, the *Action Plan* provides the following:

1. A new budgetary programme for IDPs featuring preferential mortgage loans with a 7% yearly interest rate and the development of other credit mechanisms for insuring the access of IDPs to affordable housing.
2. Increasing the funding for the ‘Affordable Housing’ programme.
3. The further development and implementation of existing state programmes on rural housing opportunities with regard to the current needs for IDP housing.

When it comes to the ‘Affordable Housing’ and rural housing programmes, these are chiefly available to social groups apart from IDPs. However, the ‘Affordable Housing’ programme – under which half of the housing price is paid by the state and a preferential loan is available for the remaining half – provides priority access to IDPs and war veterans. However, since it is intended to provide applicants with newly built housing, it is an expensive policy and cannot be considered as a solution for the significant number of IDPs.

Apart from the nation-wide programmes, many local IDP housing initiatives operate on the ‘collective centre’ idea, settling IDPs into specially designated housing blocks. In these housing blocks, IDP families have separate living spaces but share kitchens, toilets and bathrooms. IDPs are supposed to share the utility fees and maintain the premises together. In practice, this concept leads to multiple difficulties, including, the uncontrolled consumption of utilities and a lack of control over the quality of the utilities and fair billing practices. As a result, these premises often fall into decay. Utility providers often arbitrarily increase utility fees which IDPs refuse to pay, leading to the suspension of the utility services. These problems magnify one another leading to a progressive decline of living standards and the marginalisation of the IDPs.

Another form of response is the regional or local housing programmes. Funded either by local municipalities or supported by donors, these programmes aim to

facilitate the integration of local IDPs into host communities. In Ukraine, there is no unified information register of local housing programmes. According to an analytical review prepared by Charitable Fund Right to Protection in partnership with the UNHCR,<sup>\*</sup> regional housing programmes were introduced in ten of the 24 regions of Ukraine as of August 2018. For example, the biggest number of housing provided to IDPs is in the Kharkiv and Odessa regions – 358 families and 750 persons respectively. However, this amount of housing needs to be considered in light of the roughly 127,000 IDPs registered in the Kharkiv region and the roughly 42,000 IDPs registered in the Odessa region.

As well as the nation-wide response mechanisms, this model chiefly considers the construction of new housing within the costs of local and state budgets or with the assistance of international donors. As a result, it faces similar dilemmas: the amount of available funding is insufficient to provide such an expensive housing solution to all IDPs. Naturally, local initiatives are designed to approach the issue at a local level and are not conceived as a broader solution. In cases where this policy is implemented effectively within a certain area, local programmes have the potential to cause further displacement of IDPs hosted in surrounding regions where housing is less accessible.

It is easy to notice that regardless of the model used to address the housing challenge for IDPs – a central or local approach – it is the overall cost of the housing solution which makes it inappropriate to serve as the full-scale solution to the need for housing by IDPs. Under such conditions, these mechanisms are efficient for providing housing only to a limited group of IDPs. To rectify this situation, the solution needs to be based not on the construction of new housing but on utilising resources that already exist within the communities and that are ideally to the advantage of the community itself. Transferring property rights back to the local municipality (escheat) and communal property can be such a solution.

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<sup>\*</sup> [http://vpl.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ENG\\_IDPs\\_housing-programs\\_review.pdf](http://vpl.com.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ENG_IDPs_housing-programs_review.pdf)

## PROPOSED PRACTICE

This section aims to explore how the housing issue could be addressed at the local municipal level under circumstances of ineffective central regulation. The proposed solution consists of three key steps and is based on the idea of utilising real estate funds that already exist within local communities but which are not being used for a number of reasons. The proposed model proposes transferring the formal control of unutilised real estate to the respective local community and then passing ownership to the IDPs. Before considering the procedure, the potential types of properties that the real estate fund that could be used to acquire need to be specified. The first key type is the premises that were abandoned because of the conflict – including damaged premises and premises left because of the risks associated with the conflict or natural disasters leading to massive displacement. The second key type is premises that have been abandoned regardless of the conflict. This group of potential IDP housing stock differs from context to context. In Ukraine, it mainly consists of three subgroups of premises:

- ‘*Soviet heritage*’ – premises abandoned after the collapse of the Soviet Union for a number of reasons including complications of legislative reforms, the lack or duplication of regulation and administration or the disappearance of legal entities who owned or administered the property.
- *Derelict premises* – located mostly within the countryside and suburban areas, such premises are abandoned mostly because of the lack of interest from their owners and often because of a lack of the market interest in the property.
- *Escheat property* – premises abandoned because of a lack of heirs interested in the property after the death of the original owners.

Returning to the ‘three-step-solution,’ the first step would be to conduct an inventory of the real estate funds that can be potentially used to provide housing to IDPs. Humanitarian interventions and even the central government rarely have adequate information on the real estate available in a given society after the breach

of the crisis. Depending upon the origin of the real estate that is being considered for use, there are of course different underlying reasons. Although time-consuming and resource intensive, acquiring this data is vital if permanent housing solutions are to be found for the entire population. The process of the conducting such an inventory should include a number of steps, including:

- Gathering information on buildings whose conditions allow them to be used as housing for IDPs after certain renovations. This process should include both the regular inspections of the real estate funds by the local communities and the development of a mechanism for reporting this information. In both cases, it should include an obligatory technical inspection of the premises to identify whether or not it is safe for use as potential housing and what the cost of potential renovation would be.
- Evaluating the status of the related infrastructure, including the access to utilities, education, employment opportunities, healthcare and safety within the respective area.
- Assessing the legal status of the premises and the complexity of potential procedures required to transfer ownership to the local community.
- Then evaluating whether or not it is reasonable to include the object in the programme. If at any of the stages it is already clear that it is not reasonable to consider the object anymore, there is no need in its further evaluation.
- Including both qualified and non-qualifying objects in a special register – although with different categorisations.

It is important that the real estate that was not necessarily constructed to be housing should be considered as possible IDP housing. Commercial premises, such as factories and trade centres, can also serve as housing after certain renovations in order to ensure that they meet the necessary standards of adequate housing. The renovation is most likely to include the connection of the premises to utility services and some redesign of the premises, both requiring significant expenditures. However, in many cases, such renovation would still be substantially cheaper than the alternatives.

After the identification those real estate objects that can potentially be used as housing for IDPs, the second stage of the model should be implemented although these processes can in some cases run concurrently. It is reasonable that those real estate objects which require the smallest investments in order to be converted to IDP housing should be the initial focus. It is also worth noticing that conducting an inventory of the potential housing stocks and the creation of the appropriate register is prescribed by the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy on IDP Integration and Durable Solutions* mentioned above.

In evaluating whether or not the object can be potentially used to serve as IDP housing, it is crucial to consider if the object is a premise damaged during the conflict or lies within the potential area of hostilities. Depending upon the degree of the risk, certain objects will have to undergo additional renovation in order to make them applicable for the programme. This rule should also be applied to objects whose surrounding environments fail to correspond with safety standards or have inappropriately low access to infrastructure and services that cannot be amended without substantial costs.

Once the relevant real state is identified, the next step is to transfer the relevant real estate objects into the local community's ownership and then transfer them to the IDPs. Depending upon the regulation in the state where the IDP housing issue is being addressed, there are different mechanisms for transferring the real estate located within the community to its ownership or use. This is the most crucial step of the model since without its implementation, the model is impossible. In most contexts, it is likely to include judiciary proceedings and depends upon the origin of the real estate and its legal status. In the case of Ukraine, this procedure will include the following:

- *Local council addressing the local court to request transfer of the object into the communal property.* The transfer is possible in limited cases on certain grounds.
- The local council is usually required to prove the need for the transfer of property. The possible rationale may include references to a lack of use

and care of the object and related harm to public interests as well as the need to solve the IDP housing issue.

- It is also often reasonable to announce the council's request of the transfer in local newspapers, information portals and to send official requests to the registered owner of the object. These steps will demonstrate to the court that the council has fulfilled its burden to address the owner before initiating the ownership transfer. Another possible measure is to present evidence to prove the abandoned character of the object, including witnesses.
- The court will usually request that a certain period of time expire prior before approving the request and transferring the object to local council property.
- When adopted, the court decision has to be submitted to the state enforcement service to update the ownership status of the object.
- The local council adopts the decision on transferring the ownership of the object to an IDP.

What were previously public/social housing resources are sometimes privatised during conflicts as was the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Republic of Georgia and Kosovo.\* In some instances, newly privatised homes are transferred from the public to the private sector while these units are being occupied by secondary occupants with official title being conferred to the secondary occupant without the knowledge or approval of the original dweller. Changes to the tenure type of housing, generally from the public to private sector, need not necessarily be malicious in intent and may simply be part of a larger, longer-term process of privatisation. However, even in these cases, care must be taken to ensure that those with legitimate claims to return to their original homes are not excluded from the financial benefits associated with the privatisation of their original homes.

After transferring the right to possession of the real estate to IDPs, the final step is allocating funding for the rehabilitation of the housing. The most preferable

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\* *Housing, Land and Property Rights in Post-Conflict Societies: Proposals for a New United Nations Institutional and Policy Framework*, Scott Leckie, UNHCR Consultant, Legal and Protection Policy Research Series

option is to carry out the rehabilitation using the financial resources of the IDPs themselves. Certain IDPs have substantial savings or are paid high salaries which are still insufficient in order to purchase housing. They could, however, be used for the rehabilitation of the housing which is cheaper and has longer term positive integration consequences than simply renting apartments. This option is less time consuming and requires less involvement from municipalities and the private sector.

Another option is to make use of funds from local and state budgets. Emphatically, however, these funds should not be taken from the specialised part of the budget intended to support housing programmes for IDPs. Rather, they could be taken from general budget posts for covering routine maintaining of housing stock or planned construction work such as the *reparation, reconstruction, rehabilitation, renovation of social object/housing stock/premises* and other. Financial support could also be provided through targeted state subventions to local budgets at the request of municipalities. In this case, municipalities would have to apply for state funds explaining the reason for the request and how these funds will be spent.

Financial assistance from NGOs, IGOs and other humanitarian and development actors constitutes a promising opportunity. Such assistance could be provided through specialised housing projects for IDPs based on a needs assessment, proposed plans and costs of rehabilitation, support for local municipalities and a general practice of implementing similar projects in the selected area. In this case, the personal commitment of IDPs and the effective support from municipalities would play a decisive role in achieving positive outcomes for the project.

### **ROLES OF THE INVOLVED ACTORS**

*Local communities* play a key role in the model. Having established links to the central government and (often) less bureaucratised, local communities can at times act in a rather swift manner. They are also informed of local peculiarities such as the status of the available real estate stock and the geological and social context of

the community. The proper consideration of such details often determines whether or not the project will result in a success story or become a textbook example to be avoided.

Host communities are also deeply interested in the full integration of IDPs residing within the community for a number of reasons. First, depending upon how the potential is managed, IDPs can become either an immense resource for development or a heavy burden. Naturally, when lacking housing and employment IDPs – as any other individuals – are at risk of social and economic marginalisation, creating an additional burden for the community in terms of social protection, the provision of healthcare, and law and order. On the other hand, having come from the comparatively large cities of Luhansk and Donetsk, many of the IDPs possess valuable educational and professional backgrounds as well as the experience of working in progressive fields with modern technologies. Therefore, they can become a valuable asset in the development of local communities, especially when residing in villages and small towns.

Second, local communities are interested in the use and maintenance of the available resources including real estate. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, a huge amount of assets, including real estate, were abandoned due to legal and bureaucratic complications. There are situations where even entire blocks of premises were left abandoned. Forgotten by local authorities, these buildings have the negative potential to increase marginalisation and criminal activity in the surrounding environment. They can also transform into informal landfills or be a base for growing numbers of street animals. At the same time, many of these buildings are still in acceptable condition. While they need renovation to become habitable, the construction itself is often solid and safe.

Apart from these housing resources, a significant part of the housing stock has become derelict following the conflict. Many owners have left their housing with no intentions of coming back. Depending upon the country and the legislation, there are different ways to transfer such property to communal ownership or simply allow its use by the community. In some cases, owners of the premises have died and no heirs have appeared to inherit the property. Taken jointly, these

cases represent a significant amount of real estate that can be utilised to assist in providing a solution to the IDP housing problem. It is worth stressing again that both the residential property stock and the IDPs themselves can either be a huge asset or become a burden on the community, depending upon how the situation is managed. Understanding how they can potentially complement one another can be argued not just to be a possibility but even a logical necessity.

*Internally displaced persons*, unlike most of crisis response models, should play one of the key roles. For instance, IDPs would be expected to approach local municipalities to initiate the process. To make it easier for the IDPs, the humanitarian actors would provide certain support but IDPs would still be required to participate in the process actively. This may include suggesting possible premises for the housing solution, paying in full or partially for the cost of the renovation and participating in related judicial and documentation proceedings that are necessary to transfer the ownership. IDPs could also participate in the advisory body to be established to advise the local municipality on the implementation of the housing solution and ensuring public control over the programme. This would also represent an additional mechanism for circulating information about the programme within the IDP community.

*Non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations and other humanitarian and development actors* should also contribute to the process. This could be done by several means. First, these actors could advocate for the implementation of the model. It is generally the central or local government – depending on the legislation – that is supposed to initiate the process. However, in practice, these levels of government are often consumed with the immediate response tasks or suffer from a lack of political interest or even conflict among multiple competing interests. Therefore, NGOs, along with humanitarian and development actors, can advocate for the implementation of the mechanism.

Second, these actors can provide support to the central or local government and also training to IDPs. Apart from advocacy, technical and other support to central or local governments is likely to facilitate the process. Clarification of the mechanism, sharing best practices developed abroad or already implemented in other regions of

the state, facilitating the sharing of experience between representatives of different state and public bodies involved into the mechanism implementation are all steps can be taken by humanitarian and development professionals. On the other hand, as IDPs play one of the key roles in the model, it is absolutely crucial that necessary training is provided to the IDP community and that proper informational campaigns are organised in order to engage IDPs. It is important to understand that because of cultural reasons and vulnerability, many IDPs will not be able to express a firm and lasting initiative to lead the process. Therefore, these trainings should also be designed to empower IDPs to stand up for themselves.

Third, an appropriate supervision over the implementation of the model is required. Negative results of pilot projects, either because of a lack of knowledge, motivation, corruption or other reasons, are most likely to foster a public perception of the whole model in the eyes of the government and the conflict-affected population. While representatives of IDPs are supposed to participate in public bodies within the local municipalities in order to contribute to the process, NGO and humanitarian and development staff should be highly encouraged to join these public bodies as well, since they have certain qualifications and experience which IDPs may not have.

The *central government* should not play a leading role in the model. There are many reasons for this, including limitations resulting from political considerations, the high cost of the state's operationalisation and risks of corruption. However, the central government should provide legislative and informational support for the implementation of the model. This may include the development of necessary regulations and procedures and public campaigns aimed to raise IDP awareness of the programme and also to increase trust among the local municipalities and the broader population towards the housing solution. Such campaigns will also reduce the force of criticism from actors who prefer alternate uses for the real estate stock. Another way in which the state can assist in the implementation of the model is in ensuring the lawfulness of the process as a whole. However, the extensive bureaucratisation of the process should be avoided as this would delay the final provision of the housing to IDPs.

## POSSIBLE RISKS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE PRACTICE

*The length and efficiency of the related procedures* need to be taken into account. The functioning of the model requires coherent and timely actions from a substantial number of actors. If there is no legal mechanism for transferring property to local communities, the central government will need to develop this. Further, local municipalities will have to obtain the necessary information and technical resources required to implement the model and then initiate the implementation by adopting relevant decisions. The mechanism of transferring the ownership of the property depends upon the context and regulations but most often includes judiciary procedures. In some cases, this process could last for months and even years. It may even include an appeal of the decision by the interested parties. When transferred to the local community, the ownership must then be further passed to an IDP and only then it is reasonable to start the renovation process. Yet, most of the cases will be of a more routine nature. As such, it is reasonable to expect that the whole process will be highly standardised and can even be partially automated; therefore, decreasing the cost and the risks of the procedure. When operated by local municipalities instead of the central government, the process is also less expensive in terms of time than the alternatives.

*Additional investments are still required.* Although some of the IDPs will be willing to handle the renovation of the property with their own funds if offered priority access to the model, a significant number of IDPs will still require external assistance in order to carry out the renovation. However, these costs will still be significantly lower than costs of alternative housing solutions that would require the construction of new housing.

*The risk of further marginalisation in the case of poor execution* must be addressed. As mentioned before, a certain portion of the escheat and derelict real estate stock is likely to be in marginalised or higher crime locations. If these conditions are not addressed, the provision of housing in such environments will only worsen the situation for IDPs and undermine the trust between them and the government as well as between IDPs and the local community. Thus, it is absolutely necessary to

renovate not only the real estate but the surrounding environment. It is important to understand that such environments, when not improved, constitute a heavy burden for the community regardless of whether or not IDPs are located there. Therefore, the expenses associated with addressing this challenge should not be considered as an additional burden as such problems need to be addressed by the community regardless.

*Limited access to services* must be resolved. In cases where the provided housing stock is located in the distant countryside or in suburban areas, there is likely to be limited access to utility services and necessary infrastructure. In this case, solving the IDP housing issue would also provide a strong impulse to solve long-standing problems in rural areas and disenfranchised communities regarding infrastructure.

### **SUPPOSED OUTCOME OF THE PRACTICE IMPLEMENTATION**

If implemented carefully, the model is likely to provide substantial benefits to all participants in the process. Apart from housing being the key need for a strong majority of IDPs in most of the contexts, it also leads to improved access to other crucial features associated with a stable life such as employment, safety and healthcare. When provided with safe housing for the long run, IDPs are in a much better position to act in a strong and dignified way and develop a durable solution on their own. Having their families protected, individuals are more likely to consider such investments as education and building a perspective career instead of merely looking for ‘survival options.’ Each of these benefits reinforces the probability of achieving another one, leading to a lasting and comprehensive empowerment of IDPs.

As already mentioned, utilising the potential of IDPs means shifting from the extensive expenses associated with social protection to developing a new powerful resource for economic growth in society and generating additional budget revenues. The model is also a strong solution to the problem of weakened communities and

abandoned environments. It is important to notice that these benefits should be assessed not in isolation but as compared to an unsolved IDP housing issue and the problem of the disenfranchised environments.

It seems that this model could represent one of the cheapest solutions to large scale IDP housing challenges, both in terms of the housing itself and the operationalisation costs. It also creates strong connections between local communities and IDPs, leading to the integration of the latter which should be one of the state's key concerns in cases of massive internal displacement. It also stimulates the economic and social development of the state and prevents the risk of secondary displacement and forced return.

### **CONCLUSION: WHY THIS MATTERS FOR UKRAINE AND OTHER CONTEXTS**

For Ukraine, finding a durable housing solution is important for several reasons. People who were displaced by the conflict and who have a fear of returning to non-government controlled territory, or are unwilling to do so, would be prevented from involuntary return. Being citizens of Ukraine, they are entitled to enjoy the protection of the state on the territories under the effective control of the government. Moreover, human capital is underestimated, especially given that millions of Ukrainians migrated to European countries in search of work. Well-educated IDPs who fled from big and well-developed cities like Donetsk and Luhansk could be a driving force for economic development of other regions, especially those located in the controlled part of the east.

Housing is a common problem for all conflict and post-conflict settings. Policies and practices differ from country to country, depending upon local peculiarities and needs. The model of the utilisation of abandoned real estate in the possession of local communities could be applied to well built up areas where housing stock is available. The amount of financial resources necessary for rehabilitating unutilised

housing stock may vary, taking into account the local standards of living, climate, etc. For example, in tropical or subtropical climates, rehabilitation could be cheaper as housing does not require additional winterisation and the installation of heating systems. The model could work not only for internally displaced people but serve the needs of refugees as well, although the refugees will need stronger support from other actors due to cultural and languages barriers.

The role of internally displaced people in the proposed solution is also noteworthy as they are expected to play an active role and take back control of their lives following the profoundly negative events that they have experienced. The active involvement in the housing process will facilitate better integration into host communities and prevent negative coping strategies. Obviously, only certain portions of the IDP community have sufficient material and psychological resources to partake in the process, even with the active support of the NGO sector. However, this proposed solution could be implemented as a part of a wider and more comprehensive local housing strategy or be at least one of the important tools available for those in need of housing solutions.

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