



## Article

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# Addressing Housing Needs of the Displaced People Promoting Resilient and Sustainable Communities

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## Abstract

*Addressing the housing needs of the displaced communities is an essential part of a recovery programme that has specific links to livelihoods, health, education, security and social and family stability. The housing factor acts as a social centre for family and friends, a source of pride and cultural identity, a resource that commands political and economic importance. Therefore, addressing the housing needs of the displaced communities should be seen as a mode to promote resilience and sustainable communities. Instead, the consideration of housing needs merely as a physical need results in many issues to the communities, including no access to livelihood, poor living condition, health problems, lack of financial independence, lack of social satisfaction and social cohesion and sometimes even recreates and worsens the existing vulnerabilities of displaced communities. Within this context, this paper investigates the factors to consider when addressing the housing needs of the displaced people promoting Resilience and Sustainable Communities. With the identification of this research need, the research team of the project titled REGARD (REbuildinG AfteR Displacement) conducted 47 in-depth interviews in four partner countries (UK, Sweden, Estonia and Sri Lanka) with officials, community representatives, social support networks, agency networks, etc. Apart from that, focus group discussions were conducted with the community members in Sri Lanka, covering both conflict-induced and disaster-induced displacement. Findings revealed that the housing factor plays a significant role in rebuilding communities and determining the long-term satisfaction of displaced communities. Further, the results present eight essential factors to consider when addressing the housing needs of the displaced communities promoting resilient and sustainable communities.*

**Keywords:** *Housing Needs; Conflict-induced displacements; Disaster-induced displacements; Resilience; Sustainable Communities.*

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of forcibly displaced populations has risen at an escalating rate. Global forced displacement, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and asylum seekers were 65.5 million in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016). This amount increased to 70.8 million in 2018 (UNHCR, 2018) and continued to rise in 2019, with 79.5 million displaced worldwide (UNHCR, 2019). In 2020, the global forced displacement surpassed 80 million (UNHCR, 2020). Though the cause of displacement is categorised as disaster-induced, conflict-induced, environmentally induced and development-induced, climate change acts as a hidden trigger for displacement with the effect of extreme weather conditions. Weather-related crises have triggered more than twice as much displacement as conflict and violence in the last decade (UNHCR, 2021). For the displaced communities who are forced to flee from their homes, COVID-19 became an additional crisis on top of the existing challenges such as lack of access to essential services and facilities, lack of access to livelihood, health problems, lack of financial independence, lack of social satisfaction. Moreover, these accumulated challenges, together with a global public health emergency, urged the need for resilient and sustainable resettlement housing for displaced communities.

In resettlement planning, housing is often seen as a physical need of the displaced and an essential requirement that the displaced must have filled with recovering. Housing is undeniably one of the physical needs as it provides shelter and a safe place for possessions. Apart from that, housing provides privacy, space for personal activities and a social and emotional need. Housing is essential to the well-being and development of societies because it is a complex asset that has links to livelihoods, health, education, security and social and family stability and acts as a social centre for family and friends, a source of pride and cultural identity, a resource which commands both political and economic importance (Barakat, 2003). Lack of understanding of the importance of housing in the displacement context can create multiple issues resulting in social tension and sometimes even recreates and worsens the existing vulnerabilities of displaced communities.

For instance, the lack of decent quality affordable housing is a significant reason for the social tensions and conflicts among displaced and host communities (Buryan, 2012; Guay, 2015). Among the Tsunami affected communities in Sri Lanka, records show that reconstruction created new forms of conflicts and tensions for the people who came to live in the newly constructed houses (Haigh et al., 2016). According to Brun and Lund (2009), the housing sector possesses the potential to either cause conflicts or resolve them and highlights the provision of housing as a mode to develop, rebuild communities, and build back better. Once the communities are built back better, it can increase the resilience of communities which means the increase of the ability of the community exposed to an external shock/ hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a shock/ hazard in a timely and efficient manner.

Housing needs may also vary depending on the stage of recovery, immediate intermediate and long term. In the immediate response period, the displaced communities will first need a place to stay or a roof on top of their head. However, housing plays an essential role in the transition between response and recovery without limiting to a site that provides accommodation, starting from immediate recovery until long-term recovery. There should be a coherent approach to the sequential stages of providing immediate shelter, temporary housing, and permanent housing (Johnson, Lizarralde, & Davidson, 2006). In all these stages, housing will not only provide accommodation but also meet the occupants' functional and cultural requirements satisfactorily (Turner, 1976; Kellett, 1992). Addressing the housing needs of the displaced is multi-dimensional, affecting various aspects of life. These multi-dimensional aspects include physical needs of shelter, a safe place for possessions, emotional needs, privacy and quality life to access education, health and economic opportunities. Addressing these aspects of displaced communities' life through housing will result in long term satisfaction of displaced and create social cohesion between displaced and host communities. With this view, this paper answers the research question 'how to address the housing needs of the displaced promoting resilient and sustainable communities?'

## **2. Methodology**

This study was carried out as part of the project's project process titled REGARD (REbuildingG AfteR Displacement). This European Commission-funded project aims to develop competencies in rebuilding communities following a disaster conflict-induced mass displacements from the perspective of the built environment. The REGARD project is an Erasmus+ strategic partnership project with five partner institutions; University of Huddersfield UK (United Kingdom), University of Central Lancashire UK, University of Colombo Sri Lanka, Tallinn University of Technology Estonia and the University of Lund Sweden. The project consists of 10 intellectual outputs, and out of these outputs, this paper presents part of the findings of outputs 1 and 2. Project output 1 conducted a community needs assessment of displaced communities identifying the community needs of displaced. Output 1 of the study determined seven different types of interlinked needs of displaced communities; Physical

Infrastructure needs, Socio- infrastructure needs, Housing needs, socio-cultural needs, economic needs, governance needs and communities with special needs. Project output 2 investigated the role of the built environment in addressing those community needs. The following sections explain the data collection and analysis process of the study.

## **2.1 Data Collection**

Primary data were collected in four partner countries: Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Sweden through semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions. Participants were selected through purposive sampling representing government officials, community representatives, social support networks, agency networks. Semi-structured interviews were conducted where the participants were required to respond to open-ended questions to examine how they subjectively interpret the phenomena in question and to allow them to expand on the information provided. Altogether, 47 interviews were carried out in four partner countries: UK -12, Sweden- 11, Estonia- 14 and Sri Lanka- 10.

In addition, focused group discussions with community members were conducted in Sri Lanka. The primary data gathering method used in Sri Lanka is slightly different from the European context. Sri Lanka has internally displaced communities, whereas the European context has more cross border displacement. Two internal displacement sites were selected representing the conflict-Induced displacement and the disaster-induced displacement. Multiple cases of displacement locations within the country were explored and screened to identify more suitable cases within the project scope. Accordingly, from the Sri Lankan context, two settlements called Malayalapuram and Bharathipuram belonging to the Kilinochchi district were selected for the Conflict-Induced displacement following the initial exploration and screening of multiple cases of displacement done earlier; but for the disaster-induced displacement, all the districts affected by the 2018 flooding and landslides were considered as research locations. Accordingly, a focused group discussion was conducted with ten community members covering the disaster-induced displacement. Apart from that, key informant interviews were conducted with five officials. Focus group discussions with ten community members (5 each from the two locations) covered the conflict-induced displacement. Key informant interviews were then conducted with four officials related to the field.

## **2.2 Data Analysis**

The data collected through interviews and focused group discussions were analysed using the methodological framework illustrated in figure1. This methodological framework was developed by combining the 'role of the Built Environment Framework in social resilience' framework (Haigh and Amaratunga, 2011) and the 'Do No Harm' Relationship Framework (Wallace, 2015). The frameworks combination and adoption were done through a brainstorming session with all the project partners of the REGARD Project. This framework was found as an innovative approach that can be used by future researchers in the built environment and resettlement fields.

<i>Role of BE in Addressing Community Needs and Social Cohesion</i>	Context	Intervention	Dividers & Connectors	BE Related Options	Who is Responsible (Stakeholder)	Which stage
Construct – Physical Assets/Interventions						
Develop – Human Capita Assets/Interventions						
Stimulate – Economic Assets/Interventions						
Facilitate – Governance Assets/Interventions						
Protect – Environment Assets/Interventions						
Nurture - Social Assets/Interventions						

*Table 1: Methodological Framework used for the data analysis*

Once the project partners developed and agreed upon the methodological framework (Figure 1), the literature findings and primary data were mapped to the methodological framework. Accordingly, each displaced community need was assessed against the built environment intervention in addressing this need. Then, on each built environment intervention, the dividers (negatives) and connectors (positives) were assessed and found the options to harness the potentials and overcome the contains. The results were then validated through the focused group discussion conducted with 14 experts and practitioners in the resettlement planning and resilience field. The findings of this research exercise developed a framework of the role of the built environment in addressing community needs and enhancing the social cohesion between the displaced and the host communities. Within this framework, this paper presents the part of the findings related to the housing needs of the displaced communities.

#### **4. Findings**

The research study findings revealed that the housing factor plays a significant role in promoting resilience and sustainable communities in multiple ways. Firstly, the housing factor acts as a central point in rebuilding displaced communities. Since it is a foundational need of displaced communities and matching the housing need with the social and economic conditions of the displaced determines the long-term satisfaction of displaced people contributing to the social and economic sustainability and resilience of displaced communities. Matching the housing needs with environmental needs and resilience features further increases the resilience of communities. Apart from that, the findings revealed that the housing factor plays a leading role in enhancing the social cohesion between displaced and host communities. This is another influential element contributing to the sustainability and resilience of displaced communities. Within this context, the results present eight essential factors to consider when addressing the housing needs of the displaced communities promoting resilient and sustainable communities.

##### **4.1 Adequate Provision of standard and quality Housing**

Out of these eight essential factors, adequate provision of standard and quality housing dwells as a fundamental factor when addressing the housing needs of the displaced/migrants. There is a vast difference between 'Provision of housing' and 'Adequate Provision of standard and quality Housing' for the displaced communities. Refugees and asylum seekers who gain access to housing are restricted mainly by affordability, especially in big cities. This results in the displaced with no choice but the likelihood of poor housing conditions. No one would like to live in houses infested by moulds or rodents, and this also applies to the displaced persons,

and if by any means, they find themselves in such houses, it makes them unsatisfied. These poor housing conditions results in a secondary set of issues affecting the individual's health and well-being. The research findings highlight that displaced are sometimes housed even in apartments and houses with multiple occupancies within the UK context. Especially, those who could not afford adequate housing would share a flat with privacy and safety issues. One respondent implied that one might feel unsafe living with strangers from different cultural backgrounds, speak a foreign language and probably have mental health issues.

Some displaced families whose women wear the hijab have issues with privacy because of the light and see-through curtains provided in their houses are not suitable for them as it makes them uncomfortable. And because of this, they cannot remove their scarves even when they are within their private space (INT 7, 10 and 11) (Abbreviation INT stands for Interview/s). And in case of any violence, one respondent declares that government agents would deal with it and move the people who create the violence elsewhere (INT 7). Besides, the findings stated some houses have access to adequate daylighting while others do not as it depends on the houses the displaced get. Some houses are reported to have poor lighting conditions with just one translucent window, subsequently impairing the daylighting (INT 9). For a displaced person who is already struggling with depression and stress, lack of access to natural daylighting could adversely affect the displaced person's health and well-being.

Burton (2014) and Cooper (2014) submit that an improved built environment assists mental health and well-being. Ensuring house maintenance and safety within the built environment and providing public areas are indicators of adults' social well-being (Cooper 2014). In addition, the study proves that density, lack of green and play areas and lack of privacy are aspects of the built environment that influence the children's well-being. Previous studies have demonstrated that access to adequate daylighting and natural views positively influences adults' physiological well-being (Janayi, Raman and Zapata-Lancaster 2018). The physiological well-being of residents can also be affected by communities in highly built areas. Refugee communities in high-density areas are prone to infections, especially in "pregnant women and unborn children" (Cooper 2014). Overcrowding and noise have resulted in psychological distress for the inhabitants, as averred by Cooper (2014) and Fuller et al. 1993b.

As for NGO (Non-governmental Organisations) representatives, their stance on what factors affect the health and well-being of refugees differed slightly from that of the municipality representatives. In contrast to what had been stated by municipality representatives, one NGO representative mentioned how many refugees are placed in segregated and dreadful areas, where there are no green spaces facilitating meetings but only large building blocks. This NGO representative brought an example of million programme buildings (In Sweden's context, 'miljonprojekt' is a type of cheap housing adopted in Sweden in the 1960s to provide affordable housing for all). This result in overcrowding and noise issues for displaced people. A municipality representative mentioned that one of the most prominent factors affecting the health and well-being of refugees is access to quality housing. There are issues such as overcrowded housing, apartments made for single individuals who have to house several individuals, and corridor housing where one has to share accommodation with individuals one has not chosen oneself), to education and meaningful employment or work. The general message was that it is crucial for refugees to feel that they control their own lives, manage to be productive members of society and engage in meaningful activities. One representative mentioned that sometimes the municipality has difficulties offering a wide range of activities, which may affect the refugees' sense of engaging in meaningful activities of their own choice. Temporary housing and temporary residence permits were mentioned as factors affecting the health of refugees negatively and, in particular, their mental health status.

One interviewee mentioned how bedbugs had been found in one housing complex (INT 22). Here the representative also mentioned cultural differences - some refugees are very clean, but others are not. The representative continued illustrating the health problems affiliated with

overcrowded housing arrangements by saying: *"But it does not matter, because if you place 400 people in the same place, who moreover do not have money for hygiene products, this is bound to happen, regular lice as well as other diseases. Sharing a kitchen is also a problem. Here people who have received their own housing are probably less sick. These issues are also problematic because those cleaner individuals may feel humiliated when they have to place their things in quarantines because of the lice"* (INT 24). These issues can be seen as minor issues. Yet, within the displacement context for the people who are already struggling with the mental trauma that they had to leave the place they lived, these issues adversely affect the health and well-being of displaced communities. The above discussion confirms that adequate provision of standard and quality housing is a fundamental physical need, as well as a mode to enhance displaced communities' mental and physical well-being, contributing towards resilience and sustainability.

#### **4.2 Maintain the social equity in housing provision**

Although there are social inclusion policies, procedures and strategies focusing on immigration and asylum, integration, racial equality, some extent of social exclusion still exist amongst the displaced communities of asylum seekers. When asylum seekers and refugees are faced with a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor housing, poor skills, low incomes, unfair discrimination, poor health, family breakdown, they are excluded from the outcomes and opportunities enjoyed by the mainstream society. Zetter and Pearl (2000) aver that dis-entitlement to housing and welfare benefits plus the fragmented service delivery to asylum seekers and refugees has resulted in social exclusion and deprivation.

Within this context, social equity is focused on the justice and fairness of provisions to society. When it comes to displacement housing, social equity means maintaining justice and fairness in housing provisions to the displaced people. There are two main routes of becoming a refugee in the UK context: The asylum channelled refugees (ACRs), and the resettlement channelled refugees (RCRs). However, the housing arrangements for these two channelled asylum seekers are different. ACRs will have to arrange for their housing by themselves, but for RCRs, housing is one of the components of the package they get through the Resettlement Scheme. It was found that the housing conditions may also depend on where the Asylum Seekers have been dispersed to live in with claims that some are good while others are not good. Generally, refugees in the UK are treated fairly like other residents using the housing benefit as an example (INT 7). However, for the ACRs, 28 days will be given to vacate their property after the 'Leave to Remain in the UK' status is granted (INT 7). Furthermore, for all the displaced persons' categories, RCRs, ACRs and the AS, the administration needs to increase the benefit rates and the social housing stock to make housing accessible and affordable to all (INT 7, 9, 10 and 12). Likewise, it is recommended that authorities and administration need to treat both the RCRs and the ACRs with fairness and equity without discriminating against one group while the other group is favoured.

In the context of Sri Lanka, they are using two main approaches for displacement housing called doner driven and owner-driven housing. Having learnt the strengths and weaknesses of the Donor Driven approaches, the Government has moved towards a mixed practice in the project called 'Lunawa Environment and Community Improvement Project'. Under the said project, unplanned settlements around the Lunawa lagoon were converted into eco-friendlier and planned settlements. The project had the overall objective of "improving the living conditions of people in Lunawa catchment in the North and South by mitigating the flood damage through an integrated programme of improvement of urban drainage and canal systems" (Fernando, 2014). Therefore, the project included compulsory involuntary resettlement of populations, and it is the first project that put Sri Lanka's National Involuntary Resettlement Policy into practice. The affected households were given three options under the project: 1) Settle in four relocation sites prepared by the project with all basic infrastructure

such as access roads, water supply, electricity and sewerage facilities (Donor Driven), 2) Settle in lands purchased (self-relocation/Owner Driven) and 3) Settled in the original site after regularising the plots (on-site resettlement) (Fernando, 2014). In the relocation process, the local authorities helped build cordial working relationships with the displaced communities, ensuring the security of tenure, inclusions of host communities in the project, and preparing resettlement sites through community contracts (Fernando, 2014). Likewise, when maintaining social equity in housing provision, housing options to select to the displaced categories and host and displaced community participation in decision-making can ensure that fairness and justice are maintained in housing provisions.

#### **4.3 Match the Location of resettlement housing with the social, cultural and economic needs of displaced communities**

Another major factor disclosed from the research findings was matching the location of resettlement housing with displaced communities' social, cultural, and economic needs. This factor primarily determines the long-term satisfaction of displaced and host communities and promotes resilient and sustainable communities. It was found that lack of consideration on social, cultural and economic needs of displaced communities at the housing provision has adversely affected the sustainability of the communities. For instance, in Sri Lanka's context, the resettlement housing built on previous cemetery land without taking necessary steps to conduct cultural purification rituals created enormous social tension between the Hindus and the Catholics, both of which are of the Tamil Ethnic group (INT 35). Likewise, taking the cultural needs of the displaced communities into consideration of housing provision has a significant impact on the sustainability and success of resettlement planning programmes.

For instance, in the UK context, when the people are dispersed within the country wherever housing is available, sometimes refugees are sent to areas where refugee community groups are less developed. Lack of choice over housing in the asylum sector, and some are forced to live far away from family. This lack of choice over housing leads to a feeling of isolation which consequently negatively affects the mental health of the displaced asylum seeker. In those areas, the displaced communities find difficulties, such as a lack of religious places and socio-cultural activities. This type of situation adversely affects the integration of the refugees in dispersal areas. Even though everyone has a right to worship, the study suggests that religion does not seem to be considered when dispersing the displaced people to their respective houses (INT 3). The lack of mosques or churches in some areas will pose a problem to Muslims and Christians if they are dispersed into such areas. And if their denomination is not near, they are ready to travel miles to attend church (INT 5). Then the travelling or public transportation costs would increase their total cost of living.

Access to previous livelihood or place where the land/place is attached to livelihood and identity is another factor that must be considered when allocating houses for displaced. For some communities, land or place is livelihood and identity, e.g., fishery communities agricultural communities in Sri Lanka. No access to grazing land means indigenous people are deprived of a livelihood and loss of local identity. No access to the previous livelihood creates unemployment, which heightens the risk of trafficking and leads to poverty. It was found that resettlement housing is provided in areas with few employment opportunities or for agricultural communities with no suitable land for cultivation. This situation will also increase the financial dependence of the displaced communities. Therefore, displaced communities' economic needs, including access to their livelihood, need to be considered when selecting the location of resettlement housing.

Transportation linkage of the resettlement housing with the essential services is another factor attached to the economic needs of the displaced. If the transportation linkage is not there for essential services, it increases the cost of living and affects financial independence. In the UK Context, the availability of basic services around the housing sourced for the displaced



persons is usually considered, which is a positive factor. In situations where the required services are not within walking distance, the state provides transportation for the RCRs either by providing taxis, buses, and bus passes or getting reimbursed for it (INT 10). However, in the case of Asylum seekers, some of them get support while others do not. Hence, some people have to travel long distances, and due to financial constraints, some might need to walk all the way no matter the distance for essential things such as seeing their lawyers (INT 2). As solutions, either housing needs to be provided with proximity to services or provide travel passes to travel. It was also mentioned that voluntary organisations provide bikes for displaced who would like to have one.

Due to the small number of displaced people in Estonia, no references were found in the literature relating to any suggestions of physical infrastructure needs. These would be obvious in the case of camps for displaced people, but such centres do not currently exist in the Estonian context. However, some of the interviewees suggested that, concerning their housing location, access to services had been inadequate (INT 13, 18). Lack of public transportation services and Internal road conditions were considered the main reasons behind the decisions of people returning to their original housing according to CEPA (Centre for Poverty Analysis; FV01\_10\_Returnee). The condition of the internal roads was also reported to have affected respondents returning to their places of origin concerning the additional costs borne for transporting construction material.

Cooper (2014) and Evans (2003) infer that the availability of public places and play areas is crucial because they are indicators of social well-being in adults and children. This factor is even applicable for displaced communities and having a park or playground within proximity to resettlement housing affects the social well-being of displaced communities (INT 1 and 2). Our investigations concur with this fact, and there are provisions for these in the UK for displaced persons. Most public places are free except for the likes of the gym; it is open for displaced as well (INT 9). Moreover, there are gym passes available for collection with government officials and voluntary organisations. So, there is little or no restrictions to these services. There are reports of displaced persons claiming that they enjoy the outings organised for them in the parks and those who use public places like the library, gym, playgrounds and community gardens enjoy them and make them happy (INT 7 10 and 11). In addition, lack of green and play areas and lack of privacy are aspects of the built environment that influences children's well-being (INT 1). However, these facilities might not be fully harnessed by the displaced persons. Some do not know that most public places and play areas within their communities are free to use by anyone because there are entry fees to be paid before accessing the parks in their home countries, while it is not a cultural practice in their countries. Some might not have the confidence to go out and socialise because of their immigration status. Therefore, sometimes the proximity of these facilities to displaced houses is not the only matter; sometimes, it is also the awareness of these facilities and places. In the context of Sri Lanka, lack of recreational facilities was also mentioned. Still, the residents themselves have built a netball court for their children, indicating a possible deprivation risk of loss of access to common property and services in the new setting. In summary, considering all the social, cultural, and economic needs of the displaced when providing housing for the displaced has a significant impact on building resilient and sustainable communities.

#### **4.4 Match the Size, Layout and Design of resettlement housing with the social, cultural and economic needs of displaced communities**

Section 4.1 focused on the physical quality of the house; apart from the housing location, the size, layout and design of resettlement housing need to be matched with the social, cultural and economic needs of displaced communities. This will determine the long-term satisfaction of the displaced communities. If we consider the UK context, it was found that the size of resettlement housing is proportionate to the size of the family. However, this fact was argued

that composition within the family size, including age and disability demography of families, is not adequately addressed when allocating housing for displaced. Furthermore, when families grow in size as they procreate, a family house based on assessments of four people will become overcrowded when the family grows to six.

In the context of Sri Lanka, it was found that lack of satisfaction with the housing provided due to the smaller size than what people lived informally. Respondents also pointed out that the layout and the design of the house have not been made to accommodate household, small scale entrepreneurial initiatives due to the lack of space (INT 35). The houses have come with a warranty of 3 years by the donor. However, the respondents doubt if the donor would abide by this promise. Respondents also complained about the house's architectural design with respect to ventilation, lack of garden to dump their garbage, problems of sanitation as the washroom are built inside houses. Due to cultural reasons, the respondents prefer to have bathrooms outside the house rather than attached to the rooms (INT 37).

Further, the respondents also mentioned the issues such as the invasion of flies from a nearby garbage dump. Particularly noted that the kitchen is designed to use gas cookers, most of the respondents have been using firewood for cooking purposes. They are reluctant to switch to gas cookers due to the lack of understanding of using such appliances. Apart from that, these displaced communities do not have money to spend on gas (INT 37). Likewise, if the housing design is not matched with the socio-cultural needs of the displaced communities, it can create issues that need to be resolved with an extra set of measures.

Architecturally different housing designs are there in the UK; Contemporary, Victorian, Edwardian, modern, traditional. Further, these various types and their attendant facilities might impact the cultural preferences of its occupants. Most displaced are looking towards living in modern or contemporary housing depending on what they can afford. Housing satisfaction combined with cultural preferences will consequently affect the individual's happiness. There was a case in Lancaster of a displaced family who was unhappy with their poor-quality house until they moved into a better house (INT 7). This confirms that the health and well-being of a community are affected by people's behaviour and buildings with design problems correlating Cooper (2014), Lawrence (2012) and Hartig and Lawrence (2003).

Furthermore, the health and well-being of displaced persons can be affected because of the difference in housing designs in the UK. Most of them lived in big houses back in their home countries and lived with large extended families according to their cultures. However, in the UK, even the house that seems like a big house is not as big as the standard houses in those countries (INT 10 and 11). These cultural differences can affect the housing satisfaction of displaced communities.

Apart from cultural factors, Housing design caters to people's individual needs, especially those who seek self-employment. Disabled people's needs are another factor to consider when providing housing for the displaced. As an answer, the provision of adaptive housing to individual needs can be deemed. For instance, although one of the respondents claims they provide government-funded support to these groups, some displaced people still find it challenging to make the property layout adaptable to wheelchair use (INT 1, 3). In addition, some of the displaced are well provided with the help of voluntary organisations and the Government. Some are lucky to get adaptive houses (INT 7). Apart from the provision of adaptive housing involvement in displaced communities when designing the housing units, the relocation process can also be added, which will ensure the sustainability of the relocation programme.

#### **4.5 Relocate the displaced communities to suitable and welcoming neighbourhoods**

Displacement disrupts existing social networks in the displaced community and the host community. There is a lack of coexistence, which is affected by stress, tension and sometimes violence. In Sri Lanka, the civil war, which took place in Sri Lanka with some roots in the period of British-colonial rule, had created a feeling of alienation in terms of race, ethnicity, language, culture or religion that challenged any sense of political or social solidarity. Thus, bringing about growth in ethnic enclave mentality as displaced communities preferred to stick together when asked to relocate. Therefore, relocating the displaced communities to the most suitable and welcoming neighbourhood would answer many future problems in such a context. However, the characteristic of a convenient and welcoming neighbourhood may differ from one context to another.

For instance, in the context of the UK, dispersed displaced are housed in deprived areas with multiple problems and little or no experience of diverse communities. Further, when the people are dispersed wherever housing is available, refugees are sometimes sent to areas where refugee community groups are less developed. This adversely affects the integration: leading to social tension and racism towards the refugees. This study confirms the existence of cases of antisocial behaviour, which are more prevalent in some white British communities than in communities that are more diverse such as Preston. One respondent says displaced persons are bothered by some host communities. Some landlords would not want to rent their houses to the refugees (INT 2; 9; and 10).

On the other hand, for those in diverse areas, social inclusion is made easier because the city is large and public services and spaces abound where one can go for socialisation and make new friends. It is also easier for those who have people from their cultural backgrounds around them. They can meet for social events like marriages and birthdays where their culture in terms of language, food and fashion is being showcased. Hence, it can be noted that not all communities are racist or discriminatory. Some are very welcoming and help the displaced people integrate and settle. So, the displaced communities should not always assume that all the communities in the country are hostile. They should try and harness as many supports as is available for them. They should feel free to speak with their caseworkers on whatever they might be going through because they are there to help. However, to facilitate this integration, it is needed to relocate the displaced communities to suitable and welcoming neighbourhoods.

In the Sweden context, the interview findings indicated that many of the organisations involved are offering support programmes and actively promoting social inclusion and access to social services. However, there are constraints to participating in such programmes due to the language barrier. Access is limited to these support programmes due to the remote locations where the displaced have been housed, and some of them do not have time to participate due to their work commitments (INT 14). One municipality, funded by the Government, launched a very successful housing project where it collaborates with organisations in the countryside to place refugees in houses without tenants or owners in the countryside. The municipality mediates between the refugees and the organisation providing the housing, which has assisted close to 400 people in getting housing over the past two years. The representative of this municipality highlighted that the resettlement in rural locations is advantageous in terms of integrating newcomers. The representative believed that the most significant potential for sustainable reception of refugees resides in the countryside than in the city, even though it may take some time before the refugees are accepted. Settling newcomers down in big, empty houses with gardens in the countryside might not be the easiest for the newcomers who might not have the necessary tools to take care of the houses. However, the representative mentioned that with time, after initial suspicion has disappeared, neighbours and the surrounding areas have been very welcoming and helpful in helping the new inhabitants integrate. Accordingly, this discussion confirms that relocating displaced communities to

suitable and welcoming neighbourhoods underpin the resettlement programmes' sustainability and resilience.

#### **4.6 Promote Social Integration through the housing and the built environment**

Social integration act as a contributing factor towards social cohesion. Together with social integration, the most mentioned other concepts are a social network, social interactions and social capital, social inclusion, social exclusion, social mobility and social sustainability (Heer, 2018, S. Mannakkara & Wilkinson, 2013). Social integration prevails in a group if attraction bonds unite its members (Blau, 1960). In the displacement context, social integration means incorporating displaced newcomers into the social structure of the host communities. The research findings suggest that the neighbourhood's housing and built environment can facilitate social integration in multiple ways.

Housing is one of the basic needs of the displaced communities as it is with other people who are not displaced. It goes from just immediate housing to the built environment, encompassing the space and facilities required to live (UK INT 8). This makes us perceive living in the sense of everything that constitutes an individual's lifestyle. That is, the way one lives and copes with the physical, social, economic, psychological environments daily reflected in daily activities, values, interests, attitudes, opinions and at home, work or leisure and influenced by family, culture and social class. The Built Environment is the space that comprises structures, facilities, and resources that accommodate and permit all of these for the individual. The way a community's built environment is designed influences its residents' physical and mental health (Dannenberg et al., 2018); Frumkin, 2016). Frumkin (2016) further assert that as much as a healthy community protects and improves the quality of life for its citizens, it also preserves the environment. The local characteristics of buildings and neighbourhoods can improve a community's well-being as they increase the sense of belonging and attachment to the community (Janahi, Raman and Zapata-Lancaster 2018; Burton 2014). Therefore, the built environment plays a vital role in resettling and integrating refugee community housing.

In the displacement context, when host and displaced come together with different social, cultural, religious, and language backgrounds, it is challenging to create social integration. However, the findings suggest that the built environment can often get together and participate in activities with more public, cultural, religious places to face this challenge. For instance, in the UK, especially voluntary organisations and church groups locally organise many public events to integrate the displaced together with their host community to socialise and make new friends, thereby enhancing their engagement and integration with their local community. Examples of such events are the Refugee Week and the Women's Lunch Club where they socialise and learn new trades such as sewing (INT 7, 10 and 12). Furthermore, some voluntary organisations invite the Police at intervals to do a presentation about hate crime at their drop-in sessions so the displaced persons would learn to identify and report hate crimes whenever or wherever it is happening (INT 7, 10, 11 and 12). Forrest and Kearns (2001) advance that neighbourhood which, according to them, is not just a territorially circumscribed entity. Still, a series of overlapping social networks is essential in social cohesion. Thus, neighbourhood emerges as another important feature of social integration highlighted in this study.

Apart from that, it was found that displacement community and host community engagement in housing and neighbourhoods development activities work effectively in social integration. According to the (IOM IRAQ, 2017), out of the 182 transitional housing units, there is a playground, open space, a child-friendly space and a community centre that helps children and youth of the two communities to come together, exchange pleasantries and for the maintenance of well-being of the communities. The study of Karuppanan & Sivam (2011) establishes that social interactions are higher within the communities when dwelling units are

placed around the public realm or common open space. The study further demonstrates that the provision of high quality and well-located open space at the neighbourhood level, mixed land use, good accessibility to the public realm, and social infrastructure play an essential role in increasing the social sustainability of the neighbourhood. Including these features in resettlement, planning promotes community resilience and sustainability.

#### **4.7 Increase the sense of belongingness and social cohesion through housing**

The way a community's built environment is designed influences its residents' physical and mental health and a sense of belongingness. According to Bergman (2018), social inclusion means a sense of belonging; it is about including people in various social activities. Social cohesion is made possible with feelings or a sense of place and a lack of discrimination (Dempsey 2008a, p. 107). Sense of place is linked to belonging and territoriality, which are essential dimensions of social inclusion. According to Heer (2018), in social cohesion, there is the recognition of the importance of people being involved, participating, and having a vested interest in society and individuals having equal access to societal benefits. This should be one of the core factors in social cohesion because social isolation, also called social exclusion, is bound to affect social cohesion negatively.

As Forrest & Kearns (2001, p. 2128) note, a society lacking cohesion displays social inequality, social disorder and conflict, incongruent moral values, low place attachment, deficient levels of social interaction between and within communities. Forrest & Kearns, however, advanced that social cohesion can emphasise the need for a shared sense of morality and common purpose; social control and social order; the level of social interaction within communities or families; and a sense of belonging to the place. A reflection on these factors listed by Forrest & Kearns will show that social cohesion improves the well-being of the populace and improves the quality of life of the community (Karuppannan & Sivam, 2011). Such quality and character of local social relations significantly impact resilience and social sustainability.

In the displacement context, Gupta (2015) suggests that the humanitarian and development programmes can improve social cohesion if they employ area-based approaches that assist vulnerable populations other than the displaced. This means vulnerable people and women in the midst of the displaced and their hosts, and their neglect can exacerbate social tension and disrupt social cohesion. It can be said that this is one of the measures taken to strengthen the resilience of the displaced and their hosts to the point that women and men participated in producing about 264,000 bricks to build 182 housing units and a community centre in addition to the civil infrastructure (IOM IRAQ, 2017). As stated earlier, the participation of the displaced and host communities, including all vulnerable people, in building and rehabilitation will create a sense of belonging and active participation in community building trust, resulting in social networking and interactions. These factors are essential in facilitating social cohesion contributing towards resilient and sustainable communities. Further, the study suggests that neighbourhoods with a diversity which means with a mix of people from different social, cultural, religious, backgrounds, the built environment could represent this diversity by improving local characteristics of housing, buildings and neighbourhood. This type of representation can increase the sense of belonging and attachment to the community.

#### **4.8 Promote environmentally sustainable and disaster-resilient housing**

Another aspect of the best practices related to housing provision is the provision of sustainable and resilient housing designs for the displaced. Here, resilience is both disaster resilient and resilient to climate changes. According to United Nations (2020) news, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) works with designers and architects to create new spaces for resilient housing. These new spaces improve the daily lives of displaced people, have a limited impact on the environment, and are resilient in the face of extreme weather conditions.

Another example is this small cluster of shelters for Rohingya refugees at Kutupalong, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh includes water and sanitation facilities, drainage for wastewater, and solar lighting for security at night. As costs fall, renewable energy sources are becoming more common in humanitarian centres (United Nations, 2020). Further, as mentioned in section 4.1, there are issues in resettlement housing with air quality or proper ventilation. Answering these issues, resettlement housings need to be improved with sustainable building/ green building standards with the cooperation of public-private partnerships.

Refugees and IDPs are often forced to leave their homes because of disasters induced by natural hazards. The consequent pressures of such displacement are the provision of housing that is resilient to such disasters. For instance, a country like Sri Lanka frequently experiences such disasters, which has developed a range of best practices for providing post-disaster housing and when it comes to constructing disaster resilient housing. According to Wijegunaratna et al. (2017), housing is usually the most valuable asset for people. It is one of the worst affected sectors in most disasters, pointing to the need for efficient and sustainable post-disaster housing reconstruction. The Sri Lankan National Building Research Organisation (NBRO) recommends incorporating disaster resilient features into housing construction when sites are located in areas prone to disasters such as floods, landslides, high wind, and Tsunami or areas having expansive soil. The planning and construction of such housing require many aspects to be considered. First, during the planning phase, the land for the housing construction has to be carefully chosen, preferably including consultation of appropriate local authorities. Second, approval permits and the provision and use of hazard maps alongside the development of hazard profiles for the area in question ought to be taken into consideration to minimise the unfavourable impacts of overall development by ensuring the sustainability of investments, planning clearance and other approvals. Before commencing any construction activity, relevant authorities' permission should be obtained following the relevant acts, laws, and bylaws. Moreover, the planning and orientation of the housing have to be carefully laid out to minimise the impact of disasters.

UNHCR UK (2020) states that the environment, disaster and climate change have a vast impact on the lives of millions of forcibly uprooted people around the world. Unsustainable use of natural resources can lead to environmental degradation, with lasting effects on natural resources and the well-being of the displaced and host communities. Additionally, competition over scarce natural resources, such as firewood, water and grazing land, can lead to friction in most developing countries. This further confirms the need for sustainable natural resource management within resettlement planning. Another aspect of best practices addressing the environmental needs is the introduction of environmentally and culturally friendly structures for housing and the built environment structures.

## **5. Conclusion**

Promoting resilience and sustainability in housing provision for displaced communities focuses on sustainable solutions in both short and long terms. Immediately following a disaster or conflict, the displaced community may need a roof over their heads. However, from day one of displacement, this communities' recovery process begins. Therefore, the role of housing starts to evolve starting from a roof over the heads to space for personal activities, an area that fulfils the social and emotional needs of communities, the place to facilitate the economic conditions of the displaced, and a place that creates a sense of belongingness and social cohesion. All the multifaced roles need to be understood in housing provision to displaced communities. Accordingly, this paper explores the multifaceted role of housing in the displacement context, which contributes to and promotes resilient and sustainable communities.

Findings revealed that the housing factor plays a significant role in rebuilding communities and determining the long-term satisfaction of displaced communities. Further, the results

present eight essential factors to consider when addressing the housing needs of the displaced communities promoting resilient and sustainable communities; 1) adequate provision of standard and quality housing, 2) Maintain the social equity in housing provision, 3) Match the Location of resettlement housing with social, cultural and economic needs of displaced communities, 4) Match the Size, Layout and Design of resettlement housing with the social, cultural and economic needs of displaced communities, 5) Relocate the displaced communities to suitable and welcoming neighbourhoods, 6) Promote Social Integration through the housing and the built environment, 7) Increase the sense of belongingness and social cohesion through housing, and 8) Promote environmentally sustainable and disaster-resilient housing. These eight factors can be visually illustrated as follows (figure 2). These factors are helpful for future planners, urban designers, architects, and policymakers who work in the resettlement field. Planners, urban designers, and architects can utilise these identified factors to cross-check their resettlement planning and designing strategies in addressing the housing needs of the displaced communities. Further, policymakers can mainstream these identified factors into the resettlement housing-related policies and regulations.

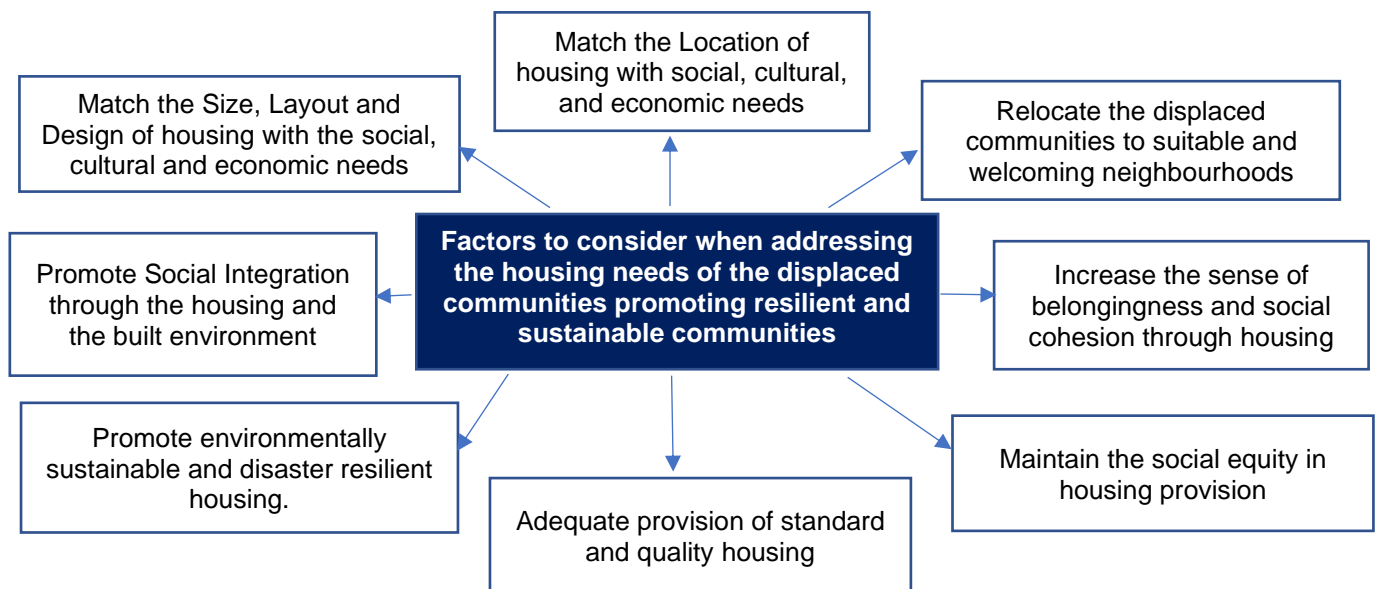


Figure 1: Factors to consider when addressing the housing needs of the displaced communities promoting resilient and sustainable communities

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