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Article

Approaches to Strengthen the Social Cohesion between Displaced and Host Communities

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Abstract: A cohesive society is not only characterised by the availability of basic services and facilities, but also promotes economic equality and inclusion, democracy, and social solidarity. Forced displacement due to disasters and conflict constantly disrupt the path to a sustainable and cohesive society. Displaced communities often struggle with a lack of access to livelihood and a lack of financial independence and social and family stability. With these challenges, a lack of provision of basic services and facilities will create a competition for housing, health, and education between the displaced and host communities. Additionally, the economic competition for jobs and the role of international aid in terms of fairness create social tension between the displaced and the host. Likewise, multiple aspects weaken the social cohesion between displaced and host communities. Within this context, we investigated approaches to enhance social cohesion following disaster-induced and conflict-induced displacement. With the identification of this research need, the research team of the project titled REGARD (REbuild-inG AfteR Displacement) conducted 47 in-depth interviews in four partner countries (U.K., Sweden, Estonia, and Sri Lanka) with community representatives, social support networks, agency networks, officials, etc. Moreover, focus group discussions were conducted with community members in Sri Lanka. The collected data were analysed through a qualitative data analysis procedure. The findings present eight approaches to strengthen the social cohesion between displaced and host communities. These eight approaches include the adequate provision of basic services and facilities without limiting the capacity of the host, support services aimed at local integration, economic integration between the displaced and host, and social cohesion through the built environment.

Keywords: social cohesion; conflict-induced displacements; disaster-induced displacements; resilience; resettlement planning

1. Introduction

Displaced communities can be described as groups of people whose houses, properties, sources of livelihood, and belongings have been devastated, and who thus have no option but to relocate to other communities for safety, resettlement, or both [1]. Displacement is not a new phenomenon to the world; it has been occurring throughout history with diversity in context, frequency, and magnitude. For instance, the European region has a long history of displacement and historical diversity. Soviet–Hungarian armed conflict in 1956 resulted in 180,000 Hungarians fleeing to Austria and another 20,000 to Yugoslavia [2]. Likewise,

throughout history, the driving factors behind the increasing number of displaced communities have been common due to protracted conflicting situations, climatic conditions, and natural hazards [3]. The Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021 confirms this by disclosing that in the year 2021, there were 40.5 million internally displaced people across 149 countries, of which 9.8 million were displaced due to conflicts and violence and 30.7 million were displaced due to natural disasters [4].

Displaced communities have also been a reason for the rapid urbanisation the world has experienced in recent years [5]. A significant proportion of displaced communities mobilise to urban areas, amounting to a total of 60% by 2015 [3]. A sudden influx of displaced people into cities creates colossal demand and pressure on housing systems [6] and may challenge the hosting communities' infrastructure systems [7]. This situation does not only mount pressure on the existing services and facilities of the host community, but likely subsequently weakens the social cohesion between the displaced and the hosts. Especially in cases of protracted displacement, the displaced persons reside in their host communities for a greater part of their lives without any plans to return to their place of origin. Arguably, protracted displacement most likely affects social cohesion much more than short-term displacement.

A good example of this is what happened to the displaced people of Syria [8,9], who received an initial warm welcome from the residents of Mafraq, Jordan, into their community. However, the protracted situation continued to reduce the spirit of hospitality of the hosts. Although the host communities were generous hosts to the displaced, at some point, the burden of housing millions of displaced Syrians stretched the hosts to their limits. A study conducted in September 2012 shows that 80% of residents in Mafraq believe that the Syrians should be housed in refugee camps isolated from their community, contrasting the warm reception afforded to the displaced upon their arrival to the host community in 2011 [8,9]. This is primarily due to housing problems. The Jordanians expressed profound frustration over the housing situation and concerns with having to share limited space with thousands of visitors [8].

Apart from the limited access to affordable quality housing, economic competition towards jobs and the role of international aid in terms of perceptions of fairness and equity also affect social cohesion [10]. Equity here means how humanitarian assistance is delivered to people, equity of access, fairness in distribution, quality, appropriateness, and quantity—who receives what and why? These are crucial factors that can put a strain on social cohesion between the displaced and the host. However, the degree to which any of these factors are noticed in these communities and the degree to which they affect social cohesion both differ significantly from community to community. With this, it is important to identify the different causes of social tension in different communities, because such knowledge will inform the next course of mitigating actions.

The mitigating actions for the above-identified challenges of social cohesion can be seen as the provision of adequate facilities and essential services, adequate affordable housing, and the creation of employment and economic opportunities. However, the question here is if mitigating social tension alone can create social cohesion. Social cohesion is not only the alleviation of social tension. Beyond that, social cohesion should promote economic equality and inclusion, democracy, and social solidarity. Social cohesion is a multifaced state that must be understood with its cause and effects.

1.1. Social Cohesion in the Displacement Context

In simple terms, cohesive societies "hang together" [11]. In studies, social cohesion is described as an ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges, and equal opportunity [12]. Furthermore, social cohesion is perceived as a broader academic concept related to a society's social capital, which represents the extent to which the society maintains trust and peaceful coexistence amidst the social, ethnic, and other demographic differences within the same community [13]. However, in relation to this study, the focus is to study social cohesion between the displaced and host communities.

When the concept of social cohesion is studied in more detail, several concepts are closely related: social networks, social interactions and social capital, social inclusion (sense of belonging), social exclusion, social mobility, and social sustainability [11,14].

Social capital can be identified as characteristics of social organisation such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit [15] (pp. 115–138). According to Baldwin and King [13], social capital benefits people when cooperating and working collectively in social networks. Social networks and interactions are related to socialising in the neighbourhood, with friends and communities [16] (pp. 2125–2143). As argued above, these interactions and networking are supposed to be cordial and of better quality. Social networking and social interactions can be seen as almost the same; however, while networking can occur on a broader scale, interactions can take place on a micro scale.

Furthermore, social exclusion is a situation where people are excluded or discriminated from participating or being fully involved in the social activities going on in a community. According to Jeannotte [12], social exclusion is a major threat to social cohesion. They quoted the definition of social exclusion in the EU literature, which states that a lack of social cohesion is not only the material deprivation of the poor, but also their inability to fully exercise their social, cultural, and political rights as citizens [12]. Social inclusion can lead to social exclusion, when social inclusion is measured by aspects of social exclusion [14]. This means that social inclusion may also result in social exclusion depending on who is included and who is excluded, meaning that care should be taken to not socially exclude some people while trying to include others.

Social inclusion is a sense of belonging. It is about the inclusion of people in various social activities.Social cohesion is made possible with a feeling or sense of place and a lack of discrimination [17] (pp. 105–114). Sense of place is linked to the concepts of belonging and territoriality, which are all important dimensions when researching social inclusion. In social cohesion, there is the recognition of the importance of people being involved, participating, and having a vested interest in society, as well as individuals having equal access to societal benefits [14]. This should be one of the core factors in social cohesion because social isolation, which may also be called social exclusion, is bound to negatively affect social cohesion.

In light of the above concepts, the working definition of the term "social cohesion" in this study can be defined as the ability of displaced people and their host—who are brought together incidentally with cultural, social, ethnic, and other demographic differences—to live in the built environment of the same community, get along amicably, trust and support each other, and live peacefully together. Having defined social cohesion in the context of this study, the following sections focus on the discussion of the built environment.

Regarding the components/domains of social cohesion, and there are five basic dimensions of social cohesion: belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy [18]. In achieving a high level of social cohesion, high-quality and cordial interactions, communications, and community networks are essential [13]. Strong, positive, integrated relationships and inclusive identities apparently reveal a high level of social cohesion. In contrast, a weak, negative, or fragmented relationship and exclusive identities may mean low social cohesion, and thus, social cohesion has a cascading effect with strong social relations [10]. If there is strong social cohesion within a community, one of the main features is the existence of activities geared towards promoting community interests with the participation of a wide array of people [13].

In writing about social cohesion in the context of forced displacement, especially in fragile and conflicted-affected (FCV) contexts, the social cohesion interventions are being conceptualised as peace-building and confidence-building measures between social groups [18]. This is an essential observation because forced displacement unavoidably introduces a new built environment for the displaced, an environment they move into with their different cultural and behavioural identities still intact. In this scenario, social

cohesion may be at stake if there are no measures to build peace and confidence in both communities by creating an atmosphere of communal habitation and socialisation.

Arguably, rising social tension among communities is usually a threat to social cohesion, because as the tension increases, social cohesion decreases, and this can generate secondary conflicts, or what is known as conflict diffusion in host communities [10]. Social tensions can be increased by the roles of social, local, and international media, especially if issues are framed in ways that target minority communities at the expense of others, a situation where a community is favoured more than the others [10]. In summary, the reasons for rising social tensions are high levels of poverty, the scarcity of resources, the inability of the municipal council to provide essential services to the people, and differences in religion, cultural, and social norms between the displaced and host communities. Furthermore, deficiency of quality affordable housing and competition for employment further worsen the predicament.

Accordingly, it can be understood that there are multiple factors affecting the social cohesion of a community. Not only the provision of basic facilities and services, but also of social and recreational services, information on and opportunities for community engagement and dialogue, improved socioeconomic infrastructure [19], economic opportunities, and social equity in service provision can further strengthen social cohesion. Apart from that, initiatives that promote belonging, inclusion, participation, recognition, and legitimacy can contribute towards the social cohesion between the displaced and host. High-quality and cordial interactions, communication, and community networks are some of the factors that need to be maintained throughout the resettlement and relocation process in order to enhance social cohesion. Likewise, there are multiple ways to create and strengthen social cohesion. However, these various approaches to social cohesion are less explored within the context of displacement. Accordingly, in this paper, we investigate the research question, "What are approaches to strengthen the social cohesion between displaced and host communities?".

1.2. REGARD Project

This paper presents part of the findings of the research work conducted under the project REGARD (REbuildinG AfteR Displacement). This is a collaborative research project funded by the European Commission. The project consortium consists of five partner institutions: the University of Huddersfield, U.K.; the University of Central Lancashire, U.K.; the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka; Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia; and the University of Lund, Sweden. The project aims to develop competencies in rebuilding communities following disaster- and conflict-induced mass displacements from the perspective of the built environment. In achieving this aim, at the initial stage of the project, a countrywide displaced and host community needs assessment was carried out. Subsequently, based on the findings of the community needs assessment, a study was carried out investigating the role of the built environment in addressing these identified needs and enhancing the social cohesion between the displaced and the host.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data Collection

The research process started with a comprehensive literature review which was carried out on two scales: a global-scale literature review and a country-specific literature review in the U.K., Sweden, Estonia, and Sri Lanka. Then, a conceptual framework was developed based on the findings of the literature analysis. The conceptual framework was used as the basis for data collection, and two types of data collection techniques were used: interviews and focus group discussions. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, which included representatives of agency networks, government officials, representatives of the community, and social assistance networks. A total of 47 interviews were carried out by the partners: 12 in the U.K., 11 in Sweden, 14 in Estonia, and 10 in Sri Lanka. The four countries represent the five participating institutions of the project. From a sociology

point of view, the research approaches a balanced number of interviews in geographically different countries, including both the western and eastern hemispheres and the countries from where people are displaced.

For this research, survey or quantitative methods were not suitable, as the study focused on examining how participants subjectively interpret the phenomena in question, allowing interviewees to expand on the information provided. Therefore, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used as the data collection technique. Accordingly, the content of the interview schedule explored nine main areas of the study as follows.

1. Basic information of the interviewee;
2. Housing needs of displaced and host: effect on social cohesion;
3. Socio-cultural needs of displaced and host: effect on social cohesion;
4. Social infrastructure needs of displaced and host: effect on social cohesion;
5. Economic needs of displaced and host: effect on social cohesion;
6. Physical infrastructure needs of displaced and host: effect on social cohesion;
7. Governance needs of displaced and host: effect on social cohesion;
8. Communities with special needs: effect on social cohesion; and
9. Role of the built environment in social cohesion.

The methodology used to collect data from Sri Lanka was slightly different. This is because, in Sri Lanka, the focus is on internal displacement, whereas in the European context, the focus is more on cross-border displacement. Accordingly, focus group discussions were conducted with community members in Sri Lanka in three different settlements, Aranayake, Malayalapuram, and Bharathipuram, covering both conflict-induced displacement and disaster-induced displacement. Additionally, five key informant interviews were conducted with officials. Another focus group discussion was conducted with 10 members in the context of conflict-induced displacement. Four key informant interviews were then conducted with officials.

2.2. Data Analysis

A methodological framework [14] adopting the role of the Built Environment Framework [20] and the "Do No Harm" Relationship Framework [21] was developed by the partners of the REGARD project. All the collected data were analysed under this methodological framework [14].

A focus group discussion was conducted with the participation of 14 experts and practitioners around the world to validate the findings. Finally, a framework was developed to identify the built environment's role in rebuilding displaced and host communities [14]. The research process of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

This final framework [14] uncovered six different perspectives of the role of the built environment in rebuilding communities, namely, physical, economic, governance, environmental, social, and human capital. Accordingly, in this paper, we present part of the findings of this final framework specific to social cohesion, revealing the approaches to enhance social cohesion between displaced and host communities.
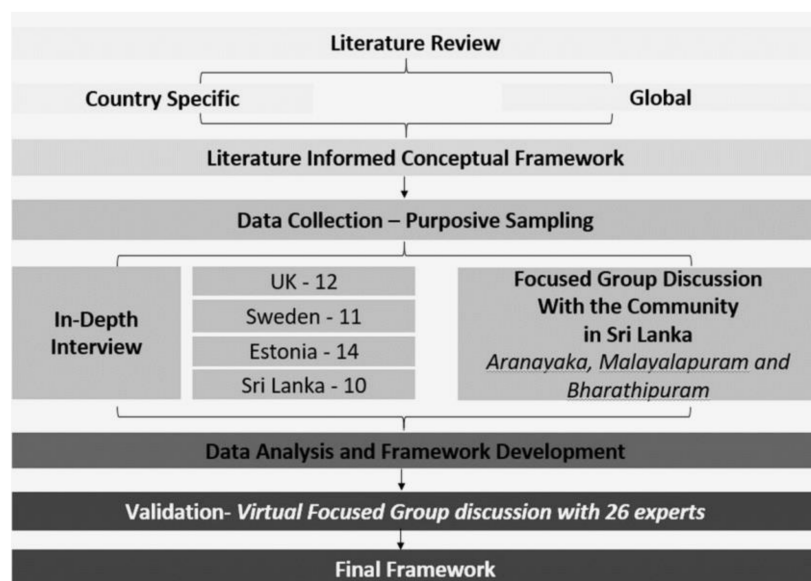
Figure 1. Research process.

3. Results and Discussions

The results of this study show that there are multiple factors affecting the social cohesion between the displaced and host. As evident from the literature (Section 1), social cohesion does not limit to the alleviation of social tension. Social cohesion needs to be carefully crafted and strengthened, examined from different perspectives. Accordingly, we present here eight approaches to enhance social cohesion between the displaced and host.

3.1. Adequate Provision of Basic Services and Facilities without Limiting the Capacity of the Host Communities

It was found that satisfactory provision of basic services and facilities to the displaced without limiting the ability of the host communities is a fundamental requirement in social cohesion in the displacement context. In the context of social cohesion, this requirement works as the bottom layer of Maslow's hierarchy of needs [22], physiological needs. Put simply, there is no rationale for implementing many social integration strategies, not including the provision of basic facilities and services to the displaced, without limiting the capacity of the host communities. The lack of basic goods and services, including food, clothes, transport, safe drinking water, electricity, education, sanitary facilities, housing, and health and emergency services, results in social tension. Furthermore, sharing host communities' basic services and facilities may limit the access to existing services and facilities, causing conflict between displaced and host.

Especially in the developing country context, the receiving community is sometimes even struggling for basic amenities such as housing, food, and clothes before the arrival of displaced people. The situation worsens with the influx of displaced people, resulting in dislike or hate towards the displaced. In this context, adequate basic facilities and services are significantly important prior to other social integration strategies. Comparatively, in the developed country context, essential services and facilities are available. However, in a context where the basic services and facilities are limited, maintaining the social equity in services and facilities provided is the most significant factor affecting social cohesion.

In Sri Lanka, in some of the new resettlement programs, the community is promised basic services and facilities at the initial phase of the program. However, these provisions are often delayed due to funding restrictions. This leaves the displaced with no option but to use the host communities' basic services and facilities, which creates pressure on existing services and facilities. When host communities view this struggle over basic services and facilities as resulting from the arrival of the newcomers, it instigates the negative perception towards the displaced and acts as a threat to the cohesive society. Furthermore, inequality

or fragmented service delivery to the displaced can result in social exclusion and destitution among them. Therefore, providing basic services and facilities at the early phases/first phase of resettlement programs is essential for social cohesion, rather than first constructing the houses and then providing the related facilities. Moreover, project funding needs to be allocated accordingly.

3.2. Adequate Assistance towards the Initiatives to Create Financial Independence for Displaced Communities

Forced displacement due to a disaster or conflict commonly attracts national and international attention with its outbreak. Therefore, as soon as the displacement occurs, national, international, governmental, and non-governmental organisations support immediate recovery with loads of aid given to the displaced.

It was found that in most instances, displaced people become reliant on the aid given. In addition, the financial assistance given to the displaced sometimes can instigate jealousy and misconception of host communities towards the displaced. Moreover, financial independence is most important for the sustainable and long-term recovery of the displaced communities in many ways. Reliant on the aid can be risky since displaced communities struggle with financial difficulties when the initial financial support becomes limited in the intermediate recovery period. Furthermore, limited opportunities for financial independence can exacerbate marginalisation and poverty among the displaced. In countries with fewer welfare facilities, such poverty and marginalisation affect displaced communities struggling to access basic services and facilities in the long run. In the developed country context, less financial independence challenges the quality of living conditions. For instance, it was found that in the U.K., quality housing structures are provided but not furnished or decorated in some cases. When the refugees have financial constraints, these houses are left without furnishing.

Furthermore, frustration and depression due to displacement can worsen due to financial restraints. With these financial frustrations, displaced communities may try to find new ways to make money, sometimes even with illegal methods in a context with less economic opportunities. Due to these reasons, social tension arises when the displaced are not financially independent. Furthermore, it is evident that financial independence brings dignity to individuals, thereby speeding up the mental recovery of the displaced and positively benefiting social cohesion.

Therefore, financial/economic services given to the displaced should enable financial independence in the long run instead of continuing aid in the long term. Furthermore, when promoting and creating these economic opportunities for the displaced, two aspects must be considered. Firstly, these economic opportunities should match the displaced communities' skills and needs. Secondly, these economic opportunities need to mutually benefit both the displaced and the host, which we further explore in the next section.

3.3. Economic Integration between the Displaced and Host Communities

The above factor examines how the absence of financial independence of displaced could act as a threat to social cohesion. Though the absence can be a threat, financial independence cannot create social cohesion unless the economic opportunities that lead to financial independence mutually benefit both the displaced and the host. Moving a step forward, these economic opportunities can be used as an opportunity for social integration between the displaced and the host. For instance, if the host municipalities are planning for construction/development activities and the displaced communities have construction professionals and labourers, these two should be matched and linked, benefiting each other. When creating economic opportunities in resettlement planning, both displaced and host communities' skills and competencies need to be considered and matched. If financial integration is not planned at the initial stage of recovery or resettlement planning, economic competition between the displaced and host can result. If the job opportunities are not matched to the skills and competencies of both the displaced and host, this can create

economic competition for jobs between both communities. This will result the negative perception of the host towards the displaced. In a context where the receiving region or country is specialised in a particular type of agriculture, industry, or service, the displaced communities should be trained for the needs of the economic activity of that specific region or country without creating an economic competition between the displaced and host.

When promoting economic integration between the displaced and the host communities, special attention needs to be given to two groups: women and disabled people. In most cases, it was found that women who look after children cannot gain employment, which is a major barrier for them to attain economic stability. Therefore, firstly, childcare facilities need to be allocated and linked at the local level, and this can even facilitate the integration of displaced children with host children. Apart from that, the women of the displaced communities and the host communities need to be considered when creating economic opportunities. Disabled people are another category requiring special attention when creating economic integration between the displaced and host communities, especially considering those who do not have access to employment due to limited mobility. Likewise, it is important to create the economic solidity of communities with special needs while generating economic integration between the displaced and host. Furthermore, this type of economic integration will bring many social and economic benefits such as an inclusive society, long-term satisfaction of communities, economic growth of the area, perceptions of fairness, and equity, resulting in long-term social cohesion.

3.4. Support Services, Advice, and Orientation Activities Aimed at Local Integration and Assistance

When displaced communities are relocated into a different region or different country, such displaced communities are new to the host's climate, finance management, housing, employment, culture, politics, rights and responsibilities, and accessible support services and facilities. In short, everything is new to them. This is why these displaced communities need orientation on local integration. This is one of the fundamental factors to achieve for a cohesive society in the displacement context. For instance, in the Swedish context, studies confirm that refugees find difficulties bonding with Swedes. They believed that Swedes are comparably introverted and hard to get along with [23] (pp. 27–28). Both municipality and NGO representatives mentioned that the refugees they have been in contact with expressed a desire to connect better with Swedes. Refugees need to meet people born in Sweden and who have lived in Sweden for a longer period to be able to share perspectives and experiences of the new country.

In such a context, refugees need a better understanding of the Swedish society as soon as they arrive, as it may be hard to understand from outside. Displaced communities thus need to be given a chance to understand the life and culture of the receiving country or region. It is essential to mention and explain the cultural differences for both sides. Such understanding and discussions are important to foster a cohesive society. Furthermore, there should be meeting points between the host and displaced. The same representative also pointed to the importance of engaging various groups and involving them in a common cause.

In general, the need for information was stressed as a factor affecting social cohesion. Refugees need support and to be educated in how the system works—this is related to cultural differences on what is acceptable and what is not. More information is needed on the significant differences between, for example, children's health care in Sweden and in the country of origin. Many refugees have not even understood that children must be in school in Sweden. Such basic information is needed (e.g., one cannot call an ambulance just because of a stomach ache). Only four occasions with such details were offered in the municipality in question, which the NGO representative did not perceive as sufficient, especially as the information given is not followed up upon.

As a good practice, it was found that the Estonian Refugee Council provides beneficiaries with assistance and support towards local integration. In the Estonian context,

these support services are principally provided through support officers who help displaced communities to understand and pass through the systems in Estonia and become independent as swiftly as possible. It can be argued that this type of service is possible when the refugee scale is small, as in Estonia. Such provision on a local scale is difficult when there is a large refugee community or when the support services and advice are dispersed within the country. As a counter-argument, the findings suggest that there are services and activities aiming at local integration which are organised by NGOs or community organisations. Local authorities or local governing bodies can work together with these community organisations and NGOs to provide quality and continuous services to create local integration. Alternatively, the displaced communities can be directed to these services and facilities provided by different NGOs and community organisations at the initial settling period, or all the support services could be relocated to one place within the municipality/local authority.

Apart from that, civil society can play a big role in the integration, and the local authorities should not undervalue these initiatives. Furthermore, it is necessary to encourage and support the activities of community groups to involve civil society and social groups to provide support services and activities to create local integration and assistance.

3.5. Easy Access to Quality Language Training Programmes of the Receiving Country or Region

The findings highlight that one of the main factors that directly affects social networking and social interaction under social cohesion is the knowledge of the local language of the receiving country or region. Confirming this, Martzoukou and Burnett [24] recognise that the English language is a "first-layer barrier" to integration in the context of the U.K. Furthermore, in Ager and Strand's conceptual framework defining core domains of integration, language is one of the two facilitators to understand and measure integration and provide a mechanism for testing the efficacy of policy initiatives [25] (pp. 525–545). There is a need for the continued provision of information where possible in languages other than English because most of the asylum seekers and refugees struggle with their communications in English (U.K. context). There is also a need for interpreters for those who cannot read or understand the English language. Support with English as an Official Language (ESOL) training is available for the displaced persons as they arrive in the U.K. to facilitate their communication skills. However, there are concerns about the quality, appropriateness, and limited availability of ESOL provisions.

Referring to the Estonian context, learning the Estonian language is made available to displaced persons. However, the Estonian language learning opportunities and support accessible are complicated and should be improved upon, since they have led to low motivation to learn the Estonian language because it is considered a complex language to learn. Considering the temporary nature of the residence permits granted to refugees, it might affect their preferences to settle in Estonia. Without knowing the Estonian language, employment, education, and social integration opportunities are limited [2,26]. Hence, to gain access to all services, understanding the Estonian language is imperative. The UNHCR [2] also reports a severe shortage of translation services, particularly for less widely spoken languages, leading to the use of online translation services such as Google Translate by service providers and refugees.

Accordingly, easy access to quality language training programs of the receiving country or region was highlighted as the main factor to strengthen the social cohesion between the displaced and host. When providing easy access, it was also found that there is a need to focus on different groups within the displaced communities. For instance, women who are looking after children cannot gain language training or education, which is a major barrier for them for social integration. Furthermore, disabled and aged people find it difficult to travel for language training, which is a basic need of displaced people. In such instances, the allocation of language training centres at the local level with easy accessibility in terms of distance and duration of the training is essential. Apart from that, people in shared housing/accommodation rely on people they are surrounded by and do not

attend such training. Therefore, the language training programmes need to be introduced at the early stage of integration, when the displaced do not depend on their neighbours. Apart from that, local-level language training centres should provide bespoke lessons for those who want to learn the language in the initial period (first two years). They follow up and strengthen the skill with other projects and services. Furthermore, public service interventions should strive to help refugees overcome language barriers in order to aid their integration into their new society.

3.6. Relocation of the Displaced Communities to Suitable and Welcoming Neighbourhoods

When providing housing for displaced communities, refugees and asylum seekers who are capable of finding their own housing select the location either by themselves or through families and friends. In Sweden and the U.K., one of the advantages is that refugees can decide where they are going to live if they can afford a house by themselves. Therefore, the refugees can determine whether they will stay near their relatives and friends, which also provides a sense of pride and dignity. Furthermore, one of the municipality representatives in the Swedish context mentioned that this sense of pride and solidarity is one of the significant factors for social integration and cohesion. Sometimes, due to economic constraints, refugees are forced to select houses with unlawful contracts, houses with multiple occupancies, and houses with poor conditions. Having family or friends close by will always help overcome these types of challenges and therefore, the local integration is safer and sounder [26] (p. 65).

However, for those who cannot find their own housing, governments of the receiving country or region need to find this for the displaced. The selection of suitable relocation areas for displaced communities may depend on factors such as availability of affordable housing, population density, and if they are new homes, land availability. Countries have their own housing challenges, and on top of them, finding houses for the displaced could put more pressure on government strategies. For instance, in the U.K., asylum seekers and refugees who cannot obtain housing by themselves are scattered across the country on a no-choice basis. Their families, friends, and community support networks are not considered, but rather, they are sent anywhere there is available housing. Sometimes, these relocated areas could be rural locations where refugee communities are less established. This negatively affects social cohesion. It is argued further that dispersed displaced communities are housed in impoverished areas with numerous problems and less experience with diverse communities. This may lead to social tension and racism towards the refugees [27] (pp. 1099–1117). Findings confirm that antisocial behaviour cases are more prevalent in some white British communities than in more diverse communities. In some cases, it was revealed that landowners were reluctant to rent their properties to refugees.

On the contrary, it is easier to create social inclusion in areas where the diversity of ethnic groups is developed. Especially in cities, it is much easier to go around and make friends with different ethnic groups, as diversity is more a common feature in some cities. Hence, we can deduce that not all communities are racist or discriminatory. Some are welcoming and help the displaced people integrate and settle.

Accordingly, it was found that relocating displaced communities to suitable and welcoming neighbourhoods that have experienced varied communities, or where refugee/displaced communities are more established, is significant in strengthening social cohesion in the context of displacement.

3.7. Social Cohesion through the Built Environment

It is always challenging to strengthen the social cohesion between host and displaced communities when they come together with different social status, culture, religion, and language backgrounds. Therefore, they need a space to exchange or share their differences. The built environment can facilitate the social integration between the displaced and host communities. For instance, one of the community representatives in Sweden mentioned that some displaced communities roam around and spend more time in town squares as

small groups chatting with each other and their children play around the square. This type of behaviour may sometimes contradict the pattern of social behaviour in the host country, and due to this reason, the women in the host community feel insecure to walk across the square. As the community representative suggested, more open spaces on a neighbourhood scale may be needed for the newly arrived refugees. Sometimes, it is not only open spaces; it can be cafes, child play areas, bars, and salons.

In general, there is also a need for awareness concerning cultural differences. Such understanding and discussions are essential to foster social cohesion, and appropriate meeting points are crucial in this endeavour. The built environment needs to be planned and designed to facilitate more natural meeting points.

The displaced persons also need to know the kind of activities and other environmental resources available in the built environment. There are events organised by the local authorities or charity organisations such as tours to different parts of the country, walks in parks, games, and stage dramas put on by the displaced and the locals, to mention a few. This has attracted some members of the local community who come in as volunteers to assist with these events, giving them opportunities to meet and spend time with other people, thereby enhancing social inclusion and reducing isolation. Accordingly, it can be noted that the built environment can be planned and designed to join people together to participate in activities with more public, cultural, religious places. Bear in mind that built environment interventions for social cohesion can sometimes create conflicts due to the differences in social norms among the host and displaced. Therefore, these built environment interventions need to be carefully revisited or altered according to the differences of social standards of host and displaced.

Apart from the built environment elements such as parks, walkways, and open areas, the neighbourhood and type of housing are also important elements of the built environment. In terms of the neighbourhood, as discussed in Section 3.6, relocating the displaced communities to suitable and welcoming neighbourhoods is a factor affecting social cohesion. However, displaced people who are responsible for finding their own housing often have to move outside of big cities and into smaller towns due to the affordability. In these small towns, diverse community groups or refugee groups are sometimes not developed, which may pose a problem for a displaced person coming from a robust networked society. In such instances, it is necessary to minimise the relocation in deprived areas with social economic problems, as this increases the social tension of both communities. Furthermore, when allocating houses, it is necessary to provide financial assistance to find housing options in locations where community groups are more developed. Furthermore, most people who receive their apartment or other housing are happy, but the risk is that these individuals become isolated with time. These matters need to be considered when allocating housing for displaced communities.

The approach of a community's built environment is designed to affect its residents' physical and mental health and sense of belongingness. Therefore, a built environment has the ability to increase the sense of belonging and attachment to the community of both the host and the displaced. If the resettlement takes place in a diverse community, local characteristics of buildings and neighbourhoods need to represent the identity of a diverse community, not the individual representation. However, some of these design interventions may not be approved through the existing building codes/planning permission of the locality. Therefore, building codes/guidelines need to be revised as per the requirement of the long-term demographic composition changes. Another aspect is that the host communities may dislike the designs that welcome the new community if they disturb the local identity of the host community. Thus, the new design interventions should also preserve the local identity of the host community. Improved local characteristics of buildings and neighbourhoods increase the sense of belonging and attachment to the community of both the displaced and the host.

3.8. Resettlement Plans Addressing the Needs of Both Displaced and Host Communities/Municipalities

Sometimes, the resettlement plans that the national government prepares do not engage the local councils/municipalities or displaced communities and, therefore, do not address the specific needs of local councils/municipalities or the displaced communities. For instance, it was found that the migration agency in Sweden does not engage the host municipality when planning the asylum centres within the locality. Therefore, the service needs of these new arrivals and asylum reception centres would disrupt the local welfare system. Furthermore, if the resettlement plans are communicated to municipalities at the last minute, they do not have the time and resources to prepare. Answering this, by consulting host local council/municipalities when preparing the resettlement plan, the national government can highlight the potentials and constraints at the local level, and they can incorporate the resettlement strategies into their local plans.

In summary, the findings of this study present eight approaches to strengthen the social cohesion between the displaced and host communities, and these eight approaches are summarised in Figure 2.
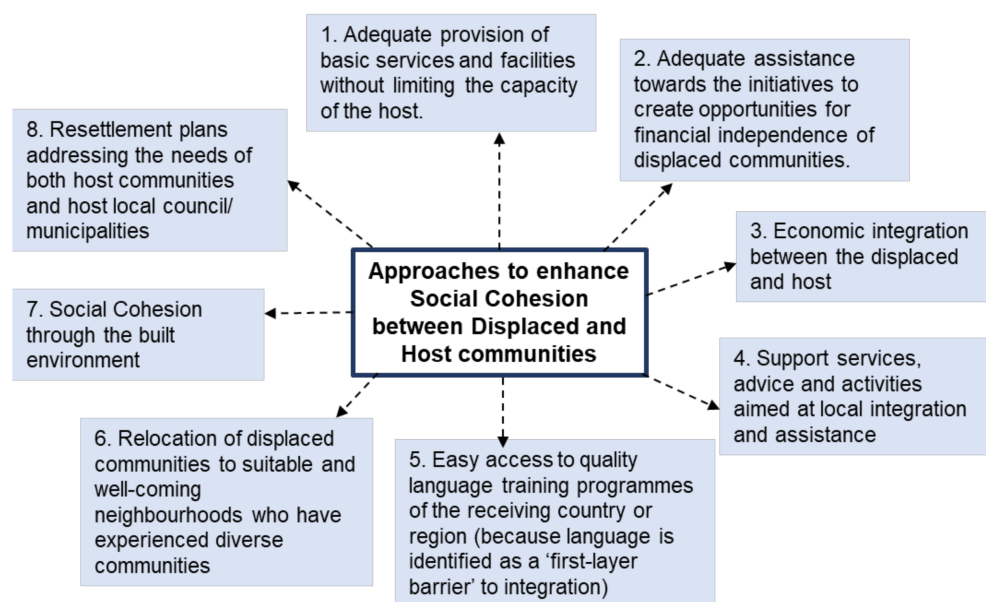

Figure 2. Approaches to enhance social cohesion between displaced and host communities.

4. Conclusions

Displacement takes place around the world on a daily basis as a result of armed conflicts, civil unrest, or manmade or natural hazards. These are circumstances where inhabitants or communities are forced to leave their original residences. The displaced communities have gone through devastating circumstances during which they have lost their original built environments, houses, properties, sources of livelihood, and belongings. Therefore, physical, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental interventions are essential to address these multifaced needs of displaced communities. Once these displaced communities settle within a neighbouring community, the receiving community becomes the host community, and the receiving government or municipality is called the host government/municipality. These host communities and governments also have their own needs, goals, and objectives. If these needs, goals, and objectives cannot be achieved due to the arrival of the displaced communities, this results in social tension, racism, and conflicts, the opposite of social cohesion. Social cohesion is described as the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges, and equal opportunity. However, this is quite challenging in the context of displaced and host communities, mainly due to

the influx of the displaced communities into host communities and potential conflicts and social tensions.

There are multiple methods and approaches to strengthen the social cohesion between displaced and host communities in addressing these challenges. Accordingly, we investigated here multiple methods and approaches to enhance social cohesion following disaster-induced and conflict-induced displacement. The literature review was conducted in the global context as well as country-specific contexts. The data collection was limited to four countries, namely, the U.K., Estonia, Sweden, and Sri Lanka, due to the project funding availability. In future research, the findings can be further explored in different country contexts. Nevertheless, as the research examined the general needs of displaced and host communities and the effect on social cohesion when fulfilling the identified needs, the findings cannot be limited to these four contexts, as they are widely applicable to any context.

The findings of this study suggest eight approaches to strengthen the social cohesion between displaced and host communities. Firstly, adequate provision of basic services and facilities without limiting the capacity of the host communities was identified as the foundational factor that affects social cohesion. In most instances, it was found that displaced people become reliant on aid given. In addition, the financial assistance given to the displaced can sometimes instigate jealousy and misconception among host communities towards the displaced. Moreover, financial independence is most important for the sustainable and long-term recovery of the displaced communities in many ways. Based on this reasoning, the second approach was found as the adequate assistance needed for initiatives to nurture the financial independence of displaced communities. Thirdly, the findings confirmed that promoting economic integration between the displaced and host communities significantly and positively affects social cohesion. Furthermore, it was highlighted that ensuring the economic stability of communities with special needs while creating economic integration between displaced and host communities is important. Furthermore, this will bring many social and economic benefits such as an inclusive society, long-term satisfaction of communities, economic growth of the area with the contributions of displaced people, and perceptions of fairness and equity, resulting in long-term social cohesion.

As for the fourth approach, it was found that it is vital to provide support services, advice, and orientation activities aimed at local integration and assistance. Adding to this, it was highlighted that the support of host communities' civil societies and community groups should be directed towards these activities and services aimed at local integration. The fifth factor contributing to social cohesion is the easy access to quality language training programs of the receiving country or region. This factor was especially emphasised because not knowing the language of the receiving/host country was identified as the first barrier to social integration. As the sixth approach, it was found that relocating the displaced communities to suitable and welcoming neighbourhoods that have experienced diverse communities or refugee/displaced community groups is significant in strengthening social cohesion in the context of displacement. The seventh factor is using the built environment to promote social cohesion. The way a community's built environment is designed influences its residents' physical and mental health. This can be executed in multiple ways either by creating the built environment to join residents together in activities or by increasing the sense of belongingness and attachment to the community of both the host and the displaced through improvements to the built environment. The eighth approach to improve social cohesion is that resettlement plans should consider the needs of both displaced and host communities/municipalities. The results of this research confirm that these eight approaches significantly strengthen the social cohesion between displaced and host communities.

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