Meeting the crisis: what is the potential of small-scale agriculture in supporting self-reliance in refugee camps?

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The camp and the potential for agricultural development

Part of a wider debate about ethics and praxis of long term local reception of refugees:

- Ethical: push for autonomy and self reliance
- Praxis: humanitarian bargain and burden sharing: the camp as driver for development

Uganda as exemplary case: the settlement model
The odd ball out: Uganda

- **Nakivale**
- 1958: camp as rural settlement
- Access to plots of land 50mx50m. But can also be smaller. + in-kind food assistance
- Growing maize, beans, sorghum, vegetables, fruits
- Self reliance strategy but still reliance on food aid without opportunity for graduation.
- Land degradation: 100-120 kg maize four years ago, now reduced 10 kg / year (refugees have been using same plot for 10 years

Concerns:

- Different social groups benefit: i.e.: Congolese cultivate, Somali’s don’t.
- Not enough land after new influx
- Subsistence agriculture is limited for high income pathway (as compared to other forms of income generations.
- Food aid supplements remain necessary
Low space or no space gardens

Agriculture as aim: hobby, solution, supplement?

- i.e.: https://lemontreetrust.org/
Jerash camp, Jordan

Rooftop gardens
Green houses

Ifo camp, Dadaab, Kenya

Multi-story gardens
Dagahaley camp, Dadaab, Kenya

Greening and fruit trees

Dadaab, Kenya

Beautification, ‘healing gardens’
Kakuma camp, Kenya

Agricultural plots

Beldangi camp, Nepal

Kitchen gardens
Za’atari camp, Jordan

Many anecdotal perspectives but what does that mean?

Camps as technology of control:

- Freedom of movement
- Employment
- Autonomy
- Settlement, i.e. permanent structures, relation to soil.
Humanitarian urbanism

- Emergence of alternative socio-spatial arrangements with distinctive lifestyles, architecture, praxis and regulation
- Rather than temporary, increasingly permanent, chronic or recurring
- From humanitarian management to hybrid governance
- Experiments with regional embedding

From mitigating (negative) effects, now increasingly presented as opportunity, emancipatory potential, etc

- Meeting a “Development Gap” (Vemeru et. al. 2016).
- And as part of a “humanitarian bargain” (Newhouse 2015).

Alternative approaches embracing the urban-like capacities and images of camps, and opportunities that emerge

- New actors (private / local / municipal / refugees)
- New policies (hybrid settlements / economic opportunities / self-reliance)
- New aims (regional solutions in ‘haven countries’ / long term development)

New dynamic after 2015 ‘Migration Crisis’?
- Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)
- Rural Development and Protection Plan (RDPP)
Hybrid settlements

Kalobeyei example of a hybrid settlement.

- Services for refugees and local community
- Differentiation / recognition of camp economy (i.e.: Cash)
- Long term planning for durable infrastructure
- Obtaining self-reliance through agriculture

Horn of Africa
- RDPP – ‘innovation’

Urban management and development

Zaatari example of urban management approaches

- Corporate involvement
- Opportunities and scenarios for local dev.
- The camp as a driver for development
- Greening the environment (environmental and social aims)
- Special economic zones and commercial agriculture in Mafraq
- I.e. Greenfield cities
However

- Thus, can agriculture develop as a means to support self-reliance?
- For agriculture and horticulture in camps to have economic value additional investment is necessary: more than seeds, tools, training for kitchen gardening. But rather:
- In remote and marginal regions: market opportunities, water, regulation, training and materials (Land rights? Conflict?)
- Are these possible within and beyond the confines of the camp?
- Part of a larger political (and moral) debate on how camps develop as either autonomous settlements or as sites of containment and abandonment.

But also, a humanitarian border

The humanitarian border as a “space of governance where human life is regulated in the name of preserving biological life and alleviating suffering” (Williams, 2015: 13).

Humanitarianism as strategy of governmentality in addition to, and merging with, other strategies such as militarization, securitization, surveillance, etc...

Shift in thinking about the roles, effects, and duration of humanitarian aid.

Building better camps, alternative borders, or maintaining post-humanitarian enclaves?

Or indeed a new sort of indefinite settlement on its own terms?
Agenda

- Humanitarian governance and environmental care

Thank you for your attention

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