

IFHP Ones

IFHP Housing Refugees Report 2
Considerations from Lab 1, 19 – 20 October 2015



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“Shelter is a basic human right and necessity. The conditions in which people live determine to a great extent their health, well-being and ability to engage in gainful occupation, pursue self-improvement through education and recreation and in consequence attain a decent standard of living.”

(ECRE European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) Position Paper on Integration of Refugees in the Europe, Appendix 2 – Housing)



Foreword

This is the IFHP Housing Refugee Report 2, based on activities initiated by IFHP Council members in Europe in 2015. The housing of refugees is one of the most urgent issues facing Europe as increasing flows of people from the Middle East, North and Central African conflict areas arrive at the European Union's (EU) borders. Accommodating such flows of people in both temporary and permanent housing is a major challenge in the EU. With many countries under pressure to provide social and affordable housing for their own populations and varying national measures and perspectives on how to provide adequate housing for refugees, the European response is to date somewhat fragmented.

Our aim is to identify challenges and solutions for the permanent and adequate housing of refugees in the EU. As an international professional community within housing and planning we believe that unbiased and politically detached perspectives are needed to render recommendations that better match the realities of the current situation.

We have developed this programme of activities with short deadlines. In September 2015 we have produced a status report which indicates how policies and procedures in 10 European nations are designed and function and we have conducted our first LAB in Deventer 19-20 October 2015 which resulted in a series of considerations to be taken when working with housing refugees. This report brings the learnings from the LAB 1 to you.

Following the LAB 1 IFHP presented our work and intention at the ISOCARP 51st congress inviting more professionals to join our action-oriented programme. We also shook hands with ISOCARP leadership on working together on this urgent matter, as we also did with the leadership of European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU) during their biannual conference in Dublin, October 2015.

Thanks to Huibert Haccou from The Netherlands, who as IFHP Council member is deeply engaged in making this happen.

Thanks to the European IFHP Council members and IFHP Community who with short deadlines respond, contribute and engage.

The conversation amongst housing and planning professionals on Housing Refugees has begun. We will keep it going. But we depend on you and on each other. The matter is urgent and complex and we believe that we need to work together as joint forces, helping improve housing conditions for all.



Anette Galskjøt, IFHP CEO

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The IFHP Housing Refugee Programme

Step 1 Housing Refugee Policy Status Report

Through the engagement of the IFHP's Community this 'Status Report' collates relevant housing policy information from EU member states, giving a situational overview, key housing policy and practice knowledge and best case examples.

IFHP Housing Refugees Report 1 available at: <http://www.ifhp.org/housing-refugees-report>

Step 2 Housing Refugee Lab 1, Deventer October 2015

Based on knowledge gathered by Report 1 experts and professional develops housing policy considerations to improve the provision of adequate, permanent housing for refugees. Local, regional and European level policy will be considered.

Step 3 ISOCARP 51st Congress Rotterdam October 2015

Considerations regarding housing refugees, policy & practice is presented and discussed.

Step 4 IFHP Summit, Berlin November 2015

Learnings and considerations from the IFHP Housing Refugee Programme is presented to the IFHP members for discussion and further debate, - in conjunction with the Summit's programme looking into the housing refugee situation in Berlin.

In **2016** IFHP intends to fundraise for continued activities on refugee/migrants, housing and integration. Anyhow, IFHP will keep the conversation going by continuing the focus on the learnings and considerations from the Housing Refugee Programme in 2015. We intend to establish a working group of professionals who will share and learn and develop. In writing, we are establishing an editorial committee which will ensure and facilitate an online conversation on the housing refugee challenges.

Report 1

Report 2

IFHP Housing Refugee Lab 1

The first lab was conducted on the 19-20 October 2015 at the Living Green Center in Deventer, Netherlands. The two day event was moderated by IFHP Council member Huibert Haccou, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Saxion University and acting consultant for strategic public policy making and process management of spatial planning and the environment. With 10 international participants from Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, UK and Portugal the lab departed from the IFHP Housing Refugee Questionnaires and Report 1, available at <http://www.ifhp.org/news/ifhp-housing-refugee-programme>

Participants	
Kria Djyoadhiningrat	studioROSA, Netherlands
Vivian Kreft	BBU - Association of Housing Companies in Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany
Hugo Priemus	OTB Institute Delft, Netherlands
Annesophie Hansen	BL – Danish Social Housing Sector, Denmark
Gina Netto	Heriot Watt University Edinburgh, UK
Thomas Knorr-Siedow	Urban Plus Berlin, Germany
Olov Schultz	Boverket – Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, Sweden
Vera Kreuwels	CRS – Catholic Relief Services. Netherlands
Anna Horolets (via skype)	University of Gdansk, Poland
Sue Lukes (via skype)	Migration Work, UK
Huibert Haccou	Saxion University of Applied Sciences Netherlands
Andreia Fidalgo	International Federation of Housing and Planning, Denmark
Christina Krog	International Federation of Housing and Planning, Denmark
Christopher Reeves	Danish Architecture Centre, Denmark

Keynote & Presentation Summary

Following a presentation by **Andreia Fidalgo** of the IFHP on the global refugee situation and summary of the IFHP Housing Refugees Report 1, the LAB kicked off with keynote presentations representing speaker's countries housing situations.

Dr Sue Lukes presenting via skype, began with the UK's dependence on the private rental sector to deal with the extra housing demand caused by refugees. **Housing and integration** practices were described as disjointed but essential to ensure that housing succeeds as a tool to integrate and enable refugees to become valuable members of society. Additionally, partnerships between housing and education service providers were noted as crucial as much of the integration processes in society are conducted in and around schools, highlighting the need for a unified housing and education strategy. Sue emphasized the need to learn from previous influxes of refugees quoting,

"... people integrate well if they are received well and you avoid bottlenecks into permanent housing. Once there is a delay as was seen with the Vietnamese influx in the 1960's then a 2 year backlog goes a long way to create a negative situation."

Anna Horolets also presenting via skype, showcased the importance of **leisure considerations in planning of adequate housing of refugees**. It was noted that as refugees spend an increased amount of time within their dwellings, especially in the immediate stages of moving to a new location, housing as a space must allow for sufficient recreation. This is important not only to allow refugees to retain and express their cultural identities but also to allow for groups to gather, form relationships and take ownership of common meeting spaces. It was suggested that when planning housing for refugee tenancy, factors such as sound, air circulation and privacy should be considered. Anna pointed to the term embeddedness to summarise the role of recreation in housing, stating that housing must be integrated and connected thereby avoiding isolation and reinforcing the home as a 'safe haven'.

The study of **extreme housing exclusion** in the EU was then presented by **Gina Netto**. The refugee challenge often comes down to concentration or diffusion. In many European countries the dispersal of refugees is at the core of the general approach on how to deal with the migrant arrivals, and this takes place at a number of different levels, from national to local. A fundamental reason for why refugees are 'dispersed' is that they are seen as burdens to society rather than opportunities. The result is that refugees are left vulnerable to segregation and racial discrimination, reinforcing negative perceptions of refugees that is used as reasoning to support further dispersal policies.

Gina pointed to the misconceived perception that concentrated refugees form ghettos. Concentrating refugees should instead be thought of as clustering, an opportunity where services can be tailor made to fit the needs of various societal groups in a more efficient manner. Gina then introduced the need to broaden housing suppliers, with medium and smaller sized housing developers creating alternative models of development. One example, the [Grow Home Concept](#) from Canada represents the advantages of incremental house building and its appropriation for low income tenants (of which many refugees are).

Finally Gina highlighted the need to recognize community self-built housing as an important tool to provide affordable housing for diverse societal groups, including refugees. Although by number such forms of housing are not significant, their symbolism within refugee and native community groups goes a long way to enable integration and social cohesion, two key elements in successful housing provision.

Annesophie Hansen followed presenting the case of **integrated cooperation in Denmark**. Denmark works under a system of dispersal, whereby refugees are allocated housing based on the available services of an individual municipality. This ensures that housing is only given when strictly available. This is however conducted on an individual basis with no holistic plan at national level supporting municipalities in providing adequate social housing for refugees. New ideas being explored in Denmark include the use of shared apartments, integrating housing in industrial areas and novel low cost methods of construction.

Vivian Kreft then moved to inform participants on the **housing situation in Berlin**. Berlin is a city that is facing huge numbers of incoming migrants. At the time of writing the city is expected to integrate 50,000 refugees in 2015. Obstacles in Berlin for the construction of new housing stock include strict planning regulations and high building standards. As a result the city is building and will build both modular apartment structures and

regular apartment units to cater for the high demand of affordable living space by both refugees and the native population. Vivian noted that although this is acceptable for now, supporting infrastructure such as transport services must follow housing growth in order to ensure that tenants are adequately connected to services and places of employment, amongst other things.

Thomas Knorr-Siedow continued presenting the **housing situation in wider Germany**. Taking point of departure from the stark statistics of incoming refugees and the opportunity and value that they bring, Thomas noted that 70% of refugees are young men and 20-25% unaccompanied children, a demographic that should always be remembered when assessing housing needs and the methods and processes of integration. Ultimately, Thomas noted, the refugee questions falls into the discussion of how to build a resilient society. Refugees, that will continue to arrive regardless of repressive measures of many peripheral European countries, can be used as an opportunity to build closer communities of resiliency and togetherness. To achieve this however, there must be support from both state and civil led initiatives.

The next presentation by **Hugo Priemus** focused on the **Dutch perspective of housing refugees**. Opening remarks included the fact that many European countries face the same challenges as the Netherlands in preventing the 'bottleneck' of refugees accessing permanent forms of housing. Such is it that currently 14,000 refugees are accommodated in temporary housing whilst awaiting the opportunity to move into permanent housing across the Netherlands. With the social renting market declining, stagnated social housing development and increasing foreign speculation and investment in social housing, rents have increased significantly across the Netherlands. Such increases have put social housing out of reach of many low income groups of society including refugees. Hugo suggests that to counter this there is a need for EU and national policies to facilitate the local scale intervention of civil society to help provide housing according to local needs and available resources. Looking at cases of student housing in cities across Europe gives many examples where housing can be adapted to the current situation, providing secure and safe housing to refugees as well as the native population.

The final presentation was given by **Olov Schultz**, demonstrating **Sweden's social housing system**. Olov highlighted that the refugee housing challenge is not necessarily to do with refugees but all groups of society whom require social and affordable housing. Many obstacles exist in current Swedish policy and regulation that act to limit the effective response to house low income groups of society (including refugees). Examples given are the strict building regulations and high environmental building standards that restrict low cost housing construction.

IFHP Considerations

Based on knowledge gathered by the IFHP Housing Refugees Report 1, experts and professionals developed considerations to improve the provision of permanent housing for refugees.

The considerations were formulated under three themes:

- **Housing & Integration**
- **Housing Policy & Affordable Housing Allocation**
- **Zoning & Planning Regulation**

Housing and Integration

Up to the 1970s, “assimilation” was the term used to denote the absorption of immigrants into host communities. Since the mid-1970s, immigrants have stopped being regarded as “temporary” residents and therefore, “integration” has been the adopted term. One of the reasons for the change is the culturally pejorative connotations of the word assimilation, since the word suggests that, to become full members of the host community, immigrants and their descendants must adopt its cultural standards. However, integration, unlike assimilation, emphasizes respect for difference. It suggests a process of adjusting and joining, the host community without losing one’s own culture or identity (*Council of Europe, 2002. The Changing Face of Europe – Population Flows in the 20th Century*).

Over previous decades, European cities and neighbourhoods have expanded successfully to accommodate the growing diversity of society. Housing refugees is a challenge for the general housing markets of the European countries and it has been strongly related with matters of integration in the hosting societies, meaning that, the place where housing for refugees exists will affect the success or fail in refugees’ integration. However, housing and integration are often conceived under separate authorities. Housing as infrastructure is just one part of the equation. Social considerations such as proximity to family, employment opportunities, schooling and community interaction are integral for permanent refugee housing to become not just a place to live but a home. This is aimed at the creation of more effective and integrative housing provision.

As a result of the discussion carried out during the LAB 1 in Deventer (19-20, October, 2015) **the following considerations on housing and integration** were formulated.

1. Housing Pathways

It should be considered that housing and integration services are combined in a ‘pathway’ approach

Why? To both the refugees and the society in which they will integrate, a mutually shared perspective of development is crucial. For each refugee an illustrated pathway of access and integration into society, built upon an individual’s dialogue and assessment with refugee reception and housing services could be created. By creating a combined housing & integration model – a pathway model – each person, may climb a ladder of development whereby both housing conditions and integration standards improve step by step. The pathway model describes expectations, rights, and obligations to the local community, society and the individual.

2. Matchmaking

It should be considered that matchmaking solutions could better respond to both refugees and municipalities' needs

Why? It can be recognised that refugees housing requirements put extra pressure on the limited available housing stock in many European countries. To improve this situation matchmaking solutions could be found whereby hosting countries/municipalities can state their available housing stock as well as societal development needs. At the same time, refugees can state their housing requirements (single bedroom unit, family house etc) and social needs (access to kindergarden, schools, agricultural employment opportunities etc). With such information an assessment of the potential overlap and mutual benefits can take place between the hosting countries/municipalities and the individual refugee. Such a process can therefore be used to match suitable housing solutions and integration factors such as education, language, culture, job opportunities etc.

It is envisaged that such a consideration would facilitate and optimize the chance of positive integration of refugees in hosting communities, whilst simultaneously resolving societal issues that the host community may be facing.

Housing Policy & Affordable Housing Allocation

Migration flows, the ongoing financial crisis, stagnant private development investment and weakening social housing budgets are all contributing an increasing demand for, and decreasing supply of affordable and social housing in Europe. In response, it is important to adapt and develop housing policy and affordable housing allocation, not only to relieve market pressures, but to provide adequate housing solutions and opportunities for both the existing population and newcomers. The aim is to create faster, more diverse and thereby establish a more effective housing provision. The ability to be agile and adjust is required as the situation and the challenges change and need to be continuously reviewed.

As a result of the discussion carried out during the LAB 1 in Deventer (19-20, October, 2015) **the following considerations on housing policy and affordable housing allocation** were formulated.

3. Housing Policy

It should be considered that a multi-agent approach is adopted to honour diversity in policy-making

Why? Today a city's needs and challenges change in unpredictable and fast ways. It is required that housing is built at a faster pace to match demands. It should be considered to both explore new and revisit past options for accommodating people. Cities should to a greater extent apply a diverse approach working on several *parallel* strategies e.g.

- the availability of existing stock AND building new stock
- explore options for increasing housing supply, which may include the conversion of empty properties such as office buildings, churches, schools etc.

- explore the possibilities of encouraging self-built housing by making land available and through supporting community involvement including refugees
- consider developing more flexible accommodation options to match the needs now and in the near future. For example the majority of refugees arriving currently are single male, who within some certainty will be granted family reunification within the nearby future.
- Experiment with responsible relaxation of regulations without compromising on decency in accommodation or environmental aims to match the current acute needs.

Cities should also include the capacity of services such as education, employability, health services etc.

All in all: This requires a multi-agent approach which involves important and relevant stakeholders in the community AND the community itself, including the local population and the refugees.

4. Affordable Housing

When providing permanent accommodation the demographic of the existing population should be taken into account

Why? The affordable (social and private) housing sector accommodates many refugees. At the same time the affordable housing sector is increasingly in demand amongst existing population. Such may lead to tensions as the existing population both in the areas and on the waiting list feels overlooked and overtaken. Screening processes and mapping of available housing stock are some of the available tools to apply. They will allow local authorities and actors to better understand and best allocate housing in accordance with the recognized demographics of refugee population and that of the existing population.

This consideration would improve significantly when applying a multi-agency collaboration within the housing industry, refugee integration services and community stakeholders.

Planning & Associated Regulation

Space can be found within regulation to find dignified standards, allowing flexibility and common sense solutions to help build adequate housing within a tight timeframe, but that also allows for long term and safe infrastructure. However, in many European countries rigid regulations can significantly limit the use, reuse or adaptation of existing spaces for housing. The limitation to the conversion of vacant buildings to support temporary housing, (e.g. office space, schools and industrial facilities), or the attribution of different uses from former defined planning zones, are examples of such regulation limitations.

When discussing the capacity of European cities to absorb increasingly high numbers of refugees, (and migrants in general) and to provide them with housing solutions (either for temporary or permanent use), alterations to the planning and associated regulations should be addressed. This is aimed at the creation of faster and more effective housing provision.

As a result of the discussion carried out during the LAB in Deventer (19-20, October, 2015) **the following considerations on planning and associated regulations** were formulated.

5. Planning regulation

It should be considered that planning regulations allow for a certain degree of plasticity and flexibility within both spatial planning and housing regulation.

Why? The broad characteristics and diverse backgrounds of refugee groups can be better considered and met, through a tailor made approach integrated into the planning process and practices. It is proposed that there should be room for manoeuvring within planning regulation to respond to the different needs of refugee groups at the various stages of affordable housing provision. Such flexibility could include the adaptation and/or the temporal wavering of regulations, helping to provide tailor made approaches and affordable housing solutions.

It is envisioned that such flexibility will allow for faster and more adaptive housing solutions to be implemented within the permit of current planning regulation.

6. Reallocation of zoning

It should be considered that planning zones are reallocated to enable the increased provision of affordable housing.

Why? Traditionally some European cities have developed upon a framework of planning zones that bound their use. Although today such zones are widely alleviated their influence and 'lock in' of function remains, acting to limit mixed land uses. Through the reallocation of planning zones such as commercial, industrial, recreational, business, etc., more opportunities to develop housing can be explored and realised. In addition the reallocation of zoning can create the conditions and opportunities for experimental land use. Such can include experimental/free planning zones (examples exist in Deventer: The Harbour area), that allow for the innovation in new forms and planning of housing.

This measure is aimed at enabling innovation in both land use and building design to better respond to the specific housing needs of municipalities and cities, and differential groups of society, of which refugees are one. This is viewed as a tool, that helps provide mutual benefits for municipalities and cities in addressing their housing challenges whilst leveraging socioeconomic opportunities.

7. Associated building regulations

It should be considered that associated building regulations can be met under a phased programme.

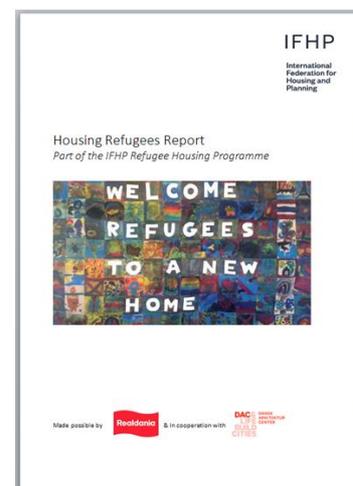
Why? Building regulations are the legislative frameworks for the construction, renovation and change-of-use of a building, establishing detailed technical and administrative requirements as well as minimum standards for building construction. These standards primary purpose is to promote public health and safety, fire protection, resource conservation, environmental integrity, and accessibility, i.e., the promotion of public safety through the application of uniform building standards. It is not disputed that such regulations are integral to sustain good building and societal standards, yet it is proposed that the attainment of such standards could be realised in phased steps. Such a program could allow for the incremental development of housing solutions according to the available resources of a local area or specific tenant group.

This consideration could help promote 'do it yourself' forms of housing provision, where actors could work to develop housing according to the required regulations over a longer period of time. Such would allow for more flexible housing solutions and for housing to be lived in whilst phased construction or renovation is taking place.

IFHP Housing Refugees Report 1 - Summary

The IFHP Housing Refugees Report 1 assessed the status quo of housing refugee policy and provision across various EU member states. The findings were collated through a literature review and data collection process conducted by the IFHP. Data was gathered through a questionnaire sent to housing experts and IFHP correspondents across various EU countries. 10 member states responded with information of how their countries process and house refugees. Participating countries were Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

Here follows a brief summary of the main findings from the IFHP Housing Refugees Report 1.



Migrants and Refugees

According to the UNHCR official figures in 2014 there were a total of 19.5 million refugees globally, from which 51% of global refugees are aged under 18 years old and primarily originate from Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia. Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon host the most refugees of all countries, with Lebanon hosting 232 refugees per 1000 population (in comparison Sweden hosts 15 per 1000 population). 86% of the world's refugees remain in their local regions, residing in neighbouring countries from where they have fled.

The EU is understandably an attractive prospect for people seeking asylum from conflict in Africa and the Middle East and although their travels to reach Europe are extremely dangerous the flow of migrants has increased month by month throughout 2015. By June 2015 and according to The European Commission, 213,200 asylum applications were submitted within the EU. This is an 85% increase compared to the same point in 2014, a record year in its own right.

Housing Refugee Literature Review & IFHP Questionnaire Findings

Utilising existing literature and available data on refugee housing across Europe, gathered with responses from the IFHP Housing Refugees questionnaire, prominent issues and considerations were collated.

It was found that:

- The EU member states are largely divided by the absence of a holistic European housing policy and differing national and regional policy and resources.
- Many EU member states face a housing shortage, particularly within the social and affordable housing sectors.
- Refugees face multiple obstacles in gaining access to adequate housing across the EU. Reasons for this include lower housing and social support subsidies as well as complex and differential housing allocation processes.

- Many EU member states experience a lack of social considerations when approaching the housing of refugees. This includes the poor coordination of housing and integration factors such as employment, education and training, health and social services.

This report is a wrap up from the IFHP Housing Refugee Lab 1, and is edited by the Huibert Haccou professor at Saxion University, Christopher Reeves, DAC and the IFHP Team.

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Keep updated and check online: <http://www.ifhp.org/news/ifhp-housing-refugee-programme>