

A city-specific focus on local and international collaboration

Tacloban, Ormoc and Palo, in the
Philippines; Medellín, Colombia;
and Juba, South Sudan

Tilly Alcayna and Furat Al-Murani

Working Paper

November 2016

Urban; Policy and planning

Keywords:

Urban crises, humanitarian response,
local actors, participation

About the authors

Tilly Alcayna is director and co-founder of Futureproof-Ideas (www.futureproof-ideas.org), and a research consultant focusing on disaster risk reduction and humanitarian assistance. She has consulted for the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, and previously worked for the British Red Cross, the European Commission, and the Royal Geographical Society.

Furat Al-Murani is director and co-founder of Futureproof-Ideas (www.futureproof-ideas.org). He trained as a medical doctor before completing a masters in Global Health at Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm. His work focuses on community-based initiatives to help mobilise vulnerable populations into the health system, and strengthening partnerships between local organisations, municipal authorities, academia, and the private sector.

E-mail: Tilly Alcayna t.alcayna@gmail.com

E-mail: Furat Al-Murani furatalmurani@gmail.com

Produced by IIED's Human Settlements Group

The Human Settlements Group works to reduce poverty and improve health and housing conditions in the urban centres of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It seeks to combine this with promoting good governance and more ecologically sustainable patterns of urban development and rural-urban linkages

Partner organisation

Futureproof-Ideas is an international research consultancy that brings together expertise from different disciplines to generate sustainable solutions to cross-cutting problems related to health, the environment, and society.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Luke Ker, Sian Parry, Farzana Ahmed, and Ruben Dario Gomez for their contributions, Ana Corena, Philip Dy, and Victoria Parr who helped initiate contacts, and Marcela Herrera for her wonderful help with organising interviews. Most importantly, we would like to thank those we interviewed in Tacloban, Ormoc, Palo, Medellín, and Juba who generously welcomed us, kindly gave up their time to meet with us, and spoke so candidly about this important issue.

Purpose

This paper is part of a series of research pieces produced under the 'Urban Crises Learning Fund' managed by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), the Urban Crises Learning Fund aims to build an in-depth understanding of how the humanitarian sector can most effectively operate in urban contexts.

Published by IIED, November 2016

Alcayna, T. and Al-Murani, F. (2016) A city-specific focus on local and international collaboration: Tacloban, Ormoc and Palo, in the Philippines; Medellín, Colombia; and Juba, South Sudan. IIED Working Paper. IIED, London.

<http://pubs.iied.org/10803IIED>

ISBN 978-1-78431-407-1

Printed on recycled paper with vegetable-based inks.

International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055
email: info@iied.org
www.iied.org

 [@iied](https://twitter.com/iied)

 www.facebook.com/theIIED

Download more publications at www.iied.org/pubs

As urban disasters increase in frequency, collaboration with local partners who understand the context is becoming an essential part of the response. However, the ways to initiate programmes and build partnerships in this complex environment remain unclear. This qualitative study interviewed 44 actors working on urban disaster in three settings; post-Typhoon Haiyan, in Tacloban City, Ormoc City, and Palo municipality in the Philippines, displacement in Medellin, Colombia, and conflict in Juba, South Sudan. The aim was to explore what is understood by a local actor, and seek urban-specific challenges to response in the current collaboration landscape. This companion piece to the working paper ‘Local and international collaboration in urban humanitarian responses: Perspectives from the Philippines, Colombia and South Sudan’ provides international actors with site-specific, actionable recommendations for improving collaboration in each setting.

Contents

Executive summary	4	2.6 Good practice	15
1 The Philippines: Tacloban City, Ormoc City, Palo municipality	5	2.7 Summary	16
1.1 Context of the Philippines	5	2.8 Recommendations	16
1.2 Background on Tacloban, Ormoc and Palo	5	3 South Sudan: Juba	17
1.3 Information on Typhoon Haiyan	6	3.1 Context of South Sudan	17
1.4 Key findings	7	3.2 Background on Juba	17
1.5 Good practice: flexible programming	9	3.3 Focus on the conflict in Juba and the resulting ‘protection of civilian’ sites	18
1.6 Summary	9	3.4 Key findings	19
1.7 Recommendations	10	3.5 Good practice: the South Sudan NGO Forum	22
2 Colombia: Medellin	11	3.6 Summary	23
2.1 Context of Colombia	11	3.7 Recommendations	23
2.2 Background on Medellin	11	Acronyms	24
2.3 Focus on the military groups and violent conflict	12	References	25
2.4 Peace process	13		
2.5 Key findings	13		

Executive summary

This companion piece complements the working paper *Local and international collaboration in urban humanitarian responses: perspectives from the Philippines, Colombia and South Sudan*. It is designed to be read primarily by international practitioners unfamiliar with the setting and context of any or all of the three countries, and who are likely to carry out work there, in particular those heading to the urban areas profiled in this study. It is also hoped to be of use to those already working in the context, to act as a springboard for further discussion into how collaboration could be improved between local and international actors.

The objectives of the full Working Paper *Local and international collaboration in urban humanitarian response, perspectives from the Philippines, Colombia and South Sudan* were fourfold:

- To explore the concept of 'local actors' to work towards a definition
- To identify urban-specific challenges to humanitarian work
- To identify challenges to local and international collaboration
- To provide recommendations to improve urban-specific local and international collaborations.

The methodology used in the study was semi-structured qualitative interviews with 44 participants from a range of backgrounds, including professionals from local and international organisations, community leaders, local government leaders, and academic and research institutions. These took place across three distinct contexts: Natural disasters in Tacloban City, Ormoc City and Palo Municipality, the Philippines (specifically Typhoon Haiyan which hit in 2013), protracted displacement in Medellín, Colombia, and conflict in Juba, South Sudan. Data collection took place between March and June 2016.

This companion piece is written with the aim of being a brief yet focused introduction to the crises faced in the country and the city under investigation, and the challenges commonly encountered when local and international actors attempt to collaborate. Each section ends with a brief overview of good practice and recommendations for improvement, based on findings from the interviews.

1

The Philippines: Tacloban City, Ormoc City, Palo municipality

1.1 Context of the Philippines

The Philippines, an archipelago of over 7,100 islands, is ranked as the fourth most natural disaster-prone country in the world (EMDAT, 2016). Annually, the country experiences between 15-25 typhoons, up to 900 earthquakes, and numerous floods, causing USD7,893 million amount of loss (GAR, 2015). Its inherently high disaster risk is due to its geographic location in the Pacific Ring of Fire and tropical typhoon belt, which is being exacerbated by climate change, environmental degradation, and unplanned urbanisation. The likelihood of extreme weather events, such as that of Super Typhoon Haiyan which hit in 2013, killing thousands and disrupting the lives of millions, is predicted to become the 'new norm'. Despite relatively good health and education indicators for a lower middle income country, over a quarter of the population lives in poverty and thus has limited coping capacity. An estimated 74 per cent of the population is vulnerable to natural hazards, and there is ongoing conflict in the southern islands of Mindanao, causing significant displacement. A long history of dealing with natural disasters has established a strong disaster management focus by government, civil society, and international actors.

Many of the cities and urban areas are located along the coasts of the islands, with 44 per cent of the 100 million Filipinos living as urban residents (World Bank, 2016). Administratively, the Philippines is divided into regions, provinces, municipalities, and *barangays*. Cities, depending on their classification, may have their own government and by-pass the regional and provincial governments to interact directly with the national government structures. The National Disaster Risk Management Council (NDRMC) should legally have corresponding offices at all administrative levels, including cities.

1.2 Background on Tacloban, Ormoc and Palo

The three settings were chosen to understand how different urban areas, across a relatively small geographical space, dealt with such a powerful typhoon and to compare collaboration initiatives. These centres are located in the province of Leyte, in the Eastern Visayas. Tacloban and Ormoc are highly urbanised cities with over 200,000 permanent inhabitants each, and daytime populations approaching a million (IMPACT, 2016). Administratively Provinces, Cities and Municipalities are classified according

to average annual income, from Class 1 (above 400 million pesos) to Class 6 (below 80 million pesos). This classification affects the way in which the cities interact with the regional and national governance structures. Being Class 1 urban areas, Tacloban and Ormoc are independent cities and coordinate directly with the national structures (rather than through the provincial government) and have their own city governments run by the elected mayor. They act as cultural and economic hubs to the province of Leyte, with the university and majority of jobs concentrated in these cities. Tacloban, in the east, is the provincial capital of Leyte. Ormoc City, in the west, has a major port into the Central Visayas region connecting with other major cities, such as Cebu. Palo, located only eight miles from Tacloban City, is a highly urbanised coastal municipality, with over 70,000 inhabitants. As a municipality, it coordinates with the provincial and regional government structures, unlike Tacloban and Ormoc City.

All three urban areas experienced significant widespread damage during Typhoon Haiyan. Loss of life was much higher in Tacloban and Palo due to the accompanying storm surge which Ormoc did not experience, being located on the western side of Leyte. Almost all cities in the Philippines are exposed in some way to natural hazards, however, between the three, only Ormoc had recently experienced a disaster. This recent experience may account somewhat for the differences in preparedness and coping capacity in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan.

In 1991, Ormoc City experienced a major flash flood caused by Tropical Storm Thelma which killed and displaced thousands of urban residents (ESSC, 2010). The city was heavily damaged by the rapid flood waters which contained large amounts of soil, debris, and gravel brought down with the rainwater from accompanying landslides which occurred in the surrounding mountains. Interviewees in Ormoc City felt that the memory of such a destructive natural disaster meant that the city government and inhabitants took the warnings of Typhoon Haiyan seriously. Pre-emptive evacuation of more than 15,000 people the night before Typhoon Haiyan helped minimise the casualties when Typhoon Haiyan hit Ormoc. These were also carried out in Tacloban and Palo; however not all families chose to leave.

Both Ormoc City and Tacloban City acted as significant coordination hubs during the response. International NGOs and the national government set up bases in the cities, creating command centres, emergency rooms, and coordination offices. Palo, Ormoc and Tacloban

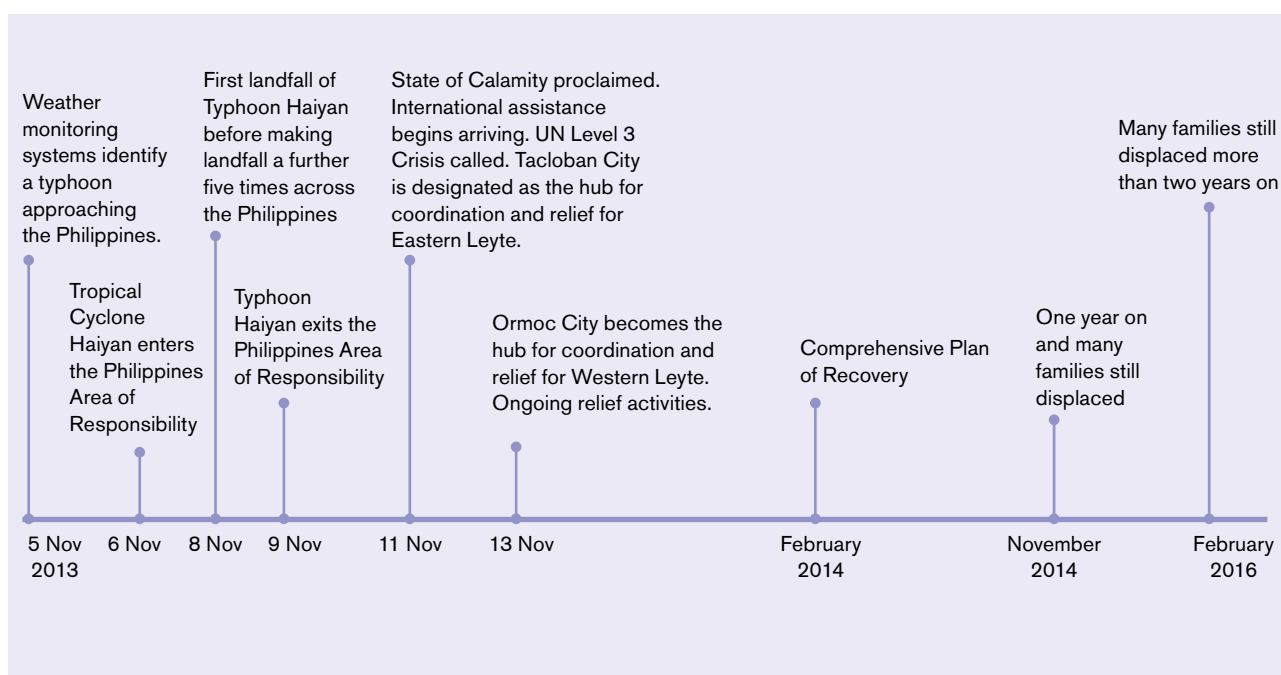
suffered logistical, transport and communication challenges as telephone lines, roads, and fuel stations were damaged or destroyed. Ormoc fared better than Tacloban and Palo as its port into the Central Visayas was still functioning. This meant that goods could be brought into Ormoc, unlike Tacloban and Palo, which became cut off due to heavy damage of the airport.

1.3 Information on Typhoon Haiyan

Typhoon Haiyan was the strongest 'super typhoon' to ever be recorded at landfall. It entered the Philippines' region of responsibility on 6 November 2013, where the winds continued to intensify, and first made landfall on 8 November, before moving across the Visayas region, making landfall a further five times. The ensuing and unprecedented wind speeds reached over 300 km/h. The accompanying storm surge – 5.75m and 6.39m in height in Tacloban and Palo respectively – caused massive destruction to buildings and infrastructure. Over 7,000 people perished and more than 16 million were affected (EMDAT, 2016) in the most devastating natural disaster to hit the Philippines and South East Asia thus far. A total of 4.1 million people were displaced and total losses were estimated at USD2 billion. In Tacloban alone, over 50 per cent of houses were totally destroyed.

Before Typhoon Haiyan struck, the government had activated its national disaster emergency system. Interviewees in all three locations remembered how they could not believe a typhoon of such magnitude could possibly be about to make landfall as the skies were clear and blue, unlike prior to previous typhoons. Many people did not believe the predictions on the intensity of the typhoon and did not fully understand terminology such as 'storm surge' and what that signified, so chose not to evacuate. Haiyan was of such a magnitude that the existing government disaster management systems – national and local – were overwhelmed (Featherstone and Antequisa, 2014), prompting the government to accept international assistance (declared as the highest level (L3) emergency in UN response mechanisms) and proclaim a 'state of calamity' over the affected regions (Hanley *et al.*, 2014).

More than two and a half years on from Typhoon Haiyan, Tacloban, Ormoc, and Palo have been largely rebuilt. However, many thousands of people remained displaced, and are in temporary settlements, awaiting relocation.



1.4 Key findings

This section summarises the key findings on collaboration based on interviews held in Tacloban, Ormoc, and Palo with local and international actors involved in the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan. Many international organisations had high numbers of national staff, all those interviewed for both local and international organisations were Filipino nationals who had had direct experience of the response in Typhoon Haiyan. The results from this research add to and support the findings of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Report on the response to Typhoon Haiyan which found overall that the international community engaged well with government. However the inter-agency response overwhelmed some government units and “failed to adequately join up with national systems, and created parallel structures for planning and coordination” (Hanley *et al.*, 2014). Whilst the international surge staff did deliver an effective response, they sidelined many in-country staff. The *Missed Again* and *Missed Opportunities* reports, which looked specifically at the experiences of partnerships during Typhoon Haiyan found that “while NNGOs were among the earliest responders to the typhoon, they played a relatively minor role in comparison with INGOs which tended to have greater access to funding, and superior logistics capacity that allowed them to work at significant scale” (Featherstone and Antequisa, 2014; Ramalingam *et al.*, 2013). This case study builds on both reports.

1.4.1 Understanding of the response, and resulting priorities, differed between local and international actors

“Local NGOS were waiting to be involved in the planning and implementation straight after Typhoon Haiyan. But many INGOs did their own thing in the planning and the project coordination meetings, and they did not involve local NGOs.” Local organisation, Tacloban

It was felt local understanding of disaster response and recovery was different to international understanding. To local groups, there was no distinction between response and recovery, both being seen as part of one continuum. Local actors felt that activities were donor-oriented, rather than what would be best for the disaster-affected communities, and that too much money was eaten up in monitoring and accountability. International actors were thought to have focused most on the easy-to-reach areas, resulting in isolated communities not receiving any help, and leading local actors to question the commitment to the response. An idea emerged of gaps within the gaps – ‘micro gaps’ – which the local actors could see, but the international actors were not addressing. When these were raised, the local actors did not feel that international counterparts were listening. It appeared that when priorities were not aligned, collaboration was not easily fostered.

1.4.2 Local coordination mechanisms and protocols were sometimes by-passed, hindering effective collaboration

“There were some INGOs who did not follow the local protocols...they would go directly down to the barangay without communicating with the chief executive of the municipality and that prevents collaboration.” Local organisation, Tacloban.

Collaboration did not occur when local protocols were by-passed, largely it was felt, because international actors were racing to deliver their mandate. The perceived time pressure meant that international actors were ‘doing things their own way’ and approaching communities directly without informing local leadership. The problems that this caused for collaboration, and local actors, included ‘chaos’ for coordinating who is doing what where; duplication of services in some areas (the easy to access ‘highway barangays’ or cities like Tacloban and Ormoc), whilst other areas were forgotten; misinformation to communities; and a failure to follow up. Local actors felt that ‘false promises’ left by international actors who had not been involved in local coordination mechanisms impacted their ability to work with communities, as trust had been lost.

1.4.3 Collaborations did not always result in balanced partnerships

“I sensed that they wanted us to work for them, but we were thinking if we work for the INGO then our plans won’t push through, because we will be working for their objectives” Local Organisation, Tacloban

Local actors expressed mixed views on whether collaboration had been balanced and whether they had benefited from working with international actors or not. Through working on response and recovery activities, local actors expressed increased confidence in forming future partnerships with international actors and expanding their own operations by having gained new technical knowledge. However, during the response, local actors felt that the international actors benefited from the local workforce, but were not able to offer anything in return in terms of materials or resources, leading to feelings of resentment by local actors. Frustrations which centred around the differences in resourcing between local and international actors led

to impressions of having been asked the impossible by international staff. Local actors, unlike international actors, were not able to coordinate via email, many having lost computers and other assets, and had limited transportation options, affecting their ability to attend or convene meetings.

1.4.4 Limited attention to local involvement and cultural norms

Overall, cultural norms were felt to have been overlooked during the response. Culturally, Filipinos are unlikely to ask for help or to demand resources. Local actors reported that they do not want to be “seen to be begging”. As part of the working culture, formal invitations to events and meetings were explained to be important aspects of Filipino culture, echoed in *Obliged to be Grateful Report* (Ong *et al.*, 2015). In the rush of the emergency response, this resulted in some local actors not feeling welcomed to the coordination meetings or feeling comfortable enough to speak up. Formal invitations to the coordination meetings would have helped local actors feel valuable and sought after.

1.4.5 Bureaucracy and inflexible processes

“Even if we wanted to make a proposal, we don’t have the paper to write it on, or the computers, and by the time it gets approved it isn’t useful anymore. Because the first month is crucial and even if we can give you a proposal, three months from now it will be useless.” Local organisation, Tacloban.

Greater flexibility towards forming new partnerships with local actors and increasing the accessibility of funds and resources was stressed as a means to improve collaboration in the future. International actors explained how they cannot work with organisations that do not have a “legal identity in the eyes of the government”. However, small informal groups sprang up during the Typhoon Haiyan response, with unique and useful skillsets. These groups wanted to engage with the response under their own mandates, but felt the funding processes were too long, and did not want to become a formalised NGO with by-laws and constitutions. According to international actors, only a handful of local NGOs and civil society groups existed in the province of Leyte prior to Typhoon Haiyan. The exclusion of informal groups due to bureaucracy and protocol meant that

local expertise could not be tapped. Instead it ran in parallel to the international response, or was lost.

1.4.6 Competition for staff, resources and beneficiaries occurred rather than collaboration

“NGOs are already here and sometimes other NGOs try to take some of your beneficiaries.” Local organisation, Tacloban.

All actors highlighted instances of competition rather than collaboration occurring during the response. There were examples of competition for competent staff between local and international organisations. At certain points in the response, bottlenecks occurred where all organisations were seeking a certain skillset, eg carpenters to rebuild, or type of material such as tarpaulins, which also led to competition between the organisations. Tension between the Mayor of Tacloban and the President was mentioned as affecting the response. The alleged biases of the city government in prioritising the activities of private organisations over the international actors was also said to have created competition. Finally, and of most concern, the idea of there being competition between organisations over disaster-affected communities in the form of ‘flag laying’ was raised.

1.4.7 Collaborations were limited in the response phase but more apparent during recovery

“Local actors had not experienced a disaster like Haiyan before.” International actor, Ormoc.

In the beginning of the response, most programmes were directly implemented by international organisations and not channelled through local ones. This was in part because local actors were themselves dealing with the consequences of the disaster and did not have the capacity to respond during the immediate crisis. International actors suggested locals may also hold limiting beliefs of what they can achieve and didn’t push themselves to expand as they perceive themselves to be “just a local NGO”. As the response phase moved to recovery, more partnerships with local organisations were established as they had had the time to come to agreements and memorandums of understanding.

1.5 Good practice: flexible programming

During recovery, interviewees were able to provide many more examples of flexible programming, as immediate lifesaving needs had been met. Examples of good collaboration such as tripartite agreements between INGOs, associations and government were common. In these collaborations there were clear roles and responsibilities between all actors. Programming was flexible working through a number of different approaches. For instance, during the response and recovery, displaced families could either be hosted in a family or in temporary shelters, with income support provided by international agencies. During relocations, land ownership was a major issue. International actors worked with private landowners or the government to secure access to land for disaster-affected communities. They would either partner with the government who would buy the land of the private individuals and be repaid over time by the international partners, or internationals would support communities to pay rent to landowners during the recovery process as communities were re-establishing livelihoods. If this flexible approach with clear delineation of roles and responsibilities where necessary could be adapted to response work, collaboration would be significantly strengthened.

1.6 Summary

In summary, collaboration between local and international actors was biased towards the international agenda. Local actors were either by-passed or engaged to help deliver the international organisation’s mandate. Local actors felt there was a lack of cultural sensitivity and interest in engaging with them. When time pressures were eased, such as during the recovery phase, more effort was put into seeking and fostering collaboration.

1.7 Recommendations

- In strategic disaster-prone areas such as cities, where there are ports or airports, pre-established partnerships between government, local actors and international actors should be prioritised. Cities can act as strategic locations to accept and distribute relief.
- Local actors should be sensitised to the range of donors and funding streams for humanitarian response and briefed on how the emergency humanitarian system works.
- Humanitarian jargon needs to be well explained and translated during coordination meetings, and in the succeeding updates.
- Cultural sensitivity to how meetings are convened and conducted will help local actors to feel comfortable, valued, and able to direct response. A few key informants should be contacted immediately after a disaster to help inform communication and engagement strategy of international actors.
- Partnering processes and access to funding need to be streamlined. Flexible ways to share resources and transport with local actors should be sought. Funding could be made simpler by creating one-page templates for proposals of small grants.

2

Colombia: Medellín

2.1 Context of Colombia

The crisis in Colombia has spanned many decades and involves numerous armed groups with different ideologies and motivations, as well as the government itself. The principal actors involved in the violence are the government forces, the guerrillas who claim to represent the rural poor against the ruling elite, and the paramilitary whose purpose is to oppose the guerrilla groups (UNRIC, 2016). Violence is widespread throughout the geographically diverse country, but particularly acute in rural forested areas.

Displacement in Colombia is tied to the issue of armed conflict. Armed groups forcibly remove people for land to grow coca plants and extract other resources. This, combined with the fear of violence, kidnappings, extortion, land mines, gender-based and sexual violence, and forced youth recruitment (UNRIC, 2016) results in 200,000 people being newly displaced every year (OCHA, 2016).

Most IDPs move to urban areas to avoid further violence, and in particular to larger cities to access victims' support. The majority of those displaced are from Afro-Caribbean and indigenous communities in Pacific rural areas and towards the Venezuelan border. Figures for the total number of IDPs range from 3.7 million (OCHA, 2016) to 6.3 million (UNHCR, 2016), with the average victim displaced three or four times. This puts estimates at 8-12 per cent of the population being victims of displacement in what is often referred to as 'Colombia's Invisible Crisis' (UNHCR, 2015). The estimated abandoned or dispossessed land lost by IDPs stands at 6.8 million hectares (OCHA, 2016), over six per cent of the surface area of the country.

2.2 Background on Medellín

Medellín, Colombia's second largest city, has an official population of over 2.2 million people (100 Resilient Cities, 2016), though estimates are closer to 2.5 million. In the early 1990s, it was the most dangerous city in the world, with a homicide rate of 382/100,000 per year (Maclean, 2014). For comparison, in 2016 the most dangerous city in the world – Caracas, Venezuela, had a homicide rate of 120/100,000 people per year. Medellín has made huge progress in curbing the violence, and the rate in 2015 was 20/100,000 (Seguridad, Justicia y Paz, 2016).

Local government states that 600,000 IDPs are currently living there, many of whom cannot, or do not want to return to from where they were displaced, placing a huge burden on the city. Whilst most do come from rural areas, the number of IDPs from urban-urban displacement is the highest in the country (Carrillo, 2009), and is rising.

Displaced people end up in high risk areas, unsuitable for building houses, and with little access to civil rights. Most live in inadequate conditions, with the whole family in a small room. The day-to-day difference between the displaced populations and urban very poor may be very small. With more urban-urban displacement, the difference between victim and non-victim is often simply administrative, and 40 per cent do not receive IDP status (OCHA, 2016), and therefore do not receive state assistance.

The wealth divide is very evident, indeed Medellín is the most inequitable city in Colombia, Latin America's most inequitable country. This huge inequity setting results in some safe, affluent areas, and other parts of the city where people advise against going there.

2.3 Focus on the military groups and violent conflict

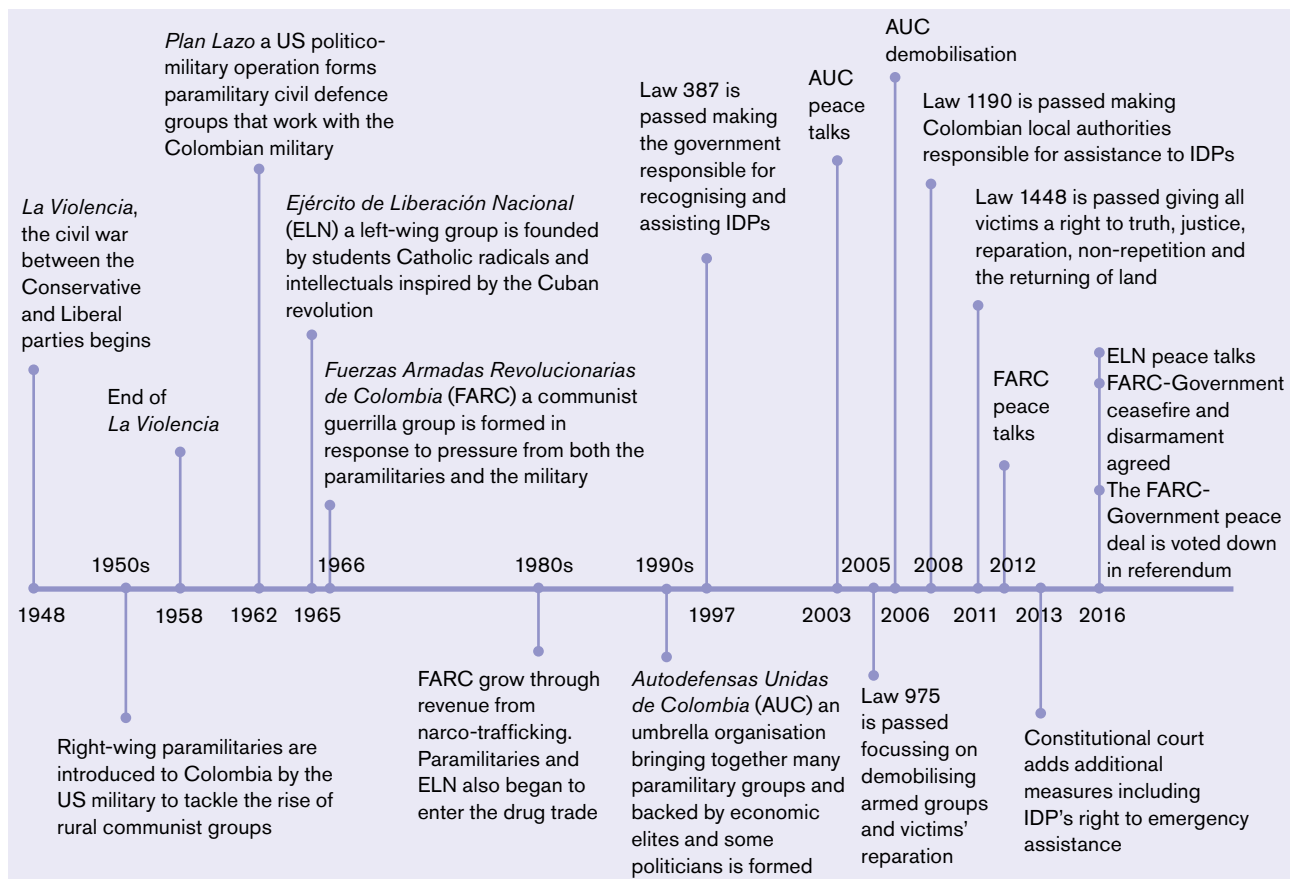
Medellín is divided into 16 districts known as *comunas*. Within and across these *comunas*, armed groups control different areas. The resulting violence, extortion and forced recruitment perpetuate the intra-urban displacement. The violence seen in Medellín cannot be entirely explained by the actions of infamous drug lords. A combination of structural inequities and limited effect of the state created a situation where 'para-political' actors could exist, providing security and rights in a way the state failed to do. This led to a "vicious cycle of violence and conflict in which violent repression is seen as a reasonable response towards violent actors in order to ensure security" (Maclean, 2014).

As Colombia's industrial centre, Medellín has historically attracted economic and displaced migrants. The surrounding fertile land also means whoever controls these areas stands much to gain from coca production (IRB, 2001), plus the proximity to the Caribbean and to Panama makes Medellín geographically advantageous

for narco-trafficking. Rival cartels, drug traffickers, on a backdrop of one of the battlegrounds between the paramilitary and guerrilla forces, as well as a large population of disenfranchised urban poor and IDPs living without rights and security, have fomented the optimal conditions for violence.

Interviews with local government described how conflict and criminality has evolved into an under recognised, "urban violence" where "criminality has become less obvious and now works underneath the surface of the city". This illegal power is funded by a huge economical infrastructure of drug dealing and extortion. These groups control territories, charging 'taxes' to residents to ensure their families and businesses remain secure. Everything from gas cylinders used for cooking, to street food stalls, have added charges levied. This extortion is claimed to provide other state services such as justice, road repairs, and even the building of sports facilities. In that regard, these armed groups compete for the services of the government, and the lack of state presence gives them the opportunity to conduct their illegal operations.

There is a very evident presence of armed groups amongst displaced settlements. When these groups fight amongst themselves for control over territory, homicides and displacement rises; when a ceasefire is agreed, extortion for citizens increases. As such, the link between inequity and violence is strong.



2.4 Peace process

Most governments since the 1980s have attempted to end the conflict. President Juan Manuel Santos reopened previously failed peace talks in 2012 in Havana, and a peace agreement was signed in 2016 between the government and FARC, however this was not ratified following the results of a general referendum (The Guardian, 2016). ELN also agreed to begin peace talks in 2016. However, there remains strong opposition to the peace deal, led by ex-president Álvaro Uribe Vélez who was determined to end the conflict through force during his time in office (2002-2010) (CFR, 2016). The government does not acknowledge that paramilitary groups continue to operate, instead referring to criminal gangs or *bacrim*¹ (Amnesty International, 2012). This lack of recognition of paramilitary activity is said by some to be a failure on behalf of the government, and a concern when it comes to enforcing the law and building peace (UNHCR, 2009).

2.5 Key findings

The findings from interviews conducted in April 2016 with local government, INGOs, NNGOs, and academia build on some of the conclusions outlined in *Resilient Medellín: A Strategy For Our Future* (100 Resilient Cities, 2016), as well as views from the Zero Draft outcome document (Habitat III, 2016), and ICRC's policy paper *Armed violence and the new urban agenda*, (ICRC, 2016), notably that social and economic development, as well as the general well-being of the population, are dependent on equitable access to reliable urban services. The following sections summarise the findings from interviews with local and international actors collaborating on urban response in Medellín.

2.5.1 There is a lack of contextualised knowledge and understanding

"Most are not conscious of the displacement phenomenon because it happens on the periphery of the city." International actor.

"Most aid agencies come to do what they believe is the problem, and not what the real problem is, and this damages the processes taking place in those communities." International actor.

"There is lack of knowledge of the context from both international actors and local actors. To intervene in a territory you need to know it, the context must be very clear. At the local level some secretaries do not know where certain areas are located which is really bad because they decide what's happening in the city." Local government.

NNGOs, INGOs, and local government all expressed frustration at interventions made without a complete understanding of the situation. This involves both national "decision makers back in Bogotá", and internationals who arrive. What can also happen is because international components are often located in Bogotá, when internationals arrive, they come with people from Bogotá. Local government reported that "when they arrive here, the people from Bogotá make an assessment of the territory, and provide methodologies or activities to be done. And that is unsatisfactory, because someone from outside cannot properly understand the conditions of the area". Collaboration with local actors is hence overlooked, opting instead for national readily available partners.

¹ *Bandas criminales.*

2.5.2 Not enough time is spent in the setting

“Internationals need to go to the communities to understand what’s going on there. Some organisations that come here do not know the social/political divisions or framework that works here in Medellín.” Local government.

Both contextualised understanding and trust come from prolonged time spent working in the affected areas. This can be difficult for international actors to achieve, because of time-limited projects, but this does not preclude collaboration. There was broad consensus that a strong part of long-term collaboration from international actors should include political advocacy. INGOs, through links with the international community, are able to press the national government to fulfil their promises and policies. Moreover, with their technical expertise, they are well placed to support these processes.

2.5.3 The situation on the ground is highly dynamic

“The situation changes a lot. So it is quite difficult to stay current. The internationals can understand the context today, but three weeks later it changes a bit, and they do not understand those changes.” Local government.

Local actors stressed how quickly the situation can evolve, and as a result how difficult it is to design an effective intervention. This becomes harder when organisations are based in Bogotá, and even harder when they are based abroad. Collaboration with local actors who are on the ground daily is therefore the foundation for any successful programming.

2.5.4 Local capacity of those affected is often underestimated

“When people are affected by the conflict they get organised. This capacity is often underestimated.” Local organisation.

Local NGOs expressed a view that they are more able to deal with challenges than they are perceived. As a result, they are excluded from potential collaborations, do not get to increase their capacity, and the resulting work is poorer for lack of their input. International actors recognised that “even the most difficult-to-access village has strong and resilient communities”, and that because international community help is impermanent, working in isolation without recognising local capacity, is simply unsustainable.

2.5.5 Ensuring the most poor are not left behind

“In the territories the difference between the victims and non-victims is more or less administrative.” Local organisation.

A large proportion of those living in the poorer *comunas* have experienced violence. Yet many victims do not receive IDP status, and as such are not entitled to assistance. However the challenges for the victim population are the same challenges as for the urban poor. International organisations interested in providing support and assistance must ensure that they seek collaboration with the local development agenda.

2.5.6 Importance of an integrated approach

“When there is a phenomenon involving populations of such a large magnitude, the chance of being reintegrated to society cannot be achieved through a focused lens; it must include a wider local and regional development perspective.” Local organisation.

“A city is like a body, whatever happens, that pain is reflected in the entire body. Sometimes we don’t feel it, but in the end, it will affect the entire body. So I think we haven’t seen a city in a more integrated way, and that is socially. We are not districts, we are not administrative institutions and territories, we are people, all driven by a common goal and challenges.” Local government.

Government agencies, particularly those working on cross-cutting issues, expressed the need to switch to a more integrated approach to tackling urban challenges. This was also suggested by local community actors, who were left frustrated by a rigid internationally-driven approach often taken by international actors working on isolated predefined projects. These views were reflected by some international actors: “the aid is isolated and the communities are left without being strengthened in their own capacities”. Collaboration, it was felt, could be strengthened, not by the international actors changing their mandate, but by changing their mode of approach. Partnerships should begin with international actors asking local actors, “how do you work, what do you need?”.

2.5.7 Transparency of purpose

“Some international organisations come here to learn about the processes that take place but it’s not clear what the reason for those visits are. So there should be clarity on the objectives of the visits. There was a recent visit, they came and met with victims and different organisations, but after that the victims said, ‘what happened with them?’. Local government.

Local organisations in particular spoke of how victims were left feeling frustrated and confused as to why internationals were there. As such, the purpose of INGO visits should be made clear. This is more easily conveyed in work which has tangible benefits and leads to action, rather than exploratory studies.

2.5.8 Inefficiencies

“We are here, the middle point (between donors and recipients) are becoming stronger. And we haven’t been able to strengthen the real institutions which are families and communities. Because we are here as an intermediary. And a very expensive intermediary!” Local government.

Both INGOs and local government spoke of how so many intermediators are present, that “whatever gets implemented is so diluted that little impact is seen”. There is a need to identify direct ways, to engage with real communities. A huge source of frustration for local actors was the resources that internationals only translate into workshops, and do not tackle the issues the population has. Local actors have become fatigued with training and theory, and want to put policy into practice. INGOs should support economic initiatives and productive projects, based on previous workshops, rather than providing new ones.

2.5.9 Short term employment undermines the ability to critique

“It’s very hard for you to be critical and say ‘perhaps this is not the right approach’.” Local government.

Local government spoke of a transition from being permanently employed to being contracted. Without the security of employment, and whilst acting as a consultant, it becomes difficult to tell whomever the money is coming from that there are shortcomings. This is an advantage that civil society has, as they are detached and can provide honest opinions. “Those who are out of the system, who say ‘you’re not doing

well’ become the stone in your shoe, but they’re very valuable” (local organisation). As such, seeking feedback from communities is very useful for when those contracted do not feel able to criticise the projects.

2.6 Good practice

La Loma is a neighbourhood whose location makes it a strategic territory for drug traffickers. On 6 May 2013, 63 families were displaced due to violence and gun-fighting in the area. The mayor’s office responded by sending several organisations there to support that case. They stayed in the area day and night for two months. With the trust built during that time, a leader group within the community was identified, which went on to create a strategic plan for addressing victims’ needs, infrastructure, and co-existence. The model developed is being used for other situations of conflict around the city.

The *Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín* (ACI) is a local government agency that acts as a filter for international cooperation, finding a place for international actors to get involved where their own tasks overlap with existing projects. This ensures that international actors are integrated into the local development strategies of the city, and ensures no duplication of work in one setting, and gaps in another.

The political participation of victims is a method used that involves victims understanding who has benefited from their victimisation, not just the immediate perpetrators, but the organisation which allowed the perpetrator to do this. For example, a victim was displaced by the paramilitary, who themselves had a mining company paying them. Most victims do not understand why they were separated from their territory, only that people with weapons arrived and displaced them. The underlying theory is the greater their understanding of the dynamics of the city and society, the more prepared they are and empowered to become part of civil society.

Lastly an influential approach to long-term strategy that was taken in 1990, when the president took the highly unconventional approach to elect a minister specifically for Medellín. Together with local victims who formed ‘round-table’ discussions, as well as with the private sector and the church, the *Strategic City Plan in the Metropolitan Area, Medellín 1995-2015* was developed. This created a clear roadmap to follow, which meant successive mayors and local government had a strategy to continue. Buy-in from citizens was so high that new mayors would have struggled to ignore it. It also allowed actors to remain proactive, continuing with work currently underway, then come in to reassess and react. In a highly dynamic situation, this long-term holistic plan provided much stability.

2.7 Summary

Medellín is a case of protracted urban displacement through violence, set against a backdrop of huge inequities in a middle-income country with a committed government. Local actors spoke of criminal groups being so strong because they work from the bottom up, directly with communities. Urban displacement is best understood by local level organisations, and international actors must therefore reframe their approach to have local actors at the centre.

International cooperation must not be isolated from the local development perspective. Cooperation with initiatives, projects, and processes is important, but it is even more important to link to local capacities and work in partnerships. That means the international community's mandates must be flexible enough to adjust to local needs. Often what happens is areas which already have strong institutions in place and where internationals have worked before are prioritised, at the expense of other sites with greater need. International collaborations must be integrated with the city's development plans. Without that long-term perspective which includes education, employment, public transportation, social engagement, and health, it will be impossible to deal with insecurity, violence, and crime.

2.8 Recommendations

- International actors interested in working in Medellín should go directly to the Medellín unit for victims to map who has worked there previously, work carried out and areas for collaboration and complementation. This information should not be retrieved from Bogotá.
- Work with victims should focus on three aspects: economic, housing, and non-repetition of the displacement.
- Responses should be aligned with the development plans that local governments have, and work as part of the installed capacities. Cooperation can then address inequality, the main cause of the conflict.
- International actors should play a key role in overseeing implementation of what has been agreed in the peace process, and hold the government accountable for non-fulfillment of policy measures.
- Initiatives based on previous workshops should be supported, rather than providing new workshops.

3

South Sudan: Juba

3.1 Context of South Sudan

The people of South Sudan have experienced decades of violence, conflict and famine, amidst three periods of civil war, both before and since gaining independence from Sudan in 2011. Less than three years after becoming the world's newest nation, civil war broke out in Juba in December 2013 when Vice-President, Riek Machar, was accused of attempting a coup d'etat against President Salva Kiir. This led to the splitting of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) – the guerrilla army which fought against the Sudanese government forces during the struggle for independence – into the SPLM/A (predominantly Dinka-led) and the SPLM/A-In Opposition (predominantly Nuer-led).

Tens of thousands of civilians were killed throughout the conflicts. Around 2.3 million people have been displaced (ACAPS, 2016), due to targeted political violence against those perceived to be sympathisers of the opposing sides, as well as retaliation killings between ethnic groups (Arensen, 2016). Peace building and peace making still have a long way to go with continued complex ethnic tensions, inter- and intra-border disputes, environmental pressures, and a deepening economic crisis (the currency devaluated by 84 per cent in December 2015) (ACAPS, 2016). South Sudan is extremely underdeveloped: having faced over five decades of humanitarian catastrophe there is some question of how well the context was

understood by international assistance, and whether the oversimplification of the divisions and tensions between the north, south, as well as the different ethnic groups caused the prolongation of the conflict. From August 2015, a peace-agreement was signed but violence has continued in Juba, the capital, and many areas of the country.

3.2 Background on Juba

Juba has continued to expand in a largely unmanaged and unplanned manner throughout the different crises (Martin and Mosel, 2011). As of 2016, it is estimated to have around 500-700,000 inhabitants, though lacking a census, this figure is likely to be underreporting true numbers. Juba is also hosting IDPs both within the city in 'collective centres' and in 'protection of civilian' (PoC) sites within the UN Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS) bases on the outskirts of the city. The majority of IDPs are in the PoC sites. Juba's population fluctuates depending on displacements and returns (Martin and Mosel, 2011), with one interviewee stating, "movement is constant, people coming in and moving out". Push and pull factors to the city include: perceived better employment, services, and quality of life compared to rural areas; presence of family; security and protection; and humanitarian assistance. Juba also acts as a transit point which often 'lasts longer than expected' for IDPs, economic migrants or returning refugees (Martin and Mosel, 2011).

The urban humanitarian response in Juba is complicated for a number of reasons. International actors reported “competing and overlapping government mandates” between the city and national response structures which create confusion over who has ownership of what, and “chronic long term bureaucratic hurdles end up causing humanitarian crises on top of lack of service provision”. Disputed administrative borders and distinctions between the subdivisions of *bomas* and *payams* (villages and communities), and blocks mean it is very hard to map who is doing what where. Access is difficult as roads are poor, and a lack of a unified approach amongst the different actors causes gaps and duplications. Hyperinflation and varying exchange rates mean that what can be purchased is constantly changing. More than a quarter of poor urban households are food insecure relying almost entirely on markets for food supplies (Hanley *et al.*, 2014). Water shortages throughout the city place almost all citizens in need of humanitarian assistance, leading to mounting tensions between city residents and IDPs, who get accused of using up the resources. The cultural differences and diversity of ethnicities within a small space require time to understand and work with. In summary, the urban humanitarian response is facing issues on who to prioritise and under which criteria.

During interviews, Juba was described as ‘deceiving’ and unrepresentative of the rest of South Sudan. The apparent development, ongoing construction and the number of paved roads, usually associated with economic growth, belie the stagnation of the economy and continued underdevelopment of the rest of the country. The urban economy has been described as mainly catering for aid actors, especially as humanitarian capacity was concentrated in Juba in the aftermath of the 2013 crisis (Arensen, 2016). High unemployment, soaring inflation rates, irregular payment of salaries, and an increased armed presence have heightened criminality in Juba, often targeting ‘wealthy’ NGOs. Harassment of humanitarian workers and a number of serious incidents prompted international humanitarian agencies to impose a 9-10pm curfew and strict use of agency-only vehicles on their international staff. International staff live in hotels, compounds or guesthouses, are not advised to walk on the streets and mainly socialise in hotels or internationally-oriented restaurants. This has created a significant divide between the daily habits and lives of the international and the local actors.

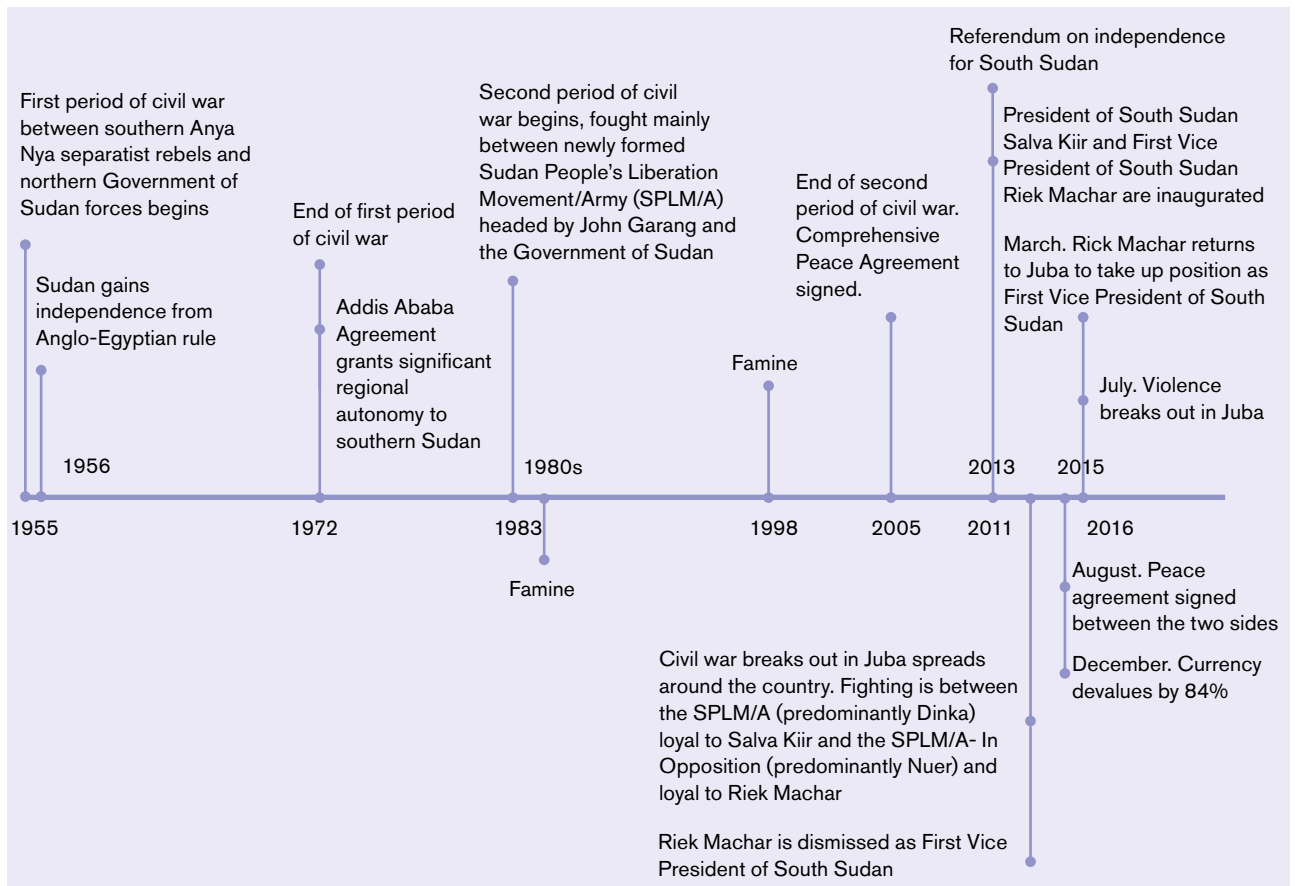
3.3 Focus on the conflict in Juba and the resulting ‘protection of civilian’ sites

On the 15 December 2013, political divides in the SPLM/A leadership erupted into conflict between the Dinka-affiliated and Nuer-affiliated soldiers in the military barracks in Juba. The violence continued to escalate, spreading into the streets of Juba, and eventually around the country. Most NGOs at the time were development-based and not prepared to respond to a rapid-onset emergency. This prompted the evacuation of most non-essential international staff leaving UNMISS to be largely responsible for humanitarian needs in the initial weeks of the crisis (Arensen, 2016).

As the fighting spread, Dinka-affiliated security forces targeted the Nuer population in Juba. Desperate for protection from the violence and killings, people rushed to the UNMISS peacekeeping bases, as well as to churches and schools. The UNMISS facilities were unprepared for the volume of displaced people and did not expect the conflict to have a long duration. The result has been a unique situation of humanitarian actors working on a military base, in what have been called ‘PoC’ sites (Arensen, 2016).

The self-settlement of the IDPs led to extreme overcrowding and disorganisation in the first two PoC sites. As of December 2014, PoC2 in UNMISS Tongping was closed and all IDPs were relocated to a pre-prepared site adjacent to UN House called PoC3. As of January 2016 there were approximately 13,000 and 20,500 living in PoC1 and PoC3, respectively (Arensen, 2016). These figures are only estimates, and it is believed by international actors working there that the real number is significantly higher than the reported figure.

Considerable tension exists between UNMISS and humanitarian responders. A report focused on researching the relationship between UNMISS and the international response found that UNMISS is “worried that continued provision of services would create a pull factor to PoC sites” and hopes to close the PoC sites (Arensen, 2016). Humanitarians are uneasy about responding on a military compound and experience numerous hurdles to conducting operations on UNMISS land (Arensen, 2016).



3.4 Key findings

The findings from the interviews held in Juba in May 2016 with INGOs, NNGOs, and government are supported by the conclusions from the *Missed Out: the role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict* report (Tanner and Moro, 2016), which found that the “potential contribution of national organisations to the humanitarian response in South Sudan is not being fully realised...the system does not go far enough in redressing power imbalances and enabling deeper and more embedded involvement and context-specific approaches’ and ‘complementarity is not favoured in a system which prioritises immediacy and short-term value for money” (Tanner and Moro, 2016).

Almost all those interviewed working for international organisations were international staff. Whilst questions were Juba-specific, many interviewees chose to speak more broadly of their experiences with collaboration. The assessment of collaboration between local and international actors revealed that, in Juba, the humanitarian response remained internationally-led for reasons related to trust, funding, capacity, power, timing, and competition. The following sections summarise the findings from interviews with international and local actors based in Juba and involved in the humanitarian response there.

3.4.1 Trust and distrust among actors influences the likelihood of collaboration

“At the end of the day you say they can’t do it themselves, but have you given them an opportunity?” Local government.

Trust between communities and NGOs, amongst NGOs, and from donors to NGOs, was a key issue in a complex, rapidly changing environment, where NGO proliferation was high. International actors expressed dismay at having been ‘burnt on experiences’ of working with local partners, who themselves explained how ‘briefcase organisations’ have undermined the trust in local organisations. “[Briefcase organisations] kill more national NGOs” because they “find money today and pocket it tomorrow” and never deliver promised services to the communities (Local organisation). International actors did not feel that the “government is as supportive as it could be”. Local actors questioned the integrity and capacity of international organisations where “staff come straight from university” and “every six months they change their staff” so their “institutional memory is lost” and mandate change according to what is being financed. The problems of corruption and poor project management were highlighted as major concerns of collaboration by all actors.

It was well recognised that local organisations help strengthen the relationship between international actors and communities. However, national NGOs were said to “receive more scrutiny than INGOs on who they were, how long they had been operating, and their mandate from communities, whereas INGOs were considered to be more neutral” (International actor). In general, trust in the local organisation’s ability to manage funding as well as the communities’ perceptions of, and trust in, the local organisation determined the likelihood of collaboration.

3.4.2 There are challenges accessing institutional funding, resulting in collaborations largely based on subcontracting

“Big funding organisations like DFID and USAID have a lot of paperwork.” Local organisation.

Most partnerships were largely based on local organisations being subcontracted on projects designed by international organisations. Views were mixed on whether subcontracting was a healthy form of collaboration and a positive means for local organisations to learn from international organisations, or whether this was negatively affecting the growth of national/local organisations. Overall it was felt that funding was more likely to go via international organisations who were able to comply, because of higher capacity with institutional donor requirements on reporting and financial controls, and that the majority of local organisations did not have the staffing capacity to complete the associated reports and evaluations from large donors. It was felt by local actors that with INGOs acting as intermediaries, money was used in their overheads with very little trickling down to local organisations in the form of collaborative endeavours. Some NNGOs (those that had been operating for many years) felt capable of directing their plans and controlling their visibility despite admitting to never having subcontracted to an INGO, whilst younger NNGOs felt that contract-driven partnerships kept the power in the international hands.

3.4.3 Funding and programming is internationally driven

“The international community comes with what they want and then we have to facilitate it.” Local organisation.

There were conflicting thoughts amongst local actors on what extent the response in Juba was internationally-driven. On the one hand, it was felt that projects would only get funded if they aligned with international funding themes, that civil society and local organisations had had to shift to the internationally-driven agenda, that the South Sudanese were often excluded from strategy and programme design while the international actors developed “big projects” with “sharp consultants” and used “good language” (local NGO), and that when the internationals inevitably leave, their projects are taken over by local actors, who have not had enough say in the design of the project. On the other hand, some local actors felt that donors should direct the funding, as ultimately it is their [the donors’] money, and the local organisations trusted that the donors had conducted appropriate assessments. Importantly, it was highlighted that worries about securing future funding meant that local organisations may be limited in how much they could criticise plans and programmes of their donors (international actor). Collaboration is negatively affected when local actors feel as though they have no voice in setting the priorities.

3.4.4 High turnover on all sides compounded by confusing bureaucracy

“Changing administration and administrators makes it difficult to know who and how to deal with authorities.” International actor.

Collaboration was negatively affected in Juba by high turnover on all sides and a high concentration of humanitarian staff and government officials. Amidst the changes in staff and transitions in government agencies, it was difficult to know with whom to work. Relationships were not fostered, training was affected, poor performance was not challenged, and communication between levels (national to local) deteriorated. The government did not represent a one-stop shop for humanitarian actors working in Juba, and coordination and procedures were inconsistent, delaying programming. International actors felt it best to coordinate directly with local government structures,

as these remained the most consistent, but this was recognised to create tension with the national government, especially in Juba where the national government officials were located, who may have felt as though they were being by-passed.

3.4.5 To interact with the humanitarian system, local organisations have lost their meaning

“You find the South Sudanese flavour of how it is meant to be done.” Local organisation.

International actors acknowledged that the South Sudanese should be at the forefront of the response, and their exclusion was detrimental to the overall success of the humanitarian response. With the concentration of resources and decisions being made in Juba, most NGOs sought to have headquarters in the city. However, in interacting with the humanitarian system, local organisations have had to develop ‘coping mechanisms’ which caused the local organisations to lose the meaning of being local actors. They either mirrored INGOs, losing diversity of ideas and modes of working, or they gave up their original mandate and followed where the money was, applying for funding outside of their expertise. Collaboration was felt to only occur under three conditions: (i) if donors required it; (ii) if the security situation meant that internationals needed to leave; or, (iii) if international organisations had money left over. ‘Diversifying’ as a means to interact with the humanitarian system was viewed as both a positive and a negative strategy by local actors. Some felt that it was a loss of their identity, whilst others thought it the best way to secure a future for their organisation.

3.4.6 Time constraints affect collaboration

“I think the biggest challenge of a response is that it is so desperate here, and there is so much need that it moves like a machine, and people don’t take the time to sort out how to do it. They have a mandate: ‘I’ve got to deliver food; I’ve got to deliver water. I don’t have time to ask the community if they like this or that kind of food’. And so their first priority is to get the work done.” International actor.

Short funding cycles and high pressure to quickly respond to needs were felt to be negatively affecting collaboration. International actors revealed that there was little incentive to work with local actors if the INGO

had the capacity to do the work itself. Working alone for INGOs was perceived to be “more cost effective and avoids the contractual headache of employing local NGOs” (International actor). Local actors felt that relationships were based on time-limited contracts which were too focused on what had to be delivered rather than the impact of the project or building the capacity of the local actor. Practically, it may be easier to work alone for international organisations, but local actors stressed that collaboration makes the activities of the international organisations more nuanced.

3.4.7 Capacity of the majority of organisations is very low

“We cannot exist alone.” Local organisation.

Limited capacity of local organisations is a major issue affecting collaboration. International actors felt that the majority of local actors had limited capacity, but plenty of information and ability to interact with communities. It was suggested that the western belief in technical fixes to complex problems engendered unintentional paternalistic approaches to collaboration from internationals (international actor). Local actors acknowledged that they can learn a lot from working with international actors in terms of project management, proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation, information sharing, recommendations to other INGOs and donors, but felt that they had much more to offer. The biggest problem highlighted by local actors was obtaining the long-term funding which would enable them to build their capacity.

3.4.8 Local actors are not given the recognition for their work

“From donor perspectives they have funded the work, but in terms of implementation the donors have not done the work without the help on the ground from the NNGOs or INGOs.” International actor.

International actors suggested that INGOs and donors often did not adequately recognise and give credit to the work of local organisations, and that large donors were likely to omit the names of their implementing partners in reports, instead claiming the work as their own. Without proper recognition from their donors, local actors do not receive the respect and acknowledgement they deserved from other organisations and the South Sudanese government.

3.4.9 Representation of local actors at higher levels is limited

“You cannot sit and talk about my home when I am not there.” Local organisation.

Overall, it was recognised by international actors that the South Sudanese were not well represented at higher levels of strategy and decision making. Some suggested that local actors lacked the required humanitarian or management expertise. Local actors felt that even if a few South Sudanese were in powerful positions they were ‘puppets’ for internationals and that national NGOs were seen as people to whom to give orders. Healthy collaboration is seriously undermined if local actors are excluded from decision making.

3.4.10 Competition: healthy or a hindrance?

“Internationals and locals are competing for the same donors.” International actor.

Local actors and international actors were competing for funding, staffing, and resources. There were conflicting views on whether there were equal opportunities to gain funding. Local actors from successful NNGOs felt that competition was ‘healthy’, however it was usually these NNGOs who won the grants, and who were thus able to regard the process as healthy. NNGOs who may have had less experience with the humanitarian system, including the smaller local actors, were not able to compete fairly. International actors echoed these concerns – that the competitive funding environment was obliging local actors, in a bid to make a name for themselves, to seek less desirable sources of funding which have “high amounts of outputs for small amounts of money” which INGOs would not “waste their time” with (international actor).

Competition between international and local organisations also extended to staffing. Both local and international actors acknowledged that good staff are often ‘poached’ into international organisations which offer better wages and job security. The resulting brain drain of expertise in local organisations was clearly a hindrance to NNGO growth, and in turn collaboration between local and international humanitarian actors.

3.4.11 Locals and international actors face different challenges, but separation of the two is harming the response

“The challenge is that sometimes we fear to work with internationals as the government feels we are being dishonest to our country.” Local organisation.

“When it comes to protecting staff what you are actually doing is putting them in strait jackets...and they are living in different worlds.” Local organisation.

International and local actors lead largely separate existences with widely different security protocols. Local actors were perceived to be targeted more than international actors and to suffer more violence and harassment, in part because they were more likely to work in more dangerous locations, and also because they were not protected by the same security considerations as international actors. The stark separation between the lives of the international and local actors in Juba led to dangerous generalisations, and may contribute to increasing the tension and undermining the trust between local and international actors.

3.5 Good practice: the South Sudan NGO Forum

The South Sudan NGO Forum is a mechanism through which national and international NGOs can share information and engage with each other. It has a membership of over 200 organisations, of which 60-75 per cent are national NGOs. Part of its core structure is to have a steering committee comprised of both international and national representatives, as well as committees dedicated to the particular needs of the two groups. The NGO Forum was felt to bring visibility to all organisations and facilitate rapid communication and coordination across a diverse group of actors. The NGO Forum had been integral in advocating the needs of both local and international actors in the past.

3.6 Summary

Collaboration between local and international actors was not as strong as it could be because of issues relating to trust in the capacity to manage finances and lead projects. The result has been a significant imbalance of power between international and local actors, with the response being largely internationally directed. High turnover on all sides made it difficult to foster strong relationships and the (perceived) limited capacity of local actors alongside the dire situation in South Sudan means international actors often overlook meaningful long-term collaborations.

3.7 Recommendations

- Better representation – beyond a box ticking approach – of local actors at higher levels of decision making, strategy and programming, in national and international fora. A greater emphasis on equal dialogue in person and at all levels between international actors and a range of local actors is required.
- Partnerships should be focused on promoting strategic growth and not based on financial transactions. Organisations with common values and missions should seek each other out to build partnerships and share ideas.
- Prioritise investments and training in local institutional capacity, focusing on staff knowledge and internal financial and management controls.
- Consult a wide range of stakeholders (government, NGOs, civil society, academia) to help inform programming and funding themes.
- Though it may have become difficult to find international actors willing to commit to long periods of time, ideally contracts for intentional actors should not be short-term, to help reduce the high turnover and encourage the development of an in-depth understanding of the South Sudanese context.

Acronyms

CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced person
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
NDRMC	National Disaster Risk Management Council
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NNGO	National non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PoC	Protection of civilian
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

References

- www.100resilientcities.org/cities/entry/medellins-resilience-challenge [Accessed 20 September 2016]
- ACAPS (2016) Global Emergencies Overview. www.acaps.org/countries [Accessed 20 September 2016].
- Alcayna, T and Al-Murani, F (2016) Local and international collaboration in urban humanitarian responses: perspectives from the Philippines, Colombia and South Sudan. *Urban Crises Working Paper*. IIED, London.
- Amnesty International (2012) *Colombia: The Victims and Land Restitution Law*. An Amnesty International Analysis.
- Arensen, MJ (2016) *If We Leave We Are Killed: Lessons Learned from South Sudan Protection of Civilian Sites 2013-2016*. IOM and Swiss Agency for Development. https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/if_we_leave_0.pdf [Accessed 20 September 2016].
- CFR (2016) Colombia's Civil Conflict. Council on Foreign Relations. www.cfr.org/colombia/colombias-civil-conflict/p9272
- ESSC (2010) The Ormoc City Tragedy of November 5th, 1981. ESSC, Manila. <http://essc.org.ph/content/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/chapter%201%20the%20ormoc%20city%20tragedy.pdf> [Accessed 20 September 2016]
- Featherstone, A and Antequisa, C (2014) *Missed again: Making space for humanitarian partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan response*. ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB and Tearfund. Available from: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/missed-again-making-space-for-partnership-in-the-typhoon-haiyan-response-336897>
- GAR (2015) Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction. Making Development Sustainable: The Future of Disaster Risk Management. www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2015/en/gar-pdf/GAR2015_EN.pdf
- Guha-Sapir, D et al. EM-DAT: The CRED/OFDA International Disaster Database www.EMDAT.be. Université Catholique de Louvain. Brussels, Belgium. Retrieved 11th June 2016.
- Habitat III (2016) Zero Draft of the new Urban Agenda. Outcome Document. <http://tinyurl.com/h2qtdb9> [Accessed 26 September 2016].
- Hanley, T, Binas, R, Murray, J and Tribunalo, B (2014) IASC Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan Response. IASC. OCHA, New York. www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Philippines_IAHE_final_report.pdf [Accessed 20 September 2016].
- ICRC (2016) Armed violence and the new urban agenda: Recommendations for Habitat III. *Policy Paper*. Available from: www.icrc.org/en/document/armed-violence-and-new-urban-agenda-recommendations-habitat-iii
- IMPACT (2016) Cities in Crisis Consultations - Tacloban, Philippines. IMPACT, Geneva.
- IRB (2001) *Current situation in the Uraba region regarding drug cartels, paramilitaries, guerrillas and smuggling of drugs and weapons*. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.
- Maclean, K (2014) *The 'Medellín Miracle': The politics of crisis, elites and coalitions*. Research Paper 24. Developmental Leadership Program. <http://publications.dlprog.org/The%20Medellin%20Miracle.pdf> [Accessed 20 September 2016].
- Martin, E and Mosel, I (2011) City limits: urbanisation and vulnerability in Sudan. Juba case study. *HPG Working Paper*. ODI, London. www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6511.pdf [Accessed 20 September 2016].
- OCHA (2016) Colombia. www.unocha.org/ochain/2014-15/colombia
- Ong, JC, Flores, JM and Combinido, P (2015) *Obligated to be grateful: How local communities experienced humanitarian actors in the Haiyan Response*. Plan International, Philippines. Available from: www.alnap.org/resource/20633
- Ramalingam, B Gray, B and Cerruti, G (2013) Missed Opportunities: The case for strengthening national and local partnership-based humanitarian responses. ActionAid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam GB and Tearfund. Available from: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/missed-opportunities-the-case-for-strengthening-national-and-local-partnership-based-humanitarian-responses-336897>

org.uk/publications/missed-opportunities-the-case-for-strengthening-national-and-local-partnership-302657

Seguridad, Justicia y Paz (2016) Caracas, Venezuela, the most violent city in the world. www.seguridadjusticiaypaz.org.mx/biblioteca/prensa/send/6-prensa/231-caracas-venezuela-the-most-violent-city-in-the-world [Accessed 20 September 2016].

Tanner, DL and Moro, DL (2016) *Missed Out: The role of local actors in the humanitarian response in the South Sudan conflict*. Oxfam. Policy and Practice. Available from: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/missed-out-the-role-of-local-actors-in-the-humanitarian-response-in-the-south-s-606290>

The Guardian (25 August 2016) Farc peace deal: rebels and Colombian government sign accord to end war. www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/24/colombia-government-farc-rebels-peace-deal-52-year-war

UNHCR (2009) Annual report on the situation of human rights in Colombia, Human Rights Council.

UNHCR (2015) UNHCR Country operations profile - Colombia overview

UNHCR (2016) Colombia Situation: UNHCR Key Figures of Colombian Persons of Concern. www.refworld.org/docid/559b7f424.html

UNRIC (2016) A refugee in their own country – the fate of the Colombian IDPs www.unric.org/en/colombia/

World Bank (2016) Urban population. Data bank <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>

As urban disasters increase in frequency, collaboration with local partners who understand the context is becoming an essential part of the response. However, the ways to initiate programmes and build partnerships in this complex environment remain unclear. This qualitative study interviewed 44 actors working on urban disaster in three settings; post-Typhoon Haiyan, in Tacloban City, Ormoc City, and Palo municipality in the Philippines, displacement in Medellin, Colombia, and conflict in Juba, South Sudan. The aim was to explore what is understood by a local actor, and seek urban-specific challenges to response in the current collaboration landscape. This companion piece to the fuller working paper provides international actors with site-specific, actionable recommendations for improving collaboration in each setting.

IIED is a policy and action research organisation. We promote sustainable development to improve livelihoods and protect the environments on which these livelihoods are built. We specialise in linking local priorities to global challenges. IIED is based in London and works in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, with some of the world's most vulnerable people. We work with them to strengthen their voice in the decision-making arenas that affect them — from village councils to international conventions.



International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055
email: info@iied.org
www.iied.org

Funded by:



This research was funded by UK aid from the UK Government, however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the UK Government.



Knowledge
Products