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Exploring the nexus between humanitarian and development goals in Aleppo

Saagarika Dadu-Brown, Abhimanyu Dadu and Muhammad Zaid

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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.

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Since 2010, the civil war in Syria has created one of the world's greatest humanitarian crises. This paper aims to present possible entry points for links between humanitarian and development efforts in Aleppo, especially in the urban context. It explores the grey areas of early-recovery and resilience programming, keeping in mind the challenges brought forth by a protracted crisis. This paper uses the Tamkeen project as a case study to explore how and where humanitarian and development actors can work together to better link humanitarian response to longer-term development processes in a fast-moving conflict context. By doing so, the research presents an in-depth understanding of potential entry points in ongoing development projects for resilience activities by humanitarian actors, and identifies opportunities to better enhance the resilience of displaced and host communities on the back of humanitarian response through the more structured participation of development actors.

Contents

List of figures and tables 5

Acronyms 5

1 Introduction 6

1.1 The scale of the Syrian civil war 6
1.2 Inadequacies of a solely humanitarian response 6
1.3 Needs and challenges of a development approach 6
1.4 A non-humanitarian case study for a humanitarian-development nexus 7

2 The Syrian conflict and Aleppo 8

2.1 Why is a discussion of a nexus between humanitarian and development goals relevant in this context? 8
2.2 Implications of the ongoing conflict and emerging protracted crisis 8
2.3 Displacement as a protracted problem 9
2.4 The urban context 10

3 Analytical approach and methodology ?

3.1 Opportunities for a connected approach 12
3.2 Coordination 12
3.3 Financing 12
3.4 Methodology 12

4 Layers of aid: reality, programme and definitions 14

4.1 Tamkeen project 14
4.2 Disentangling key terms: implications for funding and transfer of risk 16
4.3 Delivering aid, early recovery and resilience building in Aleppo's urban context 17

5 Addressing needs and strengthening systems: feasibility, coordination and financing aid in Aleppo 19

5.1 Feasibility of a nexus between humanitarian and development goals in Aleppo 19
5.2 Coordination 20
5.3 Funding mechanisms 22

6 Channelling assistance: sectors of response and Aleppo's communities 25

6.1 Sectors of response 25
6.2 Local governance bodies and local communities 26

7 Conclusion 27

References 29

List of figures and tables

Figure 1. Tamkeen project cycle 15
Figure 2. Stages of response 17
Figure 3. Role of agencies in Syria 21

Table 1. Target interview groups 12
Table 2. Interview type and location 13
Table 3. Official development assistance provided 23
Table 4. Type of humanitarian funding provided 23

Acronyms

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
ASI	Adam Smith International
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSSF	Conflict, Security and Safety Fund
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ERL	Early recovery and livelihood programmes
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International NGO
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LACU	Local Administration Councils Unit
LCs	Local councils
LNGO	Local Syrian NGO
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official development assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
TC	Tamkeen committee
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WaSH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

1 Introduction

1.1 The scale of the Syrian civil war

The civil war that has devastated Syria since 2010 has created one of the world's greatest humanitarian crises: displacing millions, fracturing communities and destroying large parts of the country's physical and economic infrastructure. At the end of 2016, an estimated 4.8 million refugees had fled Syria, and 6.3 million Syrians were internally displaced (UNOCHA 2017). According to INSO (2017) 'With an estimated 3 million people in need in "hard to reach" places [and] over a quarter of a million people besieged in cities, towns and villages, humanitarian organisations are working tirelessly to provide aid under increasingly perilous conditions'.

1.2 Inadequacies of a solely humanitarian response

The crisis has extended to such an extent that a humanitarian approach alone is insufficient to meet the needs of the people, unless it is accompanied by resilience and early-recovery activities. In May 2017, the United Nations (UN) Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammad said that 'we must bring the humanitarian and development spheres closer together from the very beginning of a crisis' (WHS 2017). Indeed, recognising this at a global level, the UN is spearheading the 'New Way of Working' agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul 2017, which sees greater collaboration between UN agencies, national governments, the donor community and implementing partners in the non-governmental organisation (NGO) and charity sectors. The approach leverages impact through mutually reinforcing programmes that reduce humanitarian need over the long term. The New Way of Working requires a greater sharing of information and pooling of resources, as well as coordinated planning and implementation among development and humanitarian actors. These ideas are also clearly articulated in former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon's report to the World Humanitarian Summit in 2015 (Moon 2015). These sentiments are strongly echoed by other key policy influencers in the humanitarian and development fields and are gaining further traction (O'Brien 2015; Redvers 2017).

Returning to the crisis in Syria, the current UN Secretary-General António Guterres, then head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), stated in 2014 that 'we must stop seeing the Syria situation as merely a humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian response alone is utterly insufficient. We must establish a solid link between the humanitarian, resilience and development dimensions' (UNHCR 2014). This is especially relevant as UNHCR has reported that increasing numbers of Syrians are returning to urban cities like Aleppo, Damascus, Homs and Hama, all of which have been devastated by the conflict (UNHCR 2017). Given that the conflict is still ongoing and these cities remain far from being considered 'safe' places to return to, UNHCR can neither facilitate nor promote these returns. As in Afghanistan, returning refugees and those internally displaced will be a reality of Syria's urban landscape for the coming years. To what extent can the pressure be relieved on those that are still in the country, on those who are returning or have been displaced, or on scant resources, institutions and infrastructure? This is a consideration that must factor into international aid assistance even now.

1.3 Needs and challenges of a development approach

Over the past decade in Syria and similar conflict-afflicted contexts, humanitarian actors have increasingly sought to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development interventions, in recognition that immediate humanitarian actions can kick-start early recovery and build longer-term resilience among affected population groups. However, humanitarian involvement in development activities has remained limited in both scale and ambition.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) currently estimates a funding gap of US$1.7 billion in the assistance that is required to meet Syria's emergency needs alone (UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic).[1] Meanwhile, development actors operating in these contexts, particularly those organisations that implement large-scale development projects – including sectors relevant to humanitarian response, such as education, water and sanitation (WaSH), and food security – have largely been uninvolved in humanitarian interventions. While collaborative approaches have been proposed in the past, these have rarely led to effective practical coordination.

1.4 A non-humanitarian case study for a humanitarian-development nexus

This paper aims to present the possible entry points for links between humanitarian and development efforts in Aleppo, especially when it comes to the urban context of Aleppo City, with large-scale infrastructure damage, displacement and a site of increasing returns of Syrians as the crisis becomes protracted. While politics and principles present valid and perhaps insurmountable reasons for why humanitarian and development goals should be kept separate, this paper aims to explore, in greater detail, the grey areas of early-recovery and resilience programming, keeping in mind the challenges brought forth by a protracted crisis.

This paper uses as a case study the Tamkeen project. In 2013–2016, the UK Department for International Development (DFID)-funded project implemented by Adam Smith International (ASI) provided grants for locally run projects in Aleppo. The Tamkeen project was one. Primarily a stabilisation project funded by the Conflict, Security and Safety Fund (CSSF), Tamkeen aimed to demonstrate how good governance principles and processes could be mainstreamed into service delivery in its project locations through community-based grants planned and implemented by local stakeholders in Aleppo and elsewhere, with interventions in sectors such as education, WaSH and food security. The project took a long-term approach to build local ownership, coping mechanisms and governance in Aleppo.

The relevance of Tamkeen[2] for the research for this case study lies in the fact that it was being implemented by a development actor, yet was working in sectors in which humanitarian actors too are closely engaged (WaSH, education, health). Lastly, the project's theory of change (strengthening local ownership and governance using a community-based approach), echoed an ongoing emphasis on community empowerment in a number of humanitarian programmes being implemented by international NGOs (INGOs) as well.

The research used Tamkeen as a case study to explore **how** and **where** humanitarian and development actors can work together to **better link** humanitarian response to longer-term development processes in a fast-moving conflict context. By doing so, the research developed an indepth understanding of potential entry points in ongoing development projects for resilience activities by humanitarian actors, and identified opportunities to better enhance the resilience of displaced and host communities on the back of humanitarian response through the more structured participation of development actors.

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- Review opportunities for addressing underlying drivers of vulnerability in Aleppo among displaced groups,
- Understand how the ongoing conflict in Aleppo affects the effectiveness of humanitarian and development initiatives,
- Identify resilience entry points for humanitarian actors in ongoing development projects in Aleppo, and
- Provide concrete learning recommendations to operational actors on these entry points.

This was done so using a three-pillar approach focusing on the feasibility of a combined humanitarian and development approach, coordination between humanitarian and development actors, and tracing the financing of humanitarian and development activities.

[1] The figures for Syria's development needs are harder to calculate.

[2] At the time of writing this paper, the original Tamkeen project referred to in this paper had come to an end. A new Tamkeen project is due to start shortly, but this paper does not make reference to the new project's theory of change.

2 The Syrian conflict and Aleppo

2.1 Why is a discussion of a nexus between humanitarian and development goals relevant in this context?

The relevance of the Syrian conflict and Aleppo specifically to explore the nexus between humanitarian and development goals is implicit in two contexts: as a response to the ongoing conflict, and as a response to the protracted crises that this civil war has now led to. Furthermore, displacement and an urban context posit two tangible areas where both ongoing and protracted crises manifest. This section will discuss each of these contexts to situate the discussion on entry points for humanitarian and development assistance in the consequent sections.

2.2 Implications of the ongoing conflict and emerging protracted crisis

The northern city of Aleppo has been a key location in which the Syrian conflict and its effects have played out. The largest city in northern Syria, it has played a critical role in the commercial, educational and cultural life of the country. Until recently, it had developed into a major industrial centre, and was second only to Damascus in size and population with an estimated population size of 2.3 million people in 2005 (BBC 2016).

Since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011, control of the city has been an important strategic prize for both rebel forces and the Assad regime. The rebels first launched a military offensive to capture parts of Aleppo in 2012, which resulted in their taking partial control of the city. Between 2012 and 2016, the city was the site of significant fighting between government and rebel forces, which did not result in decisive victory for either side.[3]

In late 2016, the Syrian government and its allies launched a siege to block supply routes to rebel-controlled areas. In December 2016, the government forces declared that they had cleared Aleppo of rebel fighters, although a residual level of fighting and shelling has carried on since then.

2.2.1 Ongoing conflict and the challenges in a besieged city

Aleppo, once Syria's most populous city and industrial engine, is now a ruined shell with acute shortages of electricity and water, and destroyed schools and hospitals. As of August 2015, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) estimated that over 609,300 people were in need in Aleppo. About 1.2 million people are displaced across Aleppo governorate and a significant share of those are thought to be residing in the provincial capital (UNRWA 2016). Interviews with local council members describe how electricity is now only available from private generators, water from wells or tanks filled by aid agencies, bread from charities, and basic education and healthcare with help from the UN and NGOs.

[3] Assad and Russian forces besieged eastern neighbourhoods of Aleppo City twice. The first siege started on 27 July 2016. Opposition factions broke the siege at the beginning of August 2016 for almost a week, but the area came under siege again 7 August 2016 and was completely besieged 4 September 2016. Many people relocated during this period.

Moreover, any temporary infrastructure, such as generator houses, clinics, hospitals, schools, water wells – essential and minimum necessary services for survival – are constantly on the verge of being damaged, contaminated or destroyed. Since 2011, an estimated 400 attacks on medical facilities have already claimed the lives of 768 medical personnel (Amnesty 2017). The regime's strategy to retake urban strongholds of opposition forces has been to establish a siege by cutting off all supply lines for the opposition forces, trapping innocent civilians along with fighters.

UNOCHA estimates anywhere between 3.9 million to 4.6 million people stuck in besieged towns in Syria and hard-to-reach areas that humanitarian agencies are unable to reach in a sustained manner through current modalities (UNOCHA, Syrian Arab Republic). Humanitarian aid is regularly denied entry by those holding the city (Morrison 2016). The cross-border problem of delivering aid has often choked resources coming into Aleppo. In July 2016, hostilities between regime and rebel forces halted all traffic in and out of Eastern Aleppo City (UNRWA 2016).

2.2.2 Fragile states with protracted crises

Conflict, post-conflict and fragile states often face the ever-looming threat of a protracted crisis. The destruction of infrastructure, systems and institutions that conflicts entail often results in widespread dependency on aid among local populations, which prevents them from becoming self-sufficient.[4] Considerable literature exists on supporting self-recovery by providing opportunities for enterprise and entrepreneurship. Once active conflict has ended, such contexts are often characterised by fragile political structures, at both sub-national and national levels.

While humanitarian assistance is given during emergencies, the sheer volume of those that fall within this category today and the extent of time for which people find themselves in situations of vulnerability, severely tests the capacity and applicability of humanitarian assistance over the long term. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan or Somali refugees in Ethiopia are a good example of large population groups that have found themselves in protracted crises with poor living conditions and dependency on humanitarian assistance. In displacement, often for decades, these groups of people find themselves caught between the humanitarian and/or development paradox. Assistance often does not factor into or leverage the positive coping mechanisms employed by those who find themselves in situations of protracted displacement. It often fails to focus on the most vulnerable or on providing them with help that will make them resilient and not dependent.

Again, the volume of people who fall into this category and the remoteness of locations where they often find themselves in are significant challenges that aid agencies face when developing solutions. Moreover, it is not just a question of assistance alone, but also of policy and governance. A concerted effort that involves national and local governance institutions and the development organisations working with them on technical capacity building, as well as humanitarian organisations that have greater direct contact with the people themselves, is essential to efforts to bring people out of vulnerability in a more sustainable way. It is important to examine this in the Syrian context in order to better prepare for a state of protracted displacement and crises in Syria.

2.3 Displacement as a protracted problem

The battle in December 2016 for control of the eastern part of the city forced an estimated 40,000 civilians to seek safety in the government-controlled west. Between September 2016 and September 2017, 911,000 displacements were reported from affected areas of northern Syria, including Aleppo (334,000), Raqqa (306,000), Hama (144,000) and Idlib (50,000) governorates (ACAPS 2016). Second only to rural Damascus, Aleppo reported 1,002,000 IDPs (ibid). In the last 12 months alone, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)[5] Cluster has recorded the highest numbers of registered displacements from Aleppo (334,000) (ibid). In terms of returnees, between January and July 2017, almost 603,000 displaced Syrians returned home according to reports from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (ibid). Of these, 93 per cent were IDPs and the rest were refugees, with the highest number coming from Turkey, followed by Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. An estimated 67 per cent of the returnees returned to Aleppo governorate, equating to 405,000 individuals. Along with the people who stayed behind, this presents a complex demographic composition for fragile and sometimes non-existent local governance institutions and local NGOs being remotely managed by INGOs from the peripheries of Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan to sufficiently address.

2.3.1 Emergency needs of the displaced and longer-term solutions

Reports released during the 2016 siege in Aleppo describe men, women and children providing harrowing details of suffering weeks of bombardment as well as shortages of food, medical care and fuel for heating. Their ordeal was compounded by the fact that the fighting had prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching the

[4] For further reading see: UNDP (2008), ILO (2008) and World Bank (2011).

[5] The CCCM is co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) for natural disasters and conflict-induced IDP situations respectively.

east for almost five months. Alongside food, water and protection services, one of the most pressing humanitarian needs was finding secure shelter for the newly displaced.

Simultaneously, displacements are ongoing and people are still fleeing the country. However, the crisis is now in its seventh year and so is also a protracted one. This repetitive compulsive trend which can go on for decades (as seen in Afghanistan and Iraq) often traps humanitarian organisations and donors in providing short-term assistance to address basic needs. With time, people who are forcibly displaced lose ties, documentation and often ownership of social and material assets. Land in particular is a key issue in post-conflict urban contexts that witness extensive returns of those forcibly displaced and migration from rural areas in search of safety, jobs and better living conditions. Still in a state of ongoing conflict, Syria will continue to present such scenarios of emergency needs to humanitarian workers.

UNHCR's general handbook (2007: 11) for programming in emergencies states that from the start – as a general principle when considering the appropriateness of measures – resources must be divided between immediate needs and actions aimed at longer-term improvements and the prevention of problems. Paragraph 44 states that from the beginning of an emergency, and even during preparations for an emergency, planning must take into account the post-emergency phase, as well as envisaged durable solutions.[6] It notes that a final phase of an emergency operation is the transition from emergency response to longer-term support, building a community-based approach and durable solutions (voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement). In practice, however, the UN Secretary-General has pinpointed this as a 'recurring gap' in the international response and a priority area where greater 'clarity and predictability are needed', both within the UN system and among key partners (Brookings 2013).

However, the limited availability of comprehensive humanitarian and development solutions that are not operating in siloes in such contexts has seemingly trapped thousands of refugees and their children in limbo, without a clear vision for the future and heavily dependent on humanitarian aid. Reducing dependency on humanitarian assistance in early-onset displacement is key. Striving for longer-term solutions for displaced groups is essential. Securing property deeds, land titles, civil documentation records – areas identified as enormous challenges in managing displacement situations in other post-conflict countries – can help alleviate some of the pressures. Agencies like the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC 2010) and the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS 2015) based in Kenya have developed guidance and indicators to measure the achievement of durable solutions for those in displacement. Think tanks like Samuel Hall have been working to develop contextualised multi-dimensional indices to measure integration of returning refugees and IDPs in contexts like Afghanistan that have witnessed a complex displacement situation for decades (Samuel Hall 2016). These, however, remain limited in their use by humanitarian organisations alone, while their benefits easily extend to those organisations who implement longer-term governance programmes in countries like Syria.

2.4 The urban context

Urban centres such as Aleppo are always recipients of displaced populations due to the existence of family ties or the possibility of finding shelter, security and humanitarian aid (IDMC). One neighbourhood in Homs experienced a four-fold increase in population due to displacement. This exacerbates communal and social tension in an already-fragile environment (Grünewald 2013: 11). Rising unemployment and food insecurity have put immense inflationary pressure on the economy of Aleppo in particular and Syria in general (Ferris *et al.* 2013). In eastern Aleppo (at the time of the siege), the UN reported that the cost of a 1kg bag of rice was six times higher (US$5.70) than the average price in the western part of the city. Electricity cuts to the pumping station also meant that almost 25,000 people were left without water supply at many points during the siege (UNOCHA 2016).

Traditionally, humanitarian and development agencies have had a 'rural bias', based on the assumption that this is where the most pressing needs manifest (Savage and Muggah 2012). The Syrian crisis has transformed the way humanitarian aid agencies see the issue of urban violence and delivering humanitarian and/or development assistance in a confined space under active conflict. Similar cases exist in Kabul, Mogadishu, Baghdad and Gaza (Moser 2004), but the Syrian context is unique in its scale and severity.

Although sparse, the literature has attempted to compile global experiences in humanitarian response to fragile urban settings (Moser 2004; Graham 2010; Savage and Muggah 2012). In many cases, even though urban violence may imitate conventional armed violence, it is seen as a symptom of some other crisis and not the crisis itself.

The case of Aleppo does not merit the same thesis. Three entry points for aid in violent urban settings suggested by the literature are relevant to Aleppo.

[6] Though the UN Secretary-General's Framework focuses on improving strategic support for solutions in the first two years after armed conflict, IASC (2010) recognises that this is a gradual process that could take years and has emphasised that solutions-focused programming is 'a complex process […] requiring the coordinated and timely engagement' of a wide range of national and international actors.

- The first entry point is calculating **the scale and distribution of violence**.[7] The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) is currently reviewing tools necessary to enumerate such levels of violence as being experienced in Aleppo, because none of the existing tools adequately reflect this information.[8]
- The second entry point calls for **enhancing support for existing public services** rather than supplanting them. This entry point has been accessed in Syria by way of local councils (LCs) and is what will be explored further in this study.
- The third entry point suggested is to **engage with the armed groups** because delivery of assistance depends a lot on their patronage. A study of urban violence in Syria (Morrison 2017), highlighted the prevalence of 'civilian protection teams' that emerged in the wake of the conflict to help deliver aid and relief in areas where traditional emergency service providers either could not or would not enter.

For this particular paper, and its focus on identifying entry points between humanitarian and development assistance, the third entry point remains premature as the conflict is still ongoing, while the first and second provide for possible areas of more immediate collaboration.

The second point of entry in the case of Syria depends on which party controls the area. In Syria's case, the state government's attitude has always been one of suspicion with regards to humanitarian agencies and is highly restrictive. Crossing the frontline between government- and rebel-controlled areas, which run arbitrarily within the city and are constantly changing, is always a dangerous prospect (Parker 2013: 3). In addition, Aleppo receives most of its aid through cross-border operations from Turkey, which presents its own set of logistical and ethical challenges (Slim and Gillard 2013: 6).

The complexity of the Syrian conflict presents huge challenges to an aid delivery culture that is already problematic in many respects. That and the fact that the war is ongoing even today matters for humanitarian and development programming because although agencies must remain neutral, they rely on supply lines, routes and resources that are directly or indirectly controlled by participants in the war. Aid delivery is closely linked to daily outcomes of the conflict, which makes the situation dynamic and unpredictable. Furthermore, the urban context creates additional challenges due to population density, urban violence and frequent movements of people.

If past efforts of aid delivery in other countries are an indication, the aid response to the conflict in Syria today will to some extent determine the extent and management of the protracted crises later. How urban structures are rebuilt, systems restarted and institutions established will have a bearing on the management of a large caseload of internally displaced people, returning refugees and inhabitants in poverty. Whether humanitarian and development goals can, to some extent, come together at this stage is a key question that this paper seeks to answer.

[7] It is possible that agencies have created their own tools based on experience and learning. These tools will need reconciling and scaling up so that other humanitarian agencies can also benefit from the tools.

[8] Discussions with ALNAP indicated that urban crisis response is gaining more prominence, which is why ALNAP maintains an online portal of compiled research in humanitarian response in urban settings.

3

Analytical approach and methodology

Given the highly complex nature of the conflict in Aleppo, this study seeks to develop pragmatic and operable entry points for humanitarian and development programming. The study therefore focuses on three core pillars: opportunities for a connected approach, coordination mechanisms, and financing opportunities.

3.1 Opportunities for a connected approach

This pillar explores the opportunities for engaging humanitarian and development actors in Aleppo and identifying the goals that bring these two together. The goals of local Syrian NGOs (LNGOs) councils and civil society organisations (CSOs) in Northern Syria and their current role in implementing both humanitarian and development projects will be factored in.

3.2 Coordination

The coordination pillar will assess links on three metrics:

- What coordination mechanisms exist where humanitarian and development actors can work together?
- Who are the key participants of these mechanisms and what are their roles?
- How could these mechanisms benefit both humanitarian and development actors?

3.3 Financing

The most challenging aspect of this research was tracing humanitarian and development funding in Northern Syria (and, where possible, in Aleppo). Could it provide opportunities for engagement between the two?

3.4 Methodology

This research was informed by a thorough literature review for establishing the context. Primary data collection was done through key informant interviews with groups outlined in Table 1 below. Field interviews were also undertaken with:

- Local councils (LCs) and their executive offices (5)
- Aleppo provincial council members (3)
- Tamkeen committee members and Tamkeen women's committees (13)
- Tamkeen grantees (5)

Key informant interviews were identified through snowball sampling, starting with Tamkeen staff, DFID and UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advisors working on Syria, and by acquiring a cluster coordinator contact list for Northern Syria efforts.

Table 1. Target interview groups

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	TARGET NO OF INTERVIEWS
Humanitarian actors	5
Civil society	5
Development actors	5
Donors	3
Tamkeen staff	7
Analysts/experts	5

Table 2. Interview type and location

CITY	INTERVIEWS TARGETS	ACTUAL INTERVIEWS	TECHNIQUE
Gaziantep, Turkey	4	6	Face-to-face
Istanbul, Turkey	3	2	Remotely (phone/Skype/WhatsApp)
Aleppo countryside, Syria	20	19	Remotely (phone/Skype/WhatsApp)
Idlib, Syria	2	2	Remotely (phone/Skype/WhatsApp)
Montreal, Quebec, Canada	1	1	Remotely (phone/Skype/WhatsApp)
Total interviews	**30**	**30**	

Due to the situation in Aleppo, all interviews in Northern Syria were conducted remotely. Face-to-face interviews were conducted only where respondents were in Turkey and agreed to meet with the interviewer. The sample for the interviews includes members in formerly opposition-held neighbourhoods of Aleppo City, areas of opposition-held Aleppo countryside, and former Tamkeen project members, in addition to LC members during that period. In total, 30 people were interviewed including eight women, 15 members of Aleppo City local council and Aleppo City Tamkeen committee, and seven participants who were in eastern Aleppo when it was besieged by the Assad regime. Table 2 provides the locations of the interviews.

4

Layers of aid: reality, programme and definitions

Having outlined the relevance of the Syrian context and that of Aleppo City to the discussion of a humanitarian and development nexus, this section will present the layers that exist between funding decisions and impact on the ground, before segueing into the penultimate section to look at the three analytical pillars of this study – feasibility, coordination and funding mechanisms.

A number of humanitarian, development, resilience, early-recovery and stabilisation projects are ongoing in Syria and have been over the last five years. At present, in the absence of a political solution, the disbursal of this aid remains devoid of a longer-term vision for the reconstruction of Syria, operating in silos of donor-established categories, project timelines, funding and reporting structures. This section looks at one project, Tamkeen, that posits an interesting foundation to discuss possible junctures of collaboration between actors working on various levels of response in Syria. It also sheds light on what exists on the ground in Aleppo, to support both humanitarian and development response – viable structures that could serve as conduits to connect emergency assistance to longer-term self-reliance through early recovery. Interspersed in this, the section takes a look at the definitions of key aid terms and the ambiguity that exists around them.

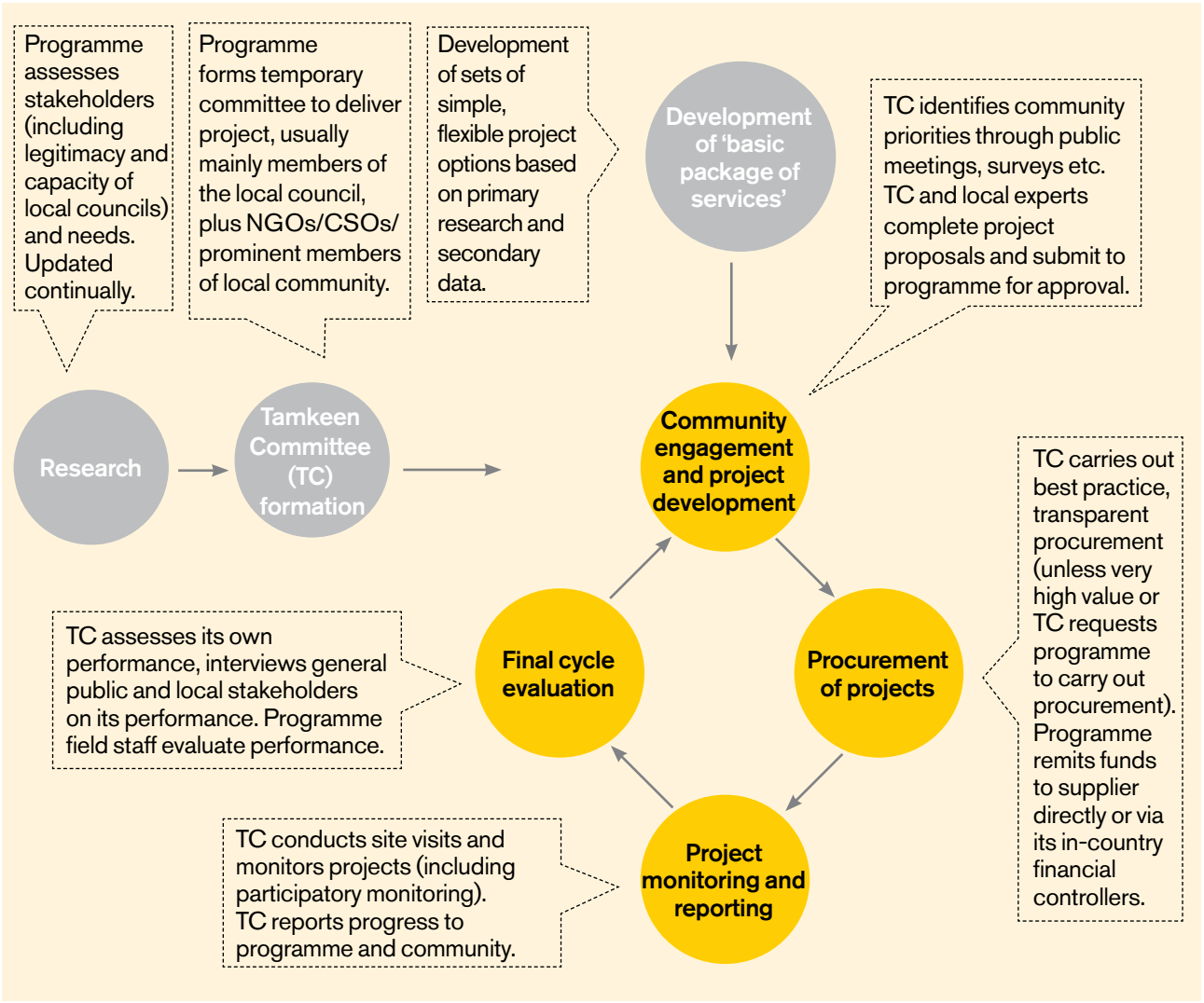
4.1 Tamkeen project

Tamkeen, which ran from 2013 until 2016, was a governance and service-delivery programme that operated in regime-free areas of Aleppo. It provided local communities with grants for service delivery, which were selected, planned, monitored and implemented by the communities themselves. Tamkeen, meaning 'empowerment' in Arabic, was a UK Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and European Union programme designed to build the governance capacities of local communities through the participatory delivery of services in opposition-controlled Syria. It provided grants to each of 36 communities per six-month cycle, and convened temporary community committees to plan, budget, procure and implement basic services projects funded by the grants. These Tamkeen committees, which were made up of members of emerging governance structures, civil society groups, and other community stakeholders, used a standardised and transparent planning and procurement procedure based on international best-practice standards. Basic services projects to be funded were chosen by the communities themselves via service delivery packages with associated model budgets in education, health, livelihoods, food security and infrastructure. Figure 1 describes the project cycle.

Projects undertaken by Tamkeen included the operation of a teacher-training centre and several women's training and literacy centres, school rehabilitation projects, the establishment or rehabilitation of several bakeries, repairing town drainage networks, clearing irrigation channels, projects to diversify local farming, constructing a local market, well repairs, repairing and asphalting roads, repairing and upgrading medical laboratories, upgrading solid waste management, and paying salaries to teachers.

Tamkeen established committees with local community representatives, local council members, and NGOs/

Figure 1. Tamkeen project cycle



civil society actors through extensive engagement and inputs from the communities themselves for ownership, involvement and buy-in. The committee administered grant allocation and provided a model for governance best practice. The committee identified community priorities through public meetings, community consultations and surveys. There was space within these projects for job creation, particularly in the form of unskilled labour associated with tasks such as road clearing, but also in more skilled areas such as construction, water facilities repair and electricity.

Tamkeen's interventions were designed not towards the delivery of services themselves but the development of capacity of the local communities, acting as substitutes of a formal government, to deliver such services. The programme's theory of change was based on the principle that good governance helps to improve living conditions **and** lays the foundations for future growth and development. The programme sought to change people's attitudes towards good governance of grant-cycle management, by illustrating that transparent and participatory processes deliver stronger outcomes than non-inclusive processes. According to the theory of change, this increases appetite for good governance and encourages people to implement good governance best practices in their professional lives in the future.

When it came to identifying prioritised intervention areas, the majority of the communities selected service delivery and development of infrastructure such as roads, schools, markets, water pumps and health facilities, rather than petitioning for humanitarian aid such as food, shelter or emergency health services. Tamkeen demonstrated that communities chose services that contribute to sustainability of their beneficiaries and the people in need, moving away from reliance on humanitarian aid.[9] The demand for humanitarian aid, however, would have increased during the siege, during which time Tamkeen had to stop operating due to security conditions.

[9] Information about Tamkeen's summary of Cycle III results was shared by programme staff.

Where then does Tamkeen fall within the spectrum of aid categorisations? In its theory of change, it is a stabilisation project, in its objective it is a governance-development project and in its implementation, in many respects, it also caters to humanitarian needs on the ground, such as the provision of basic services. Given the monumental challenge that currently faces the aid community, can such a project pave the way for clarity on the engagement of development actors and projects in tandem with the implementation of humanitarian programmes? The next section tries to disentangle some of these key terms.

4.2 Disentangling key terms: implications for funding and transfer of risk

This section discusses the understanding of what constitutes humanitarian and development programming in the field, including opinions of local Syrian NGOs (LNGOs) and CSOs who often work as implementers of both humanitarian and development projects.

4.2.1 Consensus and clarity

There exists clarity, at least in terms of definitions, of strictly humanitarian and development programmes among actors working on the Northern Syria response. However, for other intermediate approaches such as early recovery, resilience, stabilisation and growth, there is little clarity and consensus among actors (see also Figure 2).

- **Humanitarian assistance** refers to aid delivered in emergency settings due to the advent of a crisis – man-made or natural. It is delivered under the four principles of humanitarian assistance. This type of aid is delivered in short bursts involving the supply of food, water, clothing, shelter and other basic and essential services necessary for survival (UNOCHA 2012). Humanitarian aid is always associated with sudden-onset crisis and is mobilised to maintain human dignity during calamity.
- **Development assistance** is associated with long-term growth and capabilities of people, communities, societies, governments and countries. Such assistance is provided to bring people out of protracted problems such as poverty, unemployment, or inadequate governance. Such protracted issues may or may not be rooted in sudden-onset crisis (Kharas 2007). In the spectrum of aid provided, the programmes are divided based on the stages of recovery after a crisis hits a society, or when societies face endemic problems that extend beyond immediate humanitarian relief.

Studies such as Branczik (2004) and Benett (2015) have documented similar distinctions in their exploration of the definitions. Broberg (2011) has even documented international court orders and rulings that have acknowledged that humanitarian and development aid refer to two different terms of impact and operation. Our interviews suggest that there is agreement on these definitions from donors to beneficiaries.

The challenge lies in the context today, where humanitarian needs have persisted even as donors have tried to strengthen state systems and urban infrastructure. The New Deal Compact is an example of one such effort, where national governments are given greater control over development funding allocation and priority setting.[10] The emphasis is on country-led transition out of fragility. The New Deal was conceived by the g7+ and 19 fragile states and development organisations, and underpins current development practice.[11]

Identifying peacebuilding and state-building goals to consolidate donor development response, notably in countries like Somalia and Afghanistan, where large swathes of the population still suffer from humanitarian needs, came as a result of the reality of never-ending protracted crises.

4.2.2 Contested terms: resilience, early recovery and stabilisation

In the context of this, terms such as resilience, early recovery and stabilisation are much more complicated to define. There is less agreement on what these terms mean and imply on the ground, yet they remain important because of the increased frequency of usage of these terms in defining project proposals, measuring impact and driving strategic motivation of donors and aid workers.

A finding that emerged from the interviews was the distinction between global understanding of such terms versus local understanding. In Syria for instance, **early recovery** and livelihood (ERL) programmes are thought to influence the ability of people to emerge from shocks of the crisis quickly and there exists an early-recovery cluster to coordinate this response (GCER 2016). The strategic programme objectives for ERL in Syria are to improve safe access to basic and social essential services and infrastructure, to restore disrupted livelihoods for strengthened social protection and positive coping mechanisms of affected people and vulnerable groups, and to promote social cohesion and local participation for more resilient communities (GCER 2017: 2).

Other interviews suggested resilience programmes help mitigate the effects that negative shocks have on the affected people – in a sense, their ability not to be affected by the shock. According to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), the term **resilience** straddles both

[10] See www.pbsbdialogue.org/en/new-deal/about-new-deal

[11] The g7+ is a voluntary association of countries that are or have been affected by conflict and are now in transition to the next stage of development.

Figure 2. Stages of response

humanitarian and development programming (ODI 2016). Indeed, ODI has even established a 'resilience scan' report to track the usage of the term 'resilience' in humanitarian and development settings. Two questions remain, however: on which side of the spectrum does resilience fall and where does one give way to the other?

Finally, **stabilisation** may summarily be suggested as bringing people up to the pre-crisis level of livelihood and sustenance, and make them capable of absorbing development aid.

These three stages – early recovery, resilience and stabilisation – may also be referred to together as the 'rehabilitation' stage (Ramet 2012). The last stage of progress – 'growth' – is associated with better levels of human development index and quality of life, which may or may not be achieved with the help of aid.

Two points of departure emerged in the key informant interviews conducted for this study. The first was on the understanding of 'stabilisation' between donors, and the second was that even though some INGOs are today implementing resilience programmes through livelihoods and infrastructure-led interventions, they essentially split their programming based only on two basic categories (ie humanitarian or development) leading to disjointed and poorly integrated approaches. A key finding across all actors interviewed was the lack of a comprehensive plan or vision for the reconstruction of Aleppo, and how to overcome the humanitarian needs of its citizens beyond project timelines. This in itself would enable the categorisations of programmes not on the basis of funding but on the basis of the role that they play in Syria's recovery. Clarity of direction and purpose can only be achieved at a strategic level by the close cooperation and coordination of local development actors, humanitarian actors and the government.

In the above illustration, the first two stages (early recovery and resilience) come under the ambit of humanitarian agencies while the latter (stabilisation, rehabilitation and growth) are implemented by development agencies. However, agencies can often combine stages under a programme, undertake stages of development beyond their conventional role and even collaborate between themselves to carry out a large programme entailing multiple stages of recovery from crisis – all depending on the context. As an example, Tamkeen is delivered by private contractors for international aid who are considered to be development agencies. It falls under the menu of projects as part of Syria's stabilisation efforts. The context, however, has created circumstances such that Tamkeen is also affecting early-recovery and resilience parameters of its intended beneficiaries.

The sections that follow will describe the specific challenge of an urban crisis facing Aleppo and Tamkeen's point of entry; the feasibility of a nexus between humanitarian and development programmes; the mechanisms and point of entry for hybrid humanitarian, early-recover and resilience programmes; and funding mechanisms for such projects.

4.3 Delivering aid, early recovery and resilience building in Aleppo's urban context

Studies suggest that by accommodating a diversity of people, cities are more receptive to informal forms of service provision, and have a high degree of entrepreneurial drive and innovation (Graham 2010). There exists a heightened ownership among citizens within cities to either correct misplaced structures or preserve the metropolitan status quo.

Aleppo is an example of humanitarian programmes planned and implemented in a rushed and ad hoc manner. Many started out by deploying humanitarian aid through conventional methods without fully understanding the wider long-term development needs. Interviews with key informants working with donors and humanitarian actors reported that the initial aid delivery and coordination of aid to Aleppo (and more generally in Northern Syria) was haphazard, often duplicated and unplanned without any clear leadership in the early years of the conflict.

However, innovation in aid implementation to Syrian service providers resulted in a new way of delivering relief, ie by self-created local and municipal councils (Lucchi 2010). As a result, Syrian cities have been able to host many more international agencies with broader mandates that 'extend beyond narrow humanitarian aspirations' (Savage and Muggah 2012). For instance, activities by humanitarian actors in Aleppo are stretching to delivery of services such as water and sanitation, healthcare, education and even microfinance and livelihood services.

Self-organised local councils cropped up in cities to deliver public services in the absence of a proper

public authority. There is significant variation in how these councils are constituted from city to city – some comprise elected members, others are self-selected local strongmen or militia leaders (Favier 2016). These councils, in various capacities, have taken it upon themselves to deliver essential public services. While the future of such local councils under regime control is in question, their experience reveals lessons for humanitarian and future development work.

Two major challenges face these LCs – resources and capacity to deliver services. Secondly, there is the added expectation that such councils should be transparent and accountable. Residents of Aleppo interviewed for this research mentioned (unprompted) that these were important factors if these councils were to be seen as legitimate (as something different from what was the case under the regime). As a result, different councils had different rates of success when it came to legitimacy and effectiveness measured against delivery of services.

5

Addressing needs and strengthening systems: feasibility, coordination and financing aid in Aleppo

5.1 Feasibility of a nexus between humanitarian and development goals in Aleppo

In the context of the issues that Syrian cities such as Aleppo face, what is the feasibility of extending international aid to Syria from humanitarian and early recovery programmes to resilience and development? The short answer is that there is at the moment very little space to extend these programmes and these are limited by three factors: demand, capacity and risk appetite to undertake such projects. However, the need for such programmes determinedly exists.[12]

In our interviews, respondents clearly indicated that while there was a requirement to move away from emergency assistance, the prospect of creating any infrastructure to that effect was highly risky given the continued threat of shelling. The interviewees, however, also indicated that 'stability' or creating **local capacity** for essential services such food, water and electricity to be delivered was possible and this sets the platform for exploring the nexus between humanitarian and development programming.

At this local level, as reported by respondents, the 'capacity' of implementing resilience-building and stability projects requires two characteristics. The first is individual capacity of the Syrian people, expressed in terms of education.[13] The second is the capacity for transparent and accountable governance, which is in need of augmentation.

Another barrier is that donors have split funding between humanitarian and development work in their organisational structures. This is a consequence of past experience in countries such as Afghanistan. But the Syrian context stands apart. It requires a revised risk assessment and a consistency of effort on behalf of the donors to be able

[12] The 'need' is distinguished from 'demand' in the sense of priorities. While there is a need for resilience programmes, what is their priority against emergency assistance as determined by residents of Aleppo?

[13] Anecdotal evidence suggests that Syrian local NGOs staffed with nationals have higher education levels and capacity than seen in other similar contexts such as Afghanistan, Somalia or Yemen.

to cross-pollinate the two strands of assistance. There exist agencies, like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which have significant portfolios in both humanitarian and development programmes. Hence, overcoming this barrier for other donors is possible but would require some sophisticated risk analysis and advice.

The above-mentioned factors represent the restrictions to entry for development actors. However, in the Syrian context, humanitarian agencies cannot bear the entire burden of the crisis and need to think about relieving the dependency on emergency aid. At the same time, there is a demand for programmes that build resilience and increase capacity for early recovery.

A space exists where humanitarian aid can address resilience through its service delivery, and where local organisations, such as those created through Tamkeen, can provide support. Only humanitarian actors may populate the space since the risk of compromising humanitarian principles by allowing development agents to deliver humanitarian services is too high. The provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) that operated in Afghanistan are a good example of a politicised development intervention. In this extreme example, the military was responsible for delivering aid and development assistance (Hodge 2011).

David Cameron, the former UK prime minister, announced that delivering humanitarian assistance would be one of the five steps taken by the UK government to counter the threat of so-called Islamic State. This places the entire raft of humanitarian assistance and aid in Syria firmly within the context of a political agenda (Bryce 2014). The distribution of food aid in Syria has come under particular scrutiny from commentators in this regard because it has impacted on sovereign power relations and politics (Martínez and Eng 2016).

5.2 Coordination

During interviews, aid coordination in Syria was often expressed as the key challenge to delivering aid. Many of the respondents complained that aid was delivered in silos, often helping a few multiple times and the others not even once. Two of the 19 respondents also indicated that LNGOs often did not have the presence on the ground to clearly distinguish the degrees of vulnerabilities between various communities of Aleppo.

As far as the risk factors go, there have been instances in past programming in Syria that have lacked contextual sensitivity. In addition, 'Humanitarianism's ethics and imminent needs-based approaches building the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence – together providing for the physical and conceptual "humanitarian space" in which humanitarian actors operate – are fundamentally different from the more long-term, political, rights-based development approaches' (Lie 2015). Humanitarian agencies tend to be reluctant to share clusters, forums and information with development agencies since that would compromise their neutrality and impartiality.[14]

The cluster system of coordinating action is frail but present.[15] One of its primary objectives has been to share information to prevent shelling from targeting humanitarian assets such as warehouse facilities and office buildings. However, due to repeated set-backs the system is fatigued. It is also often the main forum where the resistance of humanitarian actors to development actors is expressed. Many development agencies do not attend meetings of the clusters. One reason cited in interviews for this is the traditional association of development programmes with political actors. A second reason, more specific to the Syrian context, was the evolution of coordination mechanisms over the past six years, which started off as ad hoc and without clear information-sharing lines. As one key informant noted, 'we were learning the context, process on the job as we went along'.

When the need for information and coordination was recognised, the Aid Coordination Unit in Syria was established to organise and report on aid delivered from the donors to Syrians. The Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU)[16] was also established to coordinate the work of local councils. According to interviews, donors started to bring their own visions and INGOs their mandates, and each was adopting various local councils. Throughout the course of this, coordination and information sharing were undermined by different interests. The reliability of information received from the field was also an issue that challenged stakeholders.

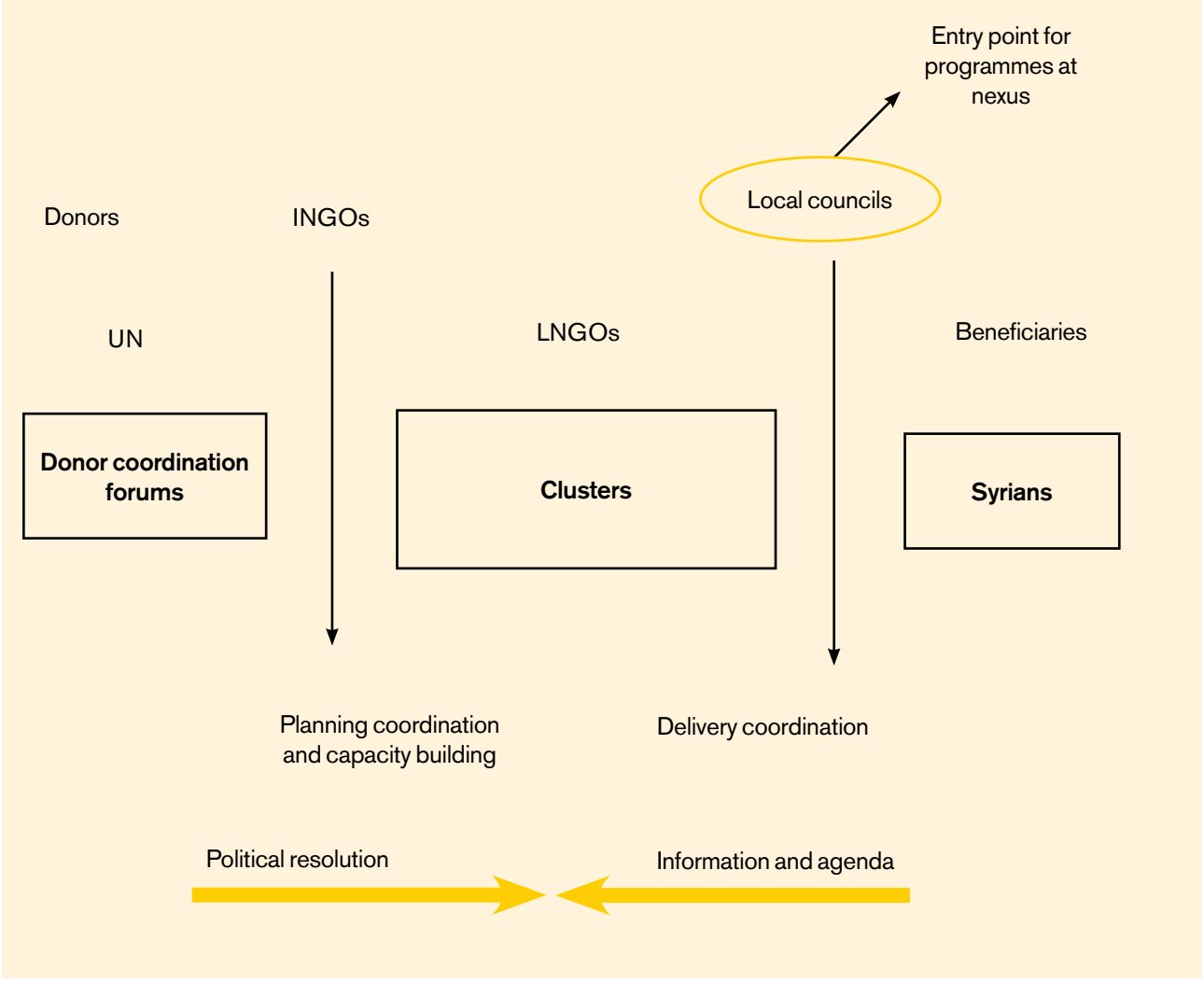
The unpredictable and intense nature of the conflict has only served to increase the cost of sharing information – both for aid coordination as well as conflict mitigation and advocacy. Humanitarian actors are disinclined to share information with development partners, to preserve their principles of neutrality and impartiality. Coordination with local government actors is extremely complex, particularly in a context where 'local government' varies from one location to another. In some cases, humanitarian actors will be forced to take a political stance if they are seen to be working alongside 'local government' representatives

[14] The evidence from key informant interviews suggests that while some humanitarian cluster chairs allowed development actors to participate in the coordination meetings, others were more reluctant to expand membership.

[15] Coordination is often an ongoing challenge and a very difficult prospect in delivering humanitarian aid in such contexts. The scope of this is beyond the subject matter of this paper but there are numerous studies documenting such challenges. In the current context, it may be said that aid coordination is not any worse than in other places given the tough circumstances.

[16] LACU is a Syrian civil society organisation specialising in promoting the concept of local administration in Syria through providing local councils with all needed services, monitoring and help in developing their activities, building their capacity, and contributing to the enhancement of active civil participation in local governance.

Figure 3. Role of agencies in Syria



from one side of the conflict or another. Thus, to build early resilience, and find a nexus between these two strands of assistance, there is seemingly only a very narrow path.

Respondents said that a critical reason to develop capacity of local councils in essential service delivery was to ensure that small local neighbourhoods became self-sufficient:

LCs are the only ones [who can] and and should be responsible for addressing them. For example, if the LC was unable to provide homes and jobs for displaced people from Aleppo it should contact [agencies] which can.

LNGO staff member, Gaziantep, Turkey

For instance, the city of Azaz depends on Afrin for three-quarters of its water but supply can get cut off if Afrin comes under active conflict. Localising and decentralising aid are the two key activities that would constitute development intervention and contribute towards resilience of neighbourhoods of smaller proportions. The view above was also held by key informants working for INGOs, whereby a key area of criticism levelled against Tamkeen was if it was seen to be duplicating existing local structures.

Important lessons can also be derived from the model of capacity transfer that Tamkeen used. Tamkeen's model was to constitute a Tamkeen committee with members of the LCs. By working for the Tamkeen committee, members of the LCs absorbed skills for public service delivery, which they carried over to the LCs later. The issue here though, was that at certain times the Tamkeen committees were seen to be substituting the LCs. Instead, it might be useful to recognise the value of having current and previous employees of LNGOs within the LCs. However, it would be important to be aware of situations which would compromise this arrangement, such as any conflicts of interest or legitimacy of the positions offered in the LNGOs.

Figure 3 above outlines the role played by various agencies in the aid response to Syria. The various actors may be pictured linearly arranged to facilitate the flow of information from local to global actors and the flow of planning for aid and resolution to the conflict from global to local actors. The entry point for programmes at the nexus of aid is in strengthening local governance structures like local councils to deliver the assistance. In delivery,

interviews with key informants suggested that LNGOs have a complicated role to play since at the moment, they compete with local councils for delivery and for the same funds. LNGOs and local councils for example apply for the same projects to source funding from INGOs as their local partners.

There are a few options to streamline the role of LNGOs vis-à-vis local communities. Since LNGOs often draw their staff from local communities, it may be possible to envision the LNGOs as representatives of their local communities and civil society. Indeed, many actors are doing so already. However, there are restrictions based on the organisational set-up of NGOs that limit the extent to which LNGOs may be regarded as local councils or local governance bodies (or vice versa). Many LNGOs imitate INGOs in their organisational set-up, which to a large extent limits their attachment to local communities and beneficiaries (Citizens for Syria 2017). Hiring practices are top-down in LNGOs whereas in local councils such as those that exist in Aleppo, hiring is bottom-up or nominated from the communities themselves.

The second option is to envisage LNGOs as a natural support mechanism for local councils in capacity. They may be relied on for delivery of those services that local communities may not be capable to deliver but done in coordination with the LC's agenda and direction. The acceptance of such options would need to gauged by all local actors.

5.3 Funding mechanisms

5.3.1 Finding the data

Tables 3 and 4 are a summary of data collected from databases maintained by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and UNOCHA. The UNOCHA Financial Tracking System offers a dataset on aid financing that refers specifically to humanitarian programmes and is maintained primarily for the purpose of coordination and avoiding duplication in delivering humanitarian aid.[17] Due to practical functionality, it was created from formal reporting practices between the members of UNOCHA. The OECD official development assistance (ODA) dataset is a collection of foreign aid (bilateral and multilateral) delivered by countries and other major donors collected and maintained through a combination of primary reporting and information collected from reports generated by donors.[18] Donors have different reporting practices – some declare humanitarian and development funding together, while others might separate the two. In addition, in donor aid reporting, strategic considerations often mean that the complete details are not publicly made available.

The two datasets were triangulated by a secondary data search against major donors identified in Syria. By visiting websites, specific entries in the OECD dataset were isolated and classified according to the purpose of the financing and marking them as humanitarian or development.

All programmes related to items listed in Table 3 were marked as humanitarian programmes. In essence, the classification of humanitarian programmes as used by UNOCHA was used to classify aid listed in the OECD dataset. The remaining distinguishable programmes were classified as development if they had long-term benefits such as livelihood programmes, provision of infrastructure, education services and long-term health and sanitation provisions. Another distinguishing criterion was the recipient/implementing agency of the programmes – the internationally recognised humanitarian agencies are only a few and receive most of the first level of funding. A key limitation of this analysis is that it is extremely challenging to extrapolate exactly how much funding goes to urban areas. This disaggregation is not yet captured in reporting mechanisms and would need a review of programmes locations and/or grants individually.

5.3.2 Datasets on financing aid to Syria

From the latest data available, in 2015, humanitarian assistance was 85 per cent of the total classifiable funding received by Syria. However, only 37 per cent of the net ODA is classifiable by sector. From the available data, it can be reasonably extrapolated that of the total available aid funding for Syria, at least three-quarters (or possibly higher) of the funding is for the humanitarian response. It must be mentioned here that the data include funding directed towards Syrian refugees in Turkey, Lebanon and other countries.

Another key factor learnt from the dataset was that agencies that almost exclusively fund development programmes – such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) or regional banks – had a nil portfolio in Syria. This indicates that the share of aid towards development programming is indeed quite low.

Other social infrastructure and services include construction of access paths to towns cut off by conflict, water pumps, electricity services, sanitation and other infrastructure rebuilt. Under development programmes, education is also a prominent sector of investment. This includes educational loans and opportunities provided to Syrian refugees as well as students inside Syria. Typically therefore, the development aid received inside Syria can be expected to be much lower than 15 per cent of the total aid in 2015.

[17] See https://fts.unocha.org

[18] See www.oecd.org/statistics/datalab/oda-recipient-sector.htm

Table 3. Official development assistance provided

OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROVIDED	2015 (US$ MILLIONS)
Humanitarian aid	1,532.0
Education	55.8
Unallocated/unspecified	8.8
Health and population	5.7
Multi-sector development	5.7
Programme assistance	5.4
Economic infrastructure and services	2.2
Production sectors	0.8
Other social infrastructure and services	184.9
Gross ODA	4,889.3
Net ODA	4,881.9
Net ODA classifiable	37%
Humanitarian aid (%) of classified funding	85%

Source: OECD Data lab

Table 4. Type of humanitarian funding provided

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING	2016 (US$ MILLIONS)	2017 (US$ MILLIONS)*
Camp coordination and management	0.72	1.95
Coordination	50.79	6.12
Early recovery and livelihoods	84.24	5.40
Education	53.33	27.87
Emergency telecommunication		0.49
Food security	132.77	82.67
Health	143.14	18.27
Logistics	7.53	4.07
Multi-sector	522.20	1,396.10
Nutrition	5.71	0.0
Protection	43.43	18.36
Shelter/non-food items	75.39	35.8
WaSH	50.11	8.7
Total classifiable in-country response	1,169.36	1,605.8
Multi-sector refugees	2,640.1	4.18
Unclassified	3,288.68	484
Total	**7,098.14**	**2093.98**

Source: UNOCHA financial tracking service
*Data for 2017 available up to March 2017

While the latest available information in the OECD dataset for Syria is until 2015, the UNOCHA dataset for Syria is only comprehensive since 2016 onwards. The total humanitarian funding to Syria increased to US$7 billion in 2016. The main share of humanitarian aid is delivered under multi-sector services, health, food security, early recovery and livelihoods. According to the space identified in the nexus between humanitarian and development programmes in Section 5, multi-sector programmes and early recovery together attracted approximately US$606 million of the classifiable funding in 2016. As a share of the total aid available, this represents a small but a significant amount of funding available to mixed programmes.

Analysis of these figures highlights a number of important observations:

- **Financial reporting systems could be strengthened**, with clearer and more explicit categorisation of funding allocation. This would allow for a more strategic resource-allocation process across humanitarian and development needs, and help to identify prioritised interventions.
- Donors should place greater emphasis on **creating multi-sector funding mechanisms** to incentivise implementing partners to design integrated humanitarian and development programmes. Currently, such approaches appear to be dis-incentivised through separate funding windows for humanitarian and development funding, which forces would-be implementing partners to develop their programmes in silos.
- Implementing partners have a key role to play here too, by illustrating to government and donors the **benefits of joined-up approaches**. Humanitarian and development actors should develop programmes that illustrate competitive return on investment to donors through combined approaches that are mutually reinforcing.
- Available funding for humanitarian work in particular tends to be dominated by a small number of large international agencies. Donors should consider **administering funds for multiple smaller partners**, which could strengthen multi-sector coordination at a programme level.
- **Localised funding must be tracked and documented**, especially in the context of urban centres.

6 Channelling assistance: sectors of response and Aleppo's communities

6.1 Sectors of response

Interviewees who were current residents of Aleppo and the surrounding countryside have indicated that the priority for aid agencies should be to create some sustainability in delivery of services that are currently being dispensed by humanitarian aid agencies. Identifiable sectors of opportunities were ones where humanitarian programming was already ongoing.

6.1.1 Health

Hospitals and clinics have regularly been hit by bombardment. In comparison to other sectors, health is more dependent on international support. For instance, health response requires skills not available in Syrian cities, and health workers either have to be trained or brought in from outside. Development of health response capacity in the local community could be considered for development-related funding.

6.1.2 Education

More than 1.7 million children are out of school and one in three schools have been either destroyed, damaged or are being used for alternative purposes (UNICEF 2017). As mentioned by one respondent, 'The generation that revolted was educated. But the current generation has severely suffered and is growing up without access to education'.[19]

6.1.3 Water and electricity

The water available per capita has dropped from 75 to 25 litres per day (UNICEF 2013). In addition, there are frequent power cuts and fuel shortages. Water and electricity infrastructure are actively being targeted by the conflict as a military tactic. Maintenance of water supply points and electricity stations runs beyond the scope of traditional humanitarian assistance. Building and maintaining infrastructure goes a long way towards building community resilience during conflict. However, this would need to be evaluated against the risk to invest in infrastructure in conflict zones, which faces ongoing bombardment.

6.1.4 Livelihoods

As previously mentioned, an extreme wartime economy prevails in Aleppo and food has been hit with severe inflation. Services such as retail, wholesale, transportation and construction have been negatively impacted. Manufacturing has been hit particularly hard in Aleppo, where many businesses have reportedly taken their businesses across the border to Turkey and are selling

[19] Abaas, a 29-year-old unmarried male with an undergraduate degree and working in Ghaziantep for an international aid agency.

back into Syria (Gobat and Kostial 2016). In addition, there exists little opportunity to find jobs and earn a living: 15 respondents in the overall study were unemployed at the time of this study, and eight were residents of Aleppo along with their families. An estimated 60 per cent of the population of Syria is currently unemployed (ibid).

These four sectors present the most opportunity for resilience building. The respondents from Aleppo, many of them having worked in the humanitarian and aid sector in Syria, prioritised these sectors over others specifically looking to build their ability to minimise the effects of the conflict. Crosscutting across these should be efforts to provide mental and psycho-social support to Syrians as well as appropriate care to people with special vulnerabilities, men, women, youth, children and adolescents.

An interesting question that was identified in the interviews was the capability at the nexus of humanitarian and development interventions to differentiate between sectors of programming. For this purpose, this paper defines cross-sector programming as a single agent involved in the delivery of services across different sectors. Thus, under cross-sector programming, community-based organisations and LCs could deliver services under education, health, water and electricity.

6.2 Local governance bodies and local communities

Now that programming space for resilience-building programmes straddling humanitarian and development characteristics has been identified, this paper explains the entry points for this aid in urban contexts.

Firstly, it is clear from interviews with key informants (international actors and policymakers) as well as primary respondents (local council members and Tamkeen beneficiaries) that local councils (LCs) have emerged as legitimate coordinating bodies on the ground, albeit with differing capacities and successes. These LCs have substituted government functions in regime-free areas of Syria. The recognition of LCs as implementing partners has slowly gained more importance in humanitarian aid programming which is seen as a step towards building resilience.[20] However, these local councils are currently competing against LNGOs for implementation. However, local community organisations, in the absence of formal governance structures, can have a higher legitimacy as residents recognise these as the new form of transparent and accountable public service providers. Respondents expressed a proactive demand that the capacity of such councils be enhanced to deliver services.

Tamkeen offers a solid example of capacity development for LCs. The Tamkeen committees, which were similar to local councils, were supported through international aid and expressly built capacity to deliver public services. Most Tamkeen committees envisioned an exit plan in which the responsibility of service provision would eventually be handed over to the local councils, by recruiting local council members to the Tamkeen committees.[21] This is similar to the secondment programmes that have been used effectively by INGOs to transfer capacity to LNGOs.

However, from interviews with key informants, it is also evident that supplying humanitarian aid through LCs is not always possible due to time constraints on humanitarian aid and the capacity of the LCs (Morrison 2017). Resilience-building initiatives closer to the development spectrum will find it even more difficult to engage with local communities since such aid is often tied to conditions that restrict who the aid passes through. Resilience-building initiatives that are identified here need strategic thought. To do so would require consultations between humanitarian and development actors keeping Syria's longer-term development and immediate needs in mind. Essential to this will be donor buy-in and Syrian ownership.

Furthermore, creating transparent and accountable LCs was not just the path but also the desired result for many people on the ground: to have services coordinated and delivered by transparent and accountable councils that derive membership from local people.

The opportunities to strengthen the response to the crisis in Syria is in supporting those actors that are present and part of the communities under crisis. This piece of research corroborates other studies that advocate locally driven programming by building local capacity and improving access to funding (Alcayna and Al-Murani 2016). There is further evidence to suggest that LCs may be prioritised to receive funding whenever possible and in their absence LNGOs may be considered.

[20] From key informant interviews done as part of this study. For instance, Save the Children recognises Idlib Health Directorate, a local community service provider as its key partner.

[21] However, in certain cases the TCs were seen to be substituting the LCs, which seemed to be an unintentional negative consequence of the programme.

7 Conclusion

This paper has sought to identify specific entry points for programming in the nexus of humanitarian and development assistance. This is an important endeavour as a lack of clarity on the definition of aid typologies is more than a question of unresolved semantics. Funding structures are built on the false architecture of programmes being either **humanitarian or development**, which perpetuates a siloed approach to implementation. Grey areas of resilience exist as this paper has shown, as a result of arbitrary categorisations implemented in a largely top-down manner, the lack of links between various actors towards a clear vision, and inadequate contextualising of the environment. Nevertheless, efforts are being made that provide crucial insights and ways of working where traditional humanitarian and development practices have found themselves constrained in their scale of impact.

Humanitarian goals have highlighted impartiality and a people-linked mandate while development efforts tend to address longer-term issues such as governance, rule of law, economic recovery or public financial management. In the Syrian context, and especially in Aleppo, it is very difficult to draw the line between humanitarian and development interventions, not least because local partners and implementing organisations work both for humanitarian and development organisations alike.

The use of the Tamkeen programme as a case study has helped to draw out a number of important entry points for future possible programming:

- **Governance and basic service delivery:** Infrastructure development is often targeted by armed groups, yet projects like Tamkeen show that there are entry points whereby best practices of local governance and accountability can go hand in hand with provision of basic services to assist those in need. Based on local community leadership and consensus, they are less likely to be targeted by armed groups.
- **Partnership with local councils and national NGOs:** Local councils and national NGOs bring fewer limitations than INGOs and carry a greater burden of risk, not distinguishing between humanitarian assistance delivery and development assistance.
- **Strengthening information sharing and coordination:** Coordination and information sharing should be improved at both national-cluster and local levels among implementing agencies and partners.

At a wider level, this study highlights a number of strategic imperatives:

- **Funding for multi-sector programming:** Donors should prioritise funding for projects that specifically address multiple humanitarian and development issues.
- **Implementing multi-sector programming:** Humanitarian and development actors must be more proactive in developing programme methodologies that address short-term relief and long-term development. They must also illustrate to donors better value for money and return on investment through mutually reinforcing combined programmes and collaborative partnerships with other implementers.

Fundamentally, the reason why it is essential to determine the nexus between humanitarian and development goals in Syria is to manage the protracted crisis that will invariably see itself manifest in urban areas in the country, including Aleppo. This study was formulated to identify specific entry points to programming in the humanitarian and development nexus, yet it is impossible to ignore the reality of short-term needs (such as food and shelter), as opposed to the longer-term needs of infrastructure development and support to civil society. The agencies and organisations that implement humanitarian work in Aleppo do not want to be embroiled in 'politicised' development funding, therefore any attempts to link humanitarian work with development goals must be couched in very

careful terms. In addition, security concerns throughout the country tend to preclude longer-term development initiatives in the current climate, so it is important that donors do not lose sight of the immediate focus for aid delivery and that aid continues to flow to humanitarian agencies.

Finally, while space exists in terms of opportunities, actors, sectors and funding there is a need for innovation and priority must be accorded to locally based service-delivery options. Projects such as Tamkeen provide a helpful blueprint for facilitating local governance and public service delivery.

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Since 2010, the civil war in Syria has created one of the world's greatest humanitarian crises. This paper aims to present possible entry points for links between humanitarian and development efforts in Aleppo, especially in the urban context. It explores the grey areas of early-recovery and resilience programming, keeping in mind the challenges brought forth by a protracted crisis. This paper uses the Tamkeen project as a case study to explore how and where humanitarian and development actors can work together to better link humanitarian response to longer-term development processes in a fast-moving conflict context. By doing so, the research presents an in-depth understanding of potential entry points in ongoing development projects for resilience activities by humanitarian actors, and identifies opportunities to better enhance the resilience of displaced and host communities on the back of humanitarian response through the more structured participation of development actors.

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.

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