



**URBAN
REFUGEES.ORG**
RAISING THE VOICE OF THE INVISIBLE

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



URBAN REFUGEES

is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) dedicated to improving the lives of urban refugees living in developing countries.

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- **URBAN REFUGEES** aims to improve the lives of urban refugees and IDPs in developing countries by:
 - GATHERING in a Platform key stakeholders so that they can share information, best practices and build joint advocacy strategies
 - INFORMING widely on urban displacement issues
 - ADVOCATING for policy change at the national, regional and international levels
 - Through this initiative, we want to mainstream the challenges of urban displacement in the humanitarian space. Convinced of the urgent need to revolutionize approaches to assisting displaced in urban settings, we want to create a new movement that generates real change.
 - In less than one year, eminent actors from the refugee field have joined our initiative either as Advisory Board members, as Platform Participants or as Contributors of our Debate Forum. Our website is visited daily by dozens of people from all over the world.
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➤ GATHER

The year 2013 was focused on the creation and the expansion of the URBAN REFUGEES Platform. Its aims were defined as the following:

- ENHANCE information and best practices sharing among participants
- FORGE a common advocacy voice at the international, regional and national level on urban refugee and IDPs issues
- AMPLIFY the voice and the visibility of key stakeholders as well as their networking capabilities.

International NGOs (such as the Women's Refugee Commission or Asylum Access), national organizations (like the Refugee Consortium of Kenya), academics and refugee Community Based Organizations (from Tanzania and Somalia) joined the new Platform this year. The registration form, the Platform guidelines and the Charter were drafted. An internal web forum was created to enable discussions among members: www.urban-refugees.org/forum



➤ ADVOCATE

An advocacy line was defined for the next 3 years. The key message is that urban displaced community based organisations play a key role in supporting their own communities in urban settings. There is now a high need for the international community to engage and support with those organisations.

The concept note of the project «A place at the Table: engaging urban displaced communities in solutions to their problems» was thus drafted.

The organisation also engaged with the Refugee Work Rights Coalition created by Asylum Access and the UrbanGoodPractice team of UNHCR.

► INFORM

In 2013, the newly created website was complemented with additional information:

- Case studies on Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan, Bangkok and Colombia were drafted and made available on the website
- An extensive bibliography on existing documents related to urban refugees was published



A Debate Forum was also created to foster discussions on key issues related to urban displacement:

The following pieces were published, with comments from readers:

- *UNHCR reviews its urban refugee policy: an air of complacency?* By Tim Morris
- *Why do we still have refugee camp?* By Michael Kagan
- *A rejoinder*, by Guglielmo Verdirame and Jason Pobjoy

A news Blog as well as social media accounts were open, with the aim of relaying the most up to date information on urban displacement.

Finally, a section of the website was created to compile existing good practices that had been identified so far. We then collaborated on this matter with the UrbanGoodPractice team of UNHCR to avoid duplication of work.

➤ **THE TEAM:**

The organisation was created by a graphic designer, David Delvalle, and a refugee protection professional, Sonia Ben Ali in September 2012.

➤ **THE ADVISORY BOARD:**

An Advisory Board was created, joined by:

TIM MORRIS

Tim Morris is a consultant, former editor of Forced Migration Review, who wrote the background paper for the December 2009 High Commissioner's Dialogue on Protection Challenges for Persons of Concern to UNHCR in Urban Settings. Tim has over 25 years of experience in relief and development.

MELISSA PHILLIPS

Melissa Philips is currently Senior Migration Officer at the Danish Refugee Council in Libya. she has nearly 15 years working experience in refugee caseload and policy roles.. She has a PhD from the University of Melbourne.

MICHELLE ARÉVALO-CARPENTER

Michelle is the founding director of the Ecuadorian offices of Asylum Access. and has held the position of Overseas Operations Director. She is currently the General Manager of TECHO-Ecuador and is based in Quito, Ecuador.

DALE BUSCHER

Dale Buscher is the Senior Director for Programs at the Women's Refugee Commission. He has been working in the refugee assistance field since 1988 in a variety of capacities and countries.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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WEBSITE:

www.urban-refugees.org

