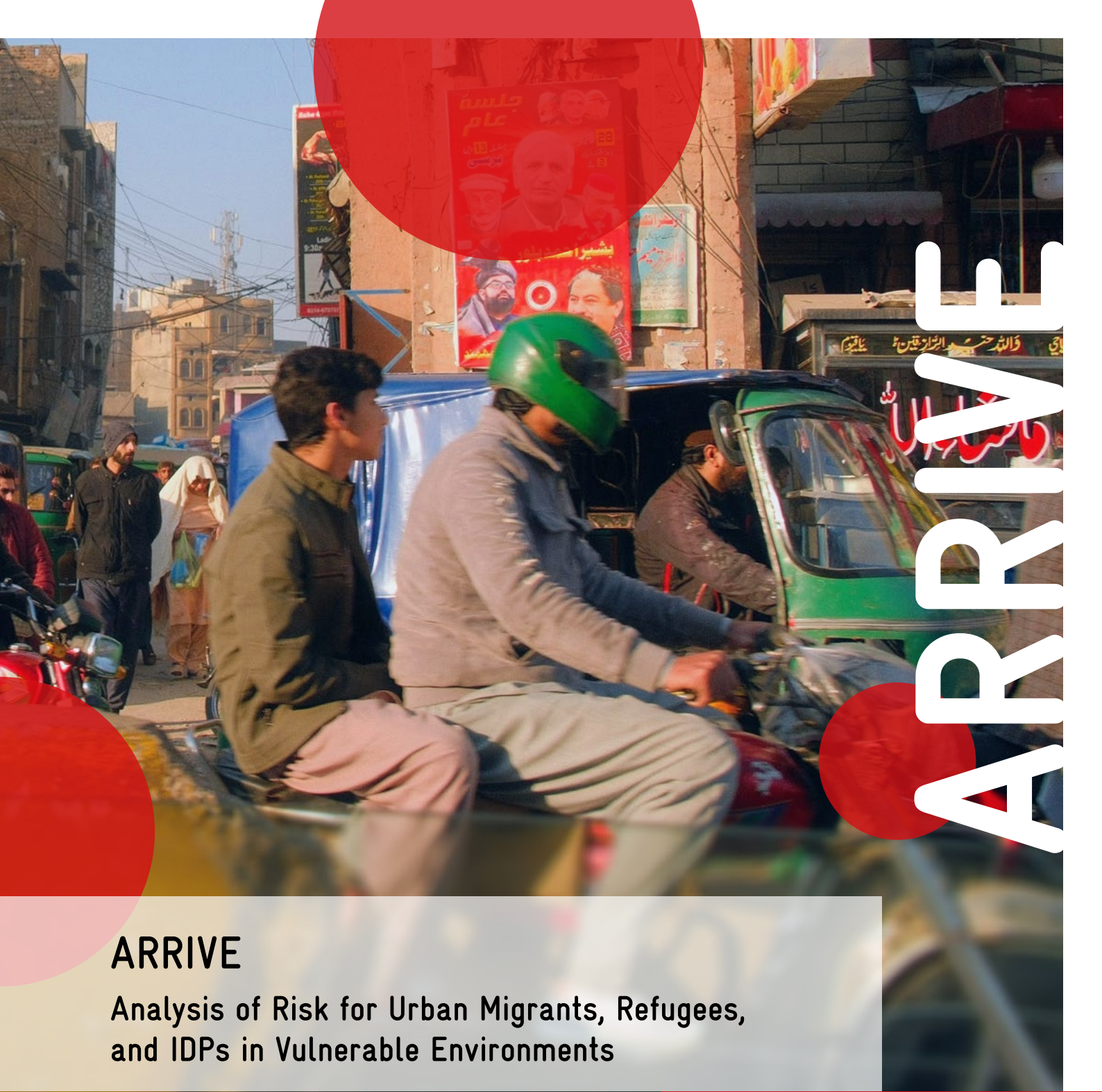




ARRIVE

Analysis of Risk for Urban Migrants, Refugees,
and IDPs in Vulnerable Environments

Study Report
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Bonn, September 2026

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The United Nations University's Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) was established in 2003 in Bonn, Germany. The Institute conducts research focused on improving human security and well-being by addressing current and future risks associated with environmental and climate change. Its main areas of work are risk, adaptation and transformation. For more information, visit <https://unu.edu/ehs>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

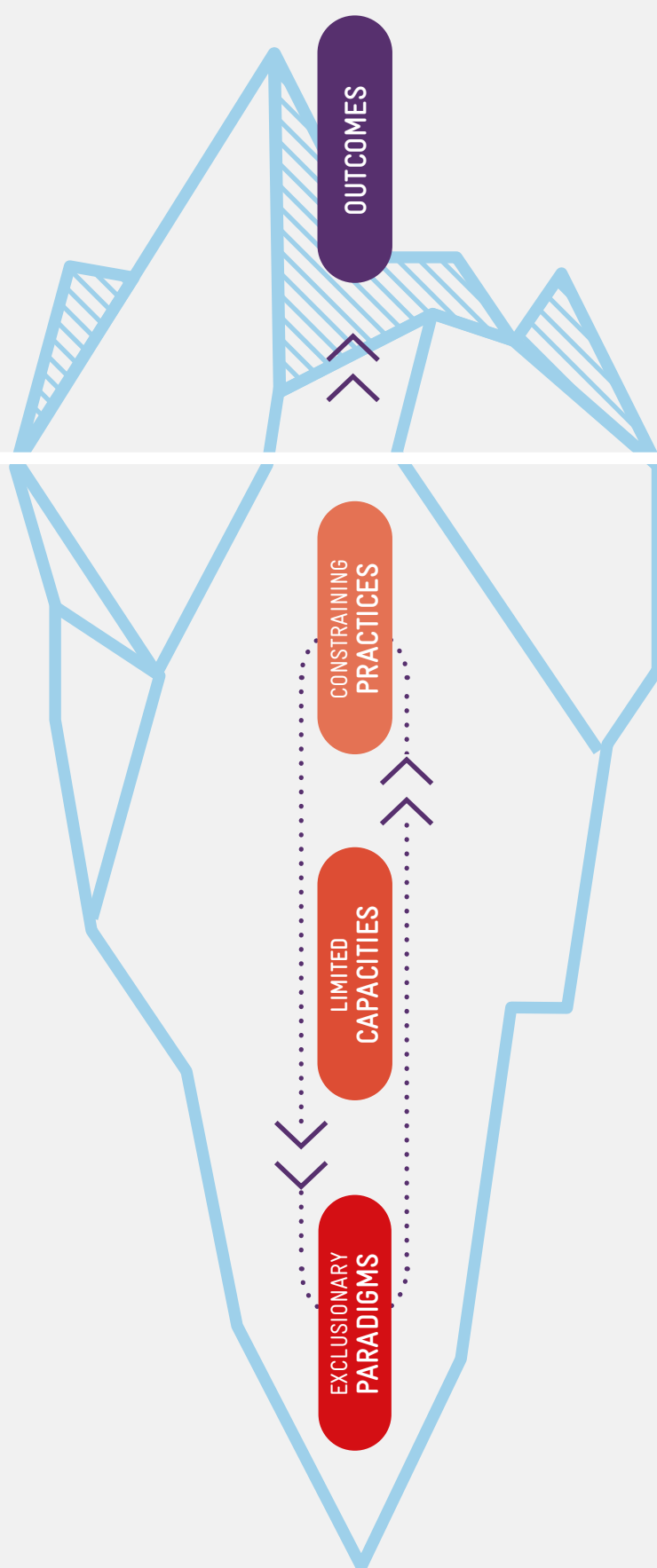
As global urbanization accelerates, cities across the Global South are increasingly at the intersection of multiple challenges, including the growing risk of climate-related disasters, inadequate housing, unplanned urban development and forced evictions. This convergence is reshaping demographic and spatial dynamics in ways that large metropolitan areas alone cannot absorb. A significant and growing share of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons settle in small and secondary cities. This provides a strategic entry point for targeted development cooperation.

The study “ARRIVE - Analysis of Risk for Urban Migrants, Refugees, and IDPs in Vulnerable Environments” was commissioned by GIZ on behalf of BMZ, co-financed by SDC and authored by UNU-EHS, with the aim of:

1. developing specific, place-based recommendations to reduce multi-dimensional exposure to climate, environmental, and socio-economic risks in arrival communities in seven cities worldwide, and
2. providing strategic guidance for a more coherent, risk-informed urban development cooperation (DC) strategy with recommendations for BMZ and other national, international and development actors.

Combining desk research with expert interviews and participatory validation workshops, the study assessed the status quo, existing solutions and concrete recommendations for seven secondary cities in five countries: Buenavista and Tanay (Philippines), Peshawar and Haripur (Pakistan), Cali (Colombia), Makurdi (Nigeria), and Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire). Based on the case studies and international literature, an iceberg framework was developed that distinguishes between the visible outcomes and the underlying practices, capacities, and paradigms that produce them.

FIGURE 1: ICEBERG MODEL WITH STATUS QUO OF THE URBAN RISK-DEVELOPMENT-MOBILITY NEXUS



Outcomes for mobile populations and cities

- Recurring exposure to risk, with limited ability to escape it
- Potential friction between migrants and host communities
- Limited access to secure jobs and livelihoods
- Declining physical and mental well-being for city residents
- Strain on housing, services and infrastructure in arrival areas
- Underused potential contribution of mobile populations

Constraining Practices

- Funding spread thinly across short-term, reactionary and disconnected initiatives
- Projects designed and run in isolation from related sectors
- Plans and decisions made without input from affected communities

Limited Capacities within cities

- Infrastructure and urban form able to absorb population growth
- Equal access to services, livelihoods and legal protection regardless of origin
- Institutions able to coordinate planning and response across sectors and levels
- Reliable data and local knowledge available to inform decision-making

Exclusionary Paradigms

- Migration seen as an economic cost rather than a potential contribution to host cities
- Infrastructure and service shortfalls blamed on migrants rather than on underinvestment in urban systems
- Migrants framed as either a threat or inherently vulnerable
- Risk treated as a hazard-only problem, managed separately from urban planning
- Climate-related mobility treated as a temporary anomaly rather than a recurring adaptation strategy

URBAN RISK-DEVELOPMENT-MOBILITY NEXUS IN CITIES WORLDWIDE

Secondary cities have become significant destinations for displaced and migrating populations worldwide, yet frequently lack the institutional capacity, infrastructure and financial resources to absorb sustained population growth. At the end of 2024, 123.2 million people globally were in a state of displacement. This figure has more than doubled over the past decade, with climate-related hazards being a growing driver of mobility, but rarely the only one. Humanitarian and development funding nonetheless is disproportionately directed toward refugee camps, despite estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) that at least 42% of internally displaced persons reside in urban areas. This mismatch leaves secondary cities to manage mounting pressure on housing, services and infrastructure with only limited external support.

Across the analysed cities, climate change functions primarily as a growing pressure intensifier rather than a standalone driver of mobility. Mobile populations frequently settle in informal, peri-urban or otherwise unregulated areas with elevated exposure to flooding, heat and other hazards, while insecure tenure, limited access to basic services and exclusion from formal labour markets compound their vulnerability. These risks are unevenly distributed across age, gender, disability and ethnicity, reinforcing existing inequalities within arrival communities.

Despite substantial differences in national and local contexts, the seven case studies reveal recurring patterns. The conclusion drawn from these shared stories is that urban risk results from underinvestment in systems that is exposed and put under strain by migration, rather than being caused by mobile populations. For this reason, the recommendations included in the report are geared to the needs of both arrival and host communities, addressing the pre-existing and underlying conditions of vulnerability.

- **Mobile populations across all locations are disproportionately concentrated in flood-prone, ecologically fragile or otherwise hazardous peripheral areas**, as a consequence of affordability constraints and exclusion from formal land and housing markets. This is documented along Peshawar's Budhni Nullah Basin, Cali's Aguablanca district and hillside communes, Makurdi's River Benue floodplains, Bouaké's Dar-es-Salaam and N'Gattakro neighbourhoods, and coastal and upland settlements in Buenavista and Tanay. In Peshawar and Cali, arrival areas show

how informal settlements, service gaps and exposure to hazards often overlap and can be mutually reinforcing. This underlines the **need for physical planning** that addresses shared urban systems rather than treating displacement as a separate and discrete spatial problem.

- The case studies document how **migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) actively contribute to urban economies and social life**, including through cooperatives and livelihood initiatives in Makurdi, homeowners' associations in relocation sites in Tanay, and community-based early-warning practices across different cities. The case studies also show that **inclusion takes various forms**. In Cali, documentation and service routes provide practical access points, while in Makurdi, cooperatives and livelihood support offer opportunities for migrants to participate in the economy.
- **Governance responses are dispersed across overlapping agencies with limited vertical or horizontal coordination, although the case studies also identify emerging entry points**, including a proposed Urban Cohesion Hub in Peshawar and coordination among authorities in Makurdi. Regulatory shifts can themselves constitute an acute source of risk for displaced populations, regardless of climate or conflict drivers, underscoring the limits of treating displacement categories in isolation from one another. A striking example is Pakistan's Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP).
- **Knowledge is scattered and not necessarily shared. Data and registration systems are consistently fragmented or siloed**, undermining both service planning and the visibility of mobile populations in municipal budgets, from Cali's disconnected registries to Haripur's "ghost population" of de facto residents who are excluded from infrastructure planning. **At the same time, communities retain knowledge of environmental change, repeated mobility and adaptation**, as seen in communities in Tanay who are forced to repeatedly move and adapt. In Cali, registries exist but remain siloed, while in Tanay the Registry of Barangay Inhabitants and Migrants (RBIM) provides local support for planning that requires sustained capacity and trust-building.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

The study produced recommendations which are structured in three tiers. They are designed to be integrated into existing German DC projects and to inform future actions of BMZ and other national and international development actors.

TIER 1 – ENABLING PRACTICES

Suggest adapting BMZ's own instruments, timescales and institutional architecture to mirror and enable transformations within the urban risk-development-mobility nexus at the local level. This requires innovative solutions to funding, mainstreaming elements of the nexus in the development of programmes and ensuring they are co-designed:

- **Support efforts to secure flexible and increased funding.** Consider creating a dedicated funding window for the urban risk-development-mobility nexus, in addition to sectoral budgets. Developing a cross-departmental instrument bridging humanitarian and development budgets between BMZ, AA and other actors will help maximise its impact. Funding related research and knowledge exchange and considering how other financial sources can be accessed will extend its reach and impact.
- **Mainstreaming the urban risk-development-mobility nexus.** Internal capacity should be built within responsible sectors by developing a nexus subtheme, thereby facilitating joint work across sectors. Sectoral projects should address strategic themes, including fostering a shared and common understanding and building a coherent, synergistic nexus approach.
- **Co-designing urban interventions with affected communities.** To ensure that projects address recognised needs, are well designed and effectively implemented, host and migrant communities should be involved in the design. Related activities should constitute an essential part of urban risk-development-mobility project budgets and funding schemes. Through deep and ongoing participation, this will enable transformation beyond the project or election cycle.

TIER 2 – STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CAPACITIES

These strategies are concerned with maximising the capacity of cities to address the urban risk-development-mobility nexus. Through funding, technical cooperation and implementation partnerships, BMZ, AA and other actors can support local systems that govern mobility in secondary cities. The four strategic themes below indicate where this support can be directed. They should be understood as connected areas of intervention, but each respond to a distinct capacity gap as identified across the case studies. While targeting BMZ and comparable organizations, they require close collaboration with urban actors.

- **Physical planning: Place-based upgrading and housing development in informal settlements and other at-risk arrival areas should be supported and funded with an integrated approach.** Investments in infrastructure, public spaces, and housing can help strengthen whole neighbourhoods rather than targeting displaced populations in isolation. They can range from temporary shelters to more permanent arrangements, in line with urban guidance from the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS).
- **Inclusion: Economic, social and legal inclusion should be made fundamental for all residents of a city and included in the requirements for related development project funding.** This means supporting access to livelihoods, social protection, documentation, and secure tenure as interconnected and essential conditions for reducing risk. Inclusion should also address social and cultural cohesion through an intersectional approach that accounts for gender, age, ethnicity, and disability. This approach reaps rewards for all residents of a city and aligns with the OECD's emphasis on ensuring access to employment, housing, welfare support and local services as a central prerequisite for the integration of migrants and refugees.
- **Governance: To build institutional capacity in the urban risk-development-mobility nexus, it is essential to strengthen vertical and horizontal governance capacity through dedicated funding and the establishment of multi-actor platforms, with a particular focus on smaller cities.** Migration and migrants should be considered part of climate adaptation and disaster risk management planning. This reflects

OECD recommendations on multi-level governance, policy coherence, and cooperation with non-state actors (OECD, 2018).

- **Knowledge: Investments should be made in producing standardised, but also context-specific, continuously updated data on the risks, needs and opportunities for urban migrant communities. This should include interoperable systems that make mobile populations visible in planning and budgets, while remaining sensitive to personal rights and data and locally owned.** Knowledge systems should integrate local or indigenous knowledge. JIPS similarly emphasises that urban profiling should combine administrative, registration, census, and community-level information, while adapting methods to complex urban settings (JIPS, 2021). Data sharing between departments and cities can ensure that decision-makers have the appropriate knowledge to address the urban risk-development-mobility nexus. At the same time, disseminating knowledge to migrants and other urban communities can build vital capacities, thereby reducing future risks.

TIER 3 – INCLUSIONARY PRINCIPLES

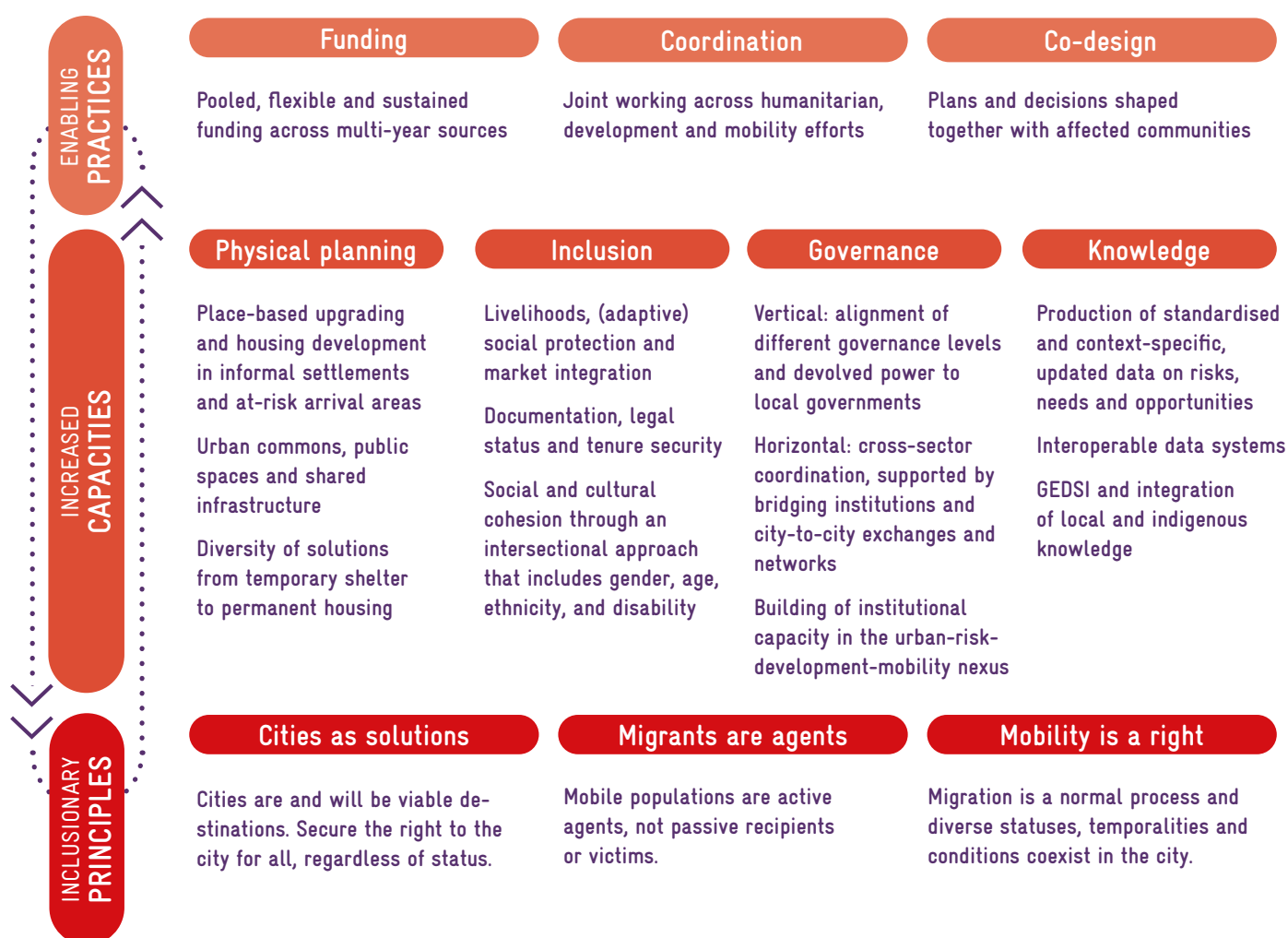
Positive change on the ground will only be lasting with a bottom-up effort supported by top-down leadership. This requires coherent approaches across actors and scales and joint learning to ensure that principles reflect local realities and needs. Comprehensive risk management can help redefine cooperation strategies and challenge existing exclusionary paradigms in the urban risk-development-mobility nexus. BMZ and other key actors at the national and international level can drive this agenda in international and bilateral spaces. This includes Germany's seat and work in bodies such as the EU, G20, OECD, and the Executive Committee of the UNHCR. The same is true for Germany's involvement in advancing and operationalising international frameworks such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Sendai Framework and related platforms.

- **Positioning cities as the primary response to displacement, instead of only focusing on encampments. Cities are and will remain the preferred and rational destinations for mobile populations. International development cooperation should therefore support the Right to the City for all**

residents, regardless of their status, rather than treating urban settlement as a failed response to displacement. This means that urban and peri-urban areas should be recognised and supported as central spaces for the protection, inclusion and development of mobile populations. This was observed across all case studies, where migrants, refugees, and IDPs are already embedded in housing markets, service systems, labour markets, and risk landscapes. This strategy aligns with UNHCR's urban refugee policy and approach to pursuing alternatives to camps, emphasising protection and solutions outside camps where appropriate.

- **Migrants and IDPs should be redefined as active city dwellers, workers and caregivers. Mobile populations are active agents, not passive recipients or victims. They contribute to urban life through work, care, community organization, local economies, diversity, and everyday coping practices.** BMZ can use this evidence to inform the design of rights-based and participatory programmes that frame mobile populations as active agents of change and development, as opposed to passive and vulnerable victims.
- **Mainstream human mobility in national dialogues on development and urban planning through comprehensive risk management, considering human mobility as integral to structural urban planning rather than an add-on.** BMZ can use international and bilateral policy dialogues to promote a broader and more context-specific understanding of mobility, thereby promoting coherent, aligned and inclusive urban and development programmes. At the same time, this approach integrates into the comprehensive risk management approach to the urban risk-development-mobility nexus, advancing BMZ positioning.

FIGURE 2: SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



CONCLUSION

Human mobility is a defining feature of the secondary cities studied, not a temporary response to crisis. Climate change increases existing pressures, but usually interacts with conflict, poverty, and limited livelihoods rather than being the sole driver of movement. As these cities continue to receive new arrivals, development efforts need to move beyond short-term displacement responses to support long-term urban inclusion.

The study finds that urban risk is driven by poor planning, limited services, and unequal access to safe land, rather than by migration itself. Mobile populations often settle in hazard-prone areas because these are the only affordable options. Their vulnerabilities are shared with many host communities and reflect broader weaknesses

in urban systems. At the same time, migrants already contribute to local economies, neighbourhood development, and community networks. The main challenge is not a lack of local capacity, but the limited recognition and support these initiatives receive.

Using the iceberg framework, the study shows that reducing risk requires more than addressing visible problems. Lasting change depends on strengthening urban systems, improving governance, and shifting the perception of migrants from being temporary beneficiaries to long-term residents and contributors. These findings point to the need for integrated action that combines urban planning, climate adaptation, and inclusive development across local, national, and international levels.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Auswärtiges Amt, German Foreign Ministry
ACC	Afghan Citizen Card, Pakistan
AMSO	Área Metropolitana del Suroccidente, Cali, Colombia
ANSTAT	Agence Nationale de la Statistique, Côte d'Ivoire
BICD	Bureau for International Development, Nigeria
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CAR	Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees, Pakistan
CDP	Comprehensive Development Plan, Philippines
CFA	West African CFA Franc
CRAV	Regional Centre for Victim Attention, Colombia
CSO	Civil society organisation
DC	Development cooperation
DRIVE	Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippines
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Order
ENSO	El Niño-Southern Oscillation
FODECAT	Local Government Development Fund, Cote d'Ivoire
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
GBV	Gender-based violence
GIS	Geographic Information System
GEDSI	Gender equality, disability inclusion, and social inclusion
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HMCCC	Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, Philippines
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRP	Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan, Pakistan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	Informal settlers' families
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LDRRMF	Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund, Philippines
MDRRM	Municipal disaster risk reduction management, Philippines
MFFE	Ministry of the Family, Women and Children, Côte d'Ivoire
MHDM	Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Nigeria
MIGRET	Réintégration durable des personnes migrantes de retour en Côte d'Ivoire et lutte contre la traite
MMIC	Municipal Migration Information Committee, Philippines
MSWDO	Office of the Municipal Social Welfare & Development, Philippines
MYP	Youth Employment Agency, Côte d'Ivoire

NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority, Pakistan
NCFRMI	National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons. Nigeria
NCR	National Capital Region, Philippines
NHA	National Housing Authority, Philippines
NIC	National Identification Card, Pakistan
NMS	National Migration Survey of Philippines
NSS	National Spatial Strategy, Philippines
OM3	Observatorio de Migración, Colombia
PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
PDMA	Provincial Disaster Management Authority
PFDA	Philippine Fish Port and Development Authority
PHP	Philippine Peso
PoR	Proof of Registration
PPA	Municipal Programs, Projects, and Activities, Philippines
PPT	Temporary Protection Permit, Colombia
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSS	Psychosocial support
PWD	Person with disabilities
RBIM	Registry of Barangay Inhabitants and Migrants, Philippines
RUMV	Single Registry of Venezuelan Migrants, Colombia
RUV	Victims Registry, Colombia
SAD	Sex, age, and disability
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency, Nigeria
SISBÉN	System for the Identification of Potential Beneficiaries of Social Programmes, Colombia
TNA	Training needs assessment
TWG	Technical Working Group
UHI	Urban heat island
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
URSU	Urban Refugees Support Unit, Pakistan
VOC	Volatile organic compound
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WSSP	Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar, Pakistan
TNA	Training needs assessment
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
URSU	Urban Refugees Support Unit, Pakistan
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
VRC	Voluntary Repatriation Centers, Pakistan
VOC	volatile organic compound
WSSP	Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar, Pakistan

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INTRODUCTION



As global urbanisation accelerates, cities across the Global South are increasingly at the intersection of multiple challenges, including the growing risk of climate-related disasters, inadequate housing, unplanned urban development and forced evictions. This convergence is reshaping demographic and spatial dynamics in ways that large metropolitan areas alone cannot absorb. A significant and growing share of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons settle in small and secondary cities. These are urban centres that frequently lack the financial resources, institutional capacity, and infrastructure to respond effectively, and as a result represent strategic opportunities for targeted development cooperation (DC).

This study was commissioned by GIZ on behalf of BMZ and co-financed by SDC to generate actionable evidence at precisely this intersection. It pursues two equally weighted objectives:

The **first objective** is to develop concrete recommendations for addressing the challenges faced by arrival communities in selected secondary cities to reduce the exposure and vulnerability of mobile populations across relevant and interconnected risk dimensions, i.e. climate, environmental, socio-economic and disaster risk. These recommendations are designed to be integrated into existing German DC projects and inform the design of future interventions in these cities.

The **second objective** is to provide strategic guidance for BMZ to achieve a more coherent and risk-informed urban DC strategy in the urban risk-development-mobility nexus. This entails building on scientific evidence developed as part of the first objective to underpin a systematic approach to German DC engagement within the nexus.

Together, these objectives bridge the gap between place-specific action and policy-level strategy, generating knowledge that is both immediately applicable and strategically relevant for the future orientation of German DC.

The study draws on seven case studies of secondary cities selected by GIZ as illustrative examples. The case studies include Buenavista and Tanay in the Philippines, Peshawar and Haripur in Pakistan, Cali in Colombia, Makurdi in Nigeria, and Bouaké in Côte d'Ivoire.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a mixed methods qualitative research approach combining desk research, expert interviews and participatory workshops to collect data and knowledge across seven cities in five countries. The aim was to produce a comparative analysis and synthesis of the disaster and climate risk facing urban mobile populations across the case studies. Small and secondary cities were chosen to reflect a deliberate focus on urban contexts that are frequently underrepresented in displacement research despite their growing relevance as receiving centres. The selected cities cannot represent the full range of risks and vulnerabilities that exist in secondary cities globally, nonetheless the range of environmental, economic and social processes and contexts within the studies enables general conclusions and recommendations to be made. While multiple forms of mobility often coexist within each case study, the analysis places particular emphasis on identifying the dominant migration patterns, recognising that these may overlap and shift across contexts.

The secondary evidence base for each case study was established through desk research and a review of the relevant literature, including academic studies, reports and existing policy frameworks. This phase provided the foundation for subsequently triangulating the interview data. Primary data was collected in semi-structured expert interviews carried out in each of the case study cities. Interviewees were drawn from a diverse pool of relevant stakeholders including local, national and local government representatives, civil society organizations and academic experts. If not indicated otherwise, data presented in the case study reports comes from interviews and group discussions. The specific primary sources are not named to ensure anonymity. A list of the institutions surveyed can be found in the [annex](#).

A team of local researchers was responsible for gathering data across all case study locations. To both synthesize the findings and draw analytical conclusions from the empirical material, the team actively participated in a series of structured validation workshops including local, national and international GIZ staff. One workshop was conducted per country, with two global workshops with GIZ to validate the overall findings. The results from the workshops were used to adapt the analytical framework mapping the drivers of risk specific to displaced populations in arrival communities, categorize vulnerabilities and establish the report's recommendations on climate-resilient urban development. GIZ and local partner organizations contributed substantively to this process through dedicated validation sessions and online forms, exchanging institutional knowledge and contextual and local expertise.

1.1 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is designed for both linear and non-linear readers, recognizing that its primary audience will often navigate directly to the most relevant sections for their context.

1

The **introduction** sets out the objectives of the study, the methodology used and the structure of the report.

2

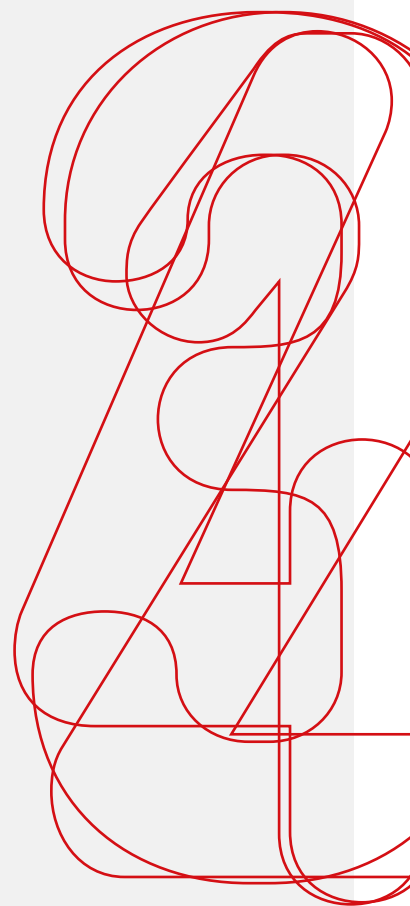
it is followed by a **global analysis** that puts small and secondary cities at the centre of the debate on human mobility in the context of climate change. This chapter establishes the broader evidence base and conceptual positioning, with context added by the findings of the case studies. It also presents the analytical framework developed specifically for the study. This provides a structure for both the case study analysis and the logic underpinning the recommendations.

3

The core of the report consists of **case studies** of seven secondary cities in five countries: Buenavista and Tanay (Philippines), Peshawar and Haripur (Pakistan), Cali (Colombia), Makurdi (Nigeria), and Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire). Each case study follows a consistent structure – national context, local context, human mobility dynamics, risk profile, risk drivers, existing strategies and recommendations – preceded by a short summary. This uniform structure allows for cross-case comparison while preserving the specificity of each urban context.

4

The final chapter presents **global recommendations and final remarks**, synthesizing cross-cutting findings from across all case studies. Rather than restating case-specific conclusions, this chapter draws out patterns and gaps that cut across geographies and displacement contexts, offering actionable directions for policy and programming for climate-resilient urban development.





GLOBAL ANALYSIS

Secondary cities, categorised by UN-Habitat as non-capital cities containing 100–500,000 people (UN-Habitat, 2021), have become important urban destinations for displaced and migrating populations worldwide. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Global Trends Report 2024, at the end of 2024, 123.2 million people worldwide were in a state of displacement as a result of "persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order" (UNHCR, 2024, p. 2).

They comprised IDPs (73.5 million), refugees (36.9 million), asylum-seekers (8.4 million), as well as other people in need of international protection (5.9 million)¹. These numbers are rising, as is the total amount of internal migration, and are expected to increase further, partly due to the growing number of climate-related disasters worldwide that cause displacement (Clement et al., 2021; UNHCR, 2025).

Secondary cities worldwide are already under pressure due to rapid urban expansion and systematic underinvestment, among other things (UN Habitat, 2020c, 2024). The influx of displaced populations puts further pressure on the cities, affecting the well-being of both host and arriving populations. The well-being of arriving populations is further threatened as they often settle in areas that are already prone to natural hazards, which are intensifying and getting more frequent due to climate change (IPCC, 2022). Even though a majority of displaced people reside in urban areas, humanitarian and developmental funding and programming remain overwhelmingly focused on refugee camps (Earle, 2023). On this matter, Earle et al. (2024, p.

81) write that "there is an oft-repeated anecdote among humanitarian actors in Jordan, that while camps only house 20% of Syrian refugees, they receive 80% of humanitarian funding".

This contributes to a funding gap for addressing the well-being of displaced populations in urban areas. Indeed, in many secondary cities, rapid population growth, exacerbated by an influx of mobile populations, is not matched by adequate investment in infrastructure, housing, services, or disaster risk management. Therefore, a shift towards more climate-resilient urban development, coupled with humanitarian and human mobility-focused approaches centred on secondary cities, is needed to ensure the long-term well-being of displaced populations and all urban inhabitants (Youngquist et al., 2023).

Unlike many metropolitan centres, secondary cities often lack the institutional capacity, infrastructure, and financial resources needed to absorb sudden population influxes. As a result, migration, especially when driven by conflict, environmental stress, or economic shocks, tends to intensify existing urban vulnerabilities. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America, the interaction between displacement and urban development has generated complex socio-spatial, economic, and governance challenges

¹ It should be noted that statistics on annual developments in relation to displaced populations, while helpful and indicative, can be unreliable and should therefore be interpreted in light of methodological limitations (Krause 2022).

(UN-Habitat, 2020; World Bank, 2025). One major challenge is unplanned urban growth and spatial expansion, as displaced populations frequently settle in informal and peri-urban areas where land is accessible but largely unregulated. Weak planning institutions and poor enforcement mechanisms in many secondary cities allow informal settlements to expand without adequate infrastructure or environmental safeguards, leading to overcrowding, insecure tenure, and heightened exposure to environmental risks such as flooding and pollution.

This pattern of growth complicates urban management, promotes inefficient land use, and increases vulnerability to climate-related hazards (UN-Habitat, 2020). Closely related is the strain on urban infrastructure and essential services, where rapid population increases place pressure on

already overstretched systems of water supply, sanitation, healthcare, transport, and education. As a consequence, displaced populations often depend on shared or informal service arrangements, thereby increasing public health risks, while schools and healthcare facilities become overcrowded and under-resourced (World Bank, 2023; IDMC, 2022). This dual pressure on services deepens inequality and weakens overall urban resilience.



Defining secondary cities

The concept of secondary cities entered the lexicon half a century ago through Rondonelli, who defined them as having a population of over 100,000, while not being the largest in the country (Rondonelli, 1983). Due to diverging development and demographic trajectories in the last fifty years, such a definition is now too general to be of use as it applies to both thriving cities in the growing economies of China and India and smaller cities in Sub-Saharan Africa (Roberts and Hohman, 2014). In practice, a secondary city is normally used to connote a second-tier city with regard to size, status or economy. "Intermediary" is another term used to describe small-to-medium-sized settlements. It relates to the fact that such cities are both between smaller and large settlements in terms of population and size, as well as connecting rural areas with larger metropolitan cities (OECD/UN-Habitat, 2022). Other definitions refer to intermediary cities as not being capital or primary cities, while still being important nodes for the circulation of good, services, capital and people.

Secondary cities can be 10% of the size of population or economy of the country's largest city. They can be sub-national capitals, housing the seat of a secondary level of government. Other terms for secondary cities are "leaders", "lagging" and "laggards". This classification is largely a function of their connectivity within supply chains (Roberts and Hohman, 2014). "Lead cities" are well connected to global systems and benefit from either resources or innovation. "Lagging cities" have established, but not yet dynamic economies. The majority of secondary cities are laggards. This means their populations are either declining or expanding rapidly, with associated economic, social and environmental challenges. Most laggard cities in Africa, the Pacific, Latin America and much of Asia fall into this category (Roberts and Hohman, 2014). It should be noted that the same city can both lead and lag, if, for example, its economic development outstrips its social progress.

2.1 MOBILE POPULATIONS AND MIGRATION CORRIDORS

The term ‘displaced populations’ covers a wide range of mobile people who can have both common and distinct experiences, needs, and vulnerabilities (see [Annex 1](#)). In general, UNHCR’s data indicates that the number of displaced people has grown consistently over the last ten years, with the total number having more than doubled since 2014 ([UNHCR, 2024](#)). Key displacement situations in 2024 mostly revolve around conflict, such as in Congo, Sudan, Myanmar, Haiti, Ukraine, and Palestine. However, other drivers are also at play. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reports a record of “nearly 45.8 million disaster displacements” in 2025 ([IDMC, 2025](#), p. 11). Disaster displacements tend to be concentrated where climate-related hazards coincide with large and vulnerable exposed populations. For instance, nine million disaster displacements were recorded in the Philippines 2024, of which 86%% were triggered by typhoons ([IDMC, 2025](#)). The two main causes of displacement—disaster and conflict—can be interlinked and mutually reinforcing. For example, the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar has been further compounded by the earthquake of March 2025. Beyond causing displacement, disaster also inhibited people from returning to their homes, prolonging displacement ([IDMC, 2026](#)).

Whether mobility is triggered by a conflict, the economy or the environment, mobility patterns tend to result in concentrations of populations as people move towards resources, opportunities and networks ([De Haas, 2021](#)). Urban areas offer access to services and infrastructure such as healthcare, education, and markets ([UN-Habitat, 2024](#)). They also provide greater prospects for employment and income-generating activities compared to rural or camp settings. This move towards resources and opportunities is true both when movement is a conscious decision, as under migration and when it is forced, as with displacement. Mobility can be classified both according to the degree of agency in the decision to move and by its distance and temporality. The vast majority of mobility is local and domestic. When mobility is international it is rarely direct, but rather through local urban transit points. The duration of mobility can be short-term, seasonal/cyclical, long term or permanent. In each case, it can involve moving to an existing (or even creating a new) urban environment. [UNHCR \(2024\)](#) reports that at least 42% of internally displaced persons reside in urban areas. This concentration is

not always in large metropolitan hubs, but also in smaller, secondary cities that absorb a significant share of migrants and displaced persons. Indeed, secondary cities are prominent transit and destination points for mobile populations, as they are the “primary reception centres for rural-urban migrants” ([UN-Habitat, 2020b](#), p. 15).

While conflict and persecution act as primary drivers for displacement, addressing these complex challenges requires shifting away from temporary relief toward structural urban development. Valuable policy ideas can be borrowed from countries such as Jordan and Türkiye, which have begun moving beyond short-term humanitarian responses by integrating displaced populations directly into national and macro city-level housing, services, and social protection systems ([United Nations, 2026](#)). Furthermore, in conflict-affected contexts such as Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, and the State of Palestine, the restoration of macro city-level infrastructure and urban recovery remains an essential prerequisite for voluntary, safe, and dignified return.

2.2 MOUNTING PRESSURES IN SECONDARY CITIES

Urban migrants contribute significantly to urban life in secondary cities, creating dynamic economies and labour markets, as well as vibrant cultural landscapes ([UN-Habitat, 2017](#)). However, without adequate policy support, the mounting pressures in secondary cities can heighten the vulnerability of both mobile and host populations, as access to employment, housing, and broader well-being is provided to a large extent by urban social systems that are already under considerable strain ([Gutheil & Schlimmer, 2024](#); [UN-Habitat, 2020](#)). For arriving populations in particular, these constraints often translate into high levels of insecure housing, unemployment, and poverty, alongside increased exposure to crime and drug use ([Adelina et al., 2020](#)). When arriving populations are defined as “other” or stigmatized because they are perceived as different or as a burden on society and public services, this can contribute to their social exclusion ([IIED, 2016](#)). These risks are especially pronounced in what [Roberts and Hohmann \(2014\)](#) describe as “laggard cities”—urban areas experiencing rapid population growth without commensurate investment, where rising poverty coincides with significant housing deficits and little job creation.



Recognition of secondary cities in international frameworks

The need to address secondary cities is recognised in numerous frameworks related to urban development, mobility, and humanitarianism. UN-Habitat highlights that in the context of a changing climate, secondary cities are often destinations for those affected by human mobility. This is because they are relatively easy to get to, cheaper than moving to capital cities and are likely to require less cultural adaptation. Especially emphasised is the need for improved policies to address the vulnerabilities of such communities (OECD/UN-Habitat, 2022). Precisely because they do have the status of large or even megacities, they provide opportunities for sustainable growth.

The Global Compact on Migration (GCM) recognizes that targeted economic and technical support for intermediate migration hubs is needed to provide services, support labour market inclusion, and manage urban-rural linkages (UNGA, 2018). The Global Compact for Refugees (UNHCR, 2018) recognises the importance of urban environments in refugee situations and the need to “address accommodation, water, sanitation and hygiene, infrastructure and environmental challenges in

or near refugee-hosting rural and urban areas (Article 79). It also highlights the need to “strengthen institutional capacities, infrastructure and accommodation at local levels” (Article 37) and that “Networks of cities and municipalities hosting refugee are invited to share good practices and innovative approaches to responses in urban settings” (Article 38).

Within the humanitarian and disaster sector, the Making Cities Resilient (MCR2030) initiative is coordinated by the UNDRR. With over 2,000 cities participating across 99 countries, hundreds of secondary cities are involved in creating a roadmap to resilience. The UN Secretary-General’s Early Warnings for All Initiative (EW4All) centres on four pillars: Risk Knowledge and Management, Observations and Forecasting, Dissemination and Communication and Preparedness to Respond (WHO, 2025). However, until now a significant proportion of people living in cities in low-and-middle income countries (LMIC) are not covered by early warning systems and as such, a city-specific framework would facilitate adaptive urban resilience (Sheehan et al., 2025).

UN-Habitat's World Cities Report (2024) identifies a significant funding gap for resilient urban infrastructures. Cities need an estimated USD 4.5 to 5.4 trillion annually to build and maintain resilient infrastructures; currently financing stands at just USD 831 billion. Secondary cities are often especially under-resourced, partially because governments and development organisations seem to exhibit a bias towards countries' largest or 'primary' cities. In contrast, secondary cities often lack the autonomy or capacity to attract and manage large-scale investments (Roberts & Hohmann, 2014; Roberts et al., 2022; UN-Habitat, 2020b).

Gender is a critical dimension of vulnerability, as it determines who is exposed to risk and who is able to respond to it. Secure tenure remains disproportionately out of reach for women: globally, only around a quarter of women hold legal documentation for the land they occupy, leaving them more exposed to eviction and less able to use land as collateral for credit, investment, or recovery after a shock (UN-Habitat, 2025). This insecurity is compounded within informal settlements, where poor lighting, inadequate service provision, and the disruption of eviction or displacement have been linked to heightened risks of gender-based violence for women and girls (UN-Habitat, n.d.; McIlwaine, 2013). Mobility linked to climate and disaster risk adds a further layer: Gender as well as age, ethnicity and other characteristics play a role in determining who is displaced, what support they can access, and whether durable solutions are reached. This means that processes that do not account for gender risk reinforce rather than reduce existing inequalities (IDMC, 2023).

As a result, many displaced persons reside in areas that cause further disadvantages because they are unsuitable for housing, prone to risk or outside the formal market—or all of these combined. These settlements are characterised by insecure tenure, overcrowding, and a lack of basic services, such as clean water and sanitation, as well as high (youth) unemployment or high rates of informal work, which exacerbates social and economic vulnerabilities (UN-Habitat, 2020b). These dynamics are reflected in the expansion of urban informal settlements globally, with approximately 1.1 billion people currently living in such settings. This number is projected to increase by a further two billion by the middle of the century, with most of that growth occurring in secondary cities (UN STATS, 2023). This combination of systematic underinvestment with rapid (unplanned) expansion contributes to mounting pressures across multiple systems, including infrastructures facilitating water

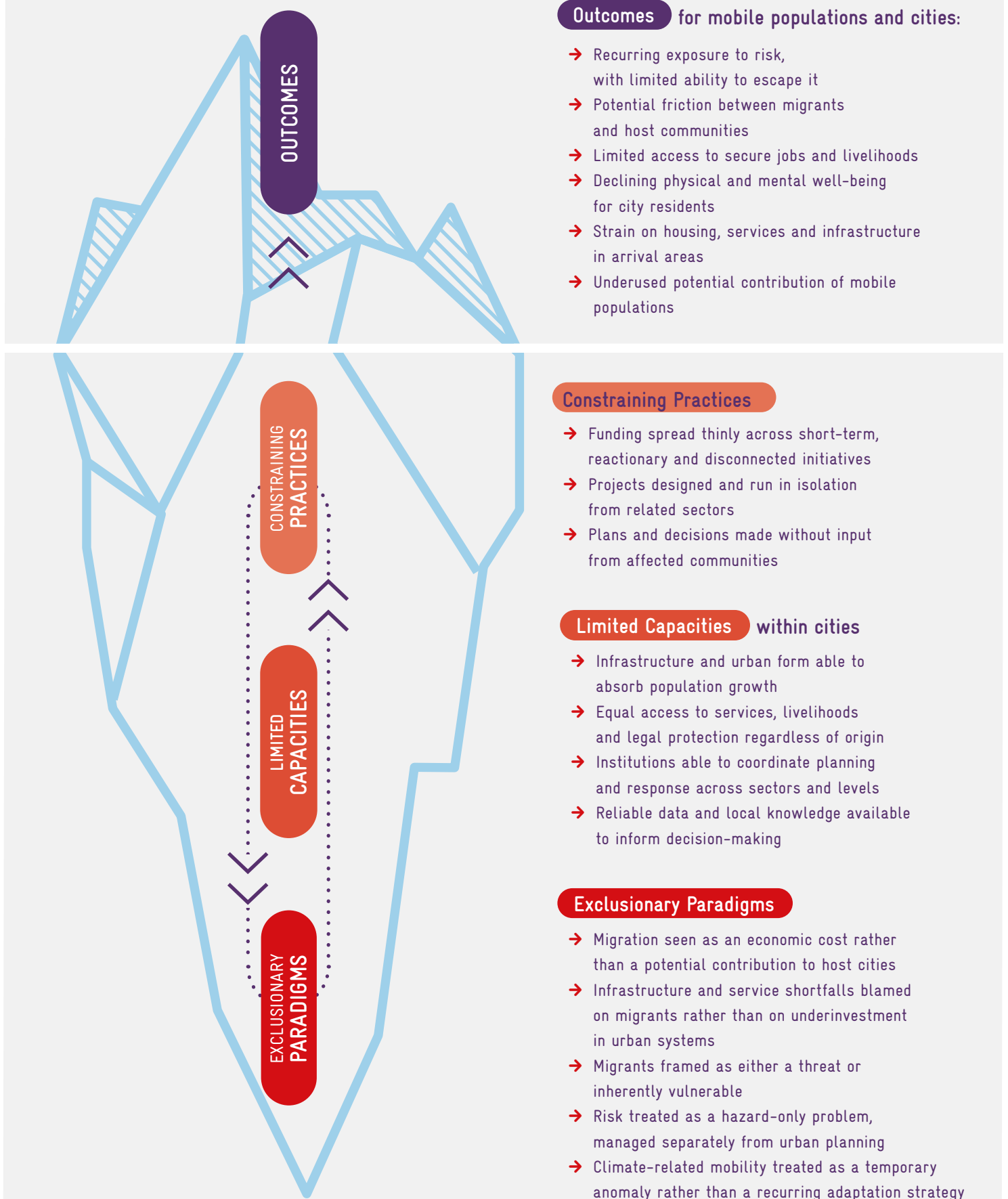
and energy access, economic activity, public services, social cohesion, (formal) employment, and governance capacities (Roberts & Hohmann, 2014). These pressures can be interconnected and mutually reinforcing, for example if strained infrastructure undermines public service delivery and economic volatility exacerbates social inequalities.

2.3 CLIMATE CHANGE AS A PRESSURE INTENSIFIER

The 2024 World Cities report claims that “By the 2050s, more than 1.6 billion urban residents will be exposed to extreme temperatures of at least 35°C” (UN-Habitat, 2024, p. 6). It also finds that, by 2023, “At least 517 million people living in cities will be exposed to riverine flooding with a 100-year return period” (UN-Habitat, 2024, p. 9). This represents 14% of the global population living in cities. One reason for these high numbers is the increasing frequency and intensity of hazards related to climate change. A second factor is vulnerability (Malm, 2023), which is determined by a wide range of socio-economic factors. For instance, social and spatial inequalities determine who bears the brunt of disaster risk, while people's ability to cope is influenced by their social and economic positions (UN-Habitat, 2024; Tierney, 2025; Vickery et al., 2023).

The precarious conditions in which many marginalised groups such as migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees in secondary cities live, such as limited access to a secure livelihood, basic services, adequate housing and formal employment, contribute to their vulnerability towards environmental and climate hazards (Guadagno et al., 2017; Satterthwaite et al., 2020). For instance, during heatwaves, poorer populations are disproportionately at risk as they live in densely populated areas with little green space, substandard housing, and high exposure to working in informal labour (UN-Habitat, 2025). Regarding flooding, the urban poor frequently reside in informal settlements that operate outside of formal planning frameworks, resulting in unsafe structures in high-risk areas, such as floodplains or steep slopes (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1989; Lombard & Horn, 2024). Consequently, people living in urban informal settlements often have little protection from hazards such as floods, which leads to high rates of injury or health issues. Moreover, housing itself can be damaged or lost, leading to high costs or (further) displacement (Mirwald et al., 2024). Failure to secure adequate housing leads to significant cascading risks in the case of environmental hazards.

FIGURE 3: ICEBERG MODEL WITH STATUS QUO OF THE URBAN RISK-DEVELOPMENT-MOBILITY NEXUS



Such risks are conditioned by social markers, such as age, gender, disability and ethnicity. For example, high youth unemployment limits the economic coping strategies of young mobile populations, while older people face heightened health risks and reduced physical mobility during extreme events. For women, vulnerability is frequently compounded by exclusion from formal labour markets, financial services, and property ownership, alongside increased exposure to gender-based violence and discrimination in disaster and post-disaster contexts (Joireman, 2023). It has long been known in the disaster literature that diverse ethnicities, languages and cultures can affect vulnerability before and after disasters (Fothergill et al., 1999). Taken together, these intersecting inequalities exacerbate climate risk for mobile populations in secondary cities, reinforcing precarity and causing a decline in their well-being, particularly if disaster risk management does not sufficiently take into account new and growing informal areas (Ndabezitha et al., 2024).

2.4 URBAN RISK-DEVELOPMENT-MOBILITY NEXUS

As has been shown, the origins and propagation of risk in the urban risk-development-mobility nexus is complex, and the result of a range of context-specific and changing structures and processes. Properly understanding risks and considering how to address them requires moving beyond the proximate causes to a deeper understanding of more remote, sometimes invisible drivers. To structure the analysis of risk facing urban migrants, refugees, and IDPs across the seven case studies, this report employs an iceberg framework (see Figure 1). The framework organises findings into three layered levels (visible outcomes, underlying practices and capacities, and deeper paradigms) and serves as a common analytical spine connecting the case studies to the recommendations presented in Chapter 4.

Human mobility is a normal everyday occurrence and increasingly becoming a defining feature of secondary cities (Youngquist et al., 2023). People move for a wide range of reasons, with climate change being just one contributing factor among many. While the outcomes of moving vary across time, space, context and region (as shown in the seven city reports), it tends to be true that when individuals have less agency in the decision to move, such as in displacement contexts, outcomes are more negative (Warner, 2010). When movement is more voluntary, *migration* may have more beneficial outcomes as those moving have control over wheth-

er, when and where they move. In the case of *displacement*, movement is forced and more likely linked to a sudden on-set event such as a flood or storm. In such situations those moving are much less able to choose and therefore have less control over the outcomes. Immobility is often subdivided into involuntary and voluntary immobility. In the case of the former, outcomes tend to be worse as affected persons have the aspiration to move, but not the capability—they are unable to move due to a lack of funds or other capital. In the case of those who are voluntarily immobile, as they have made a choice it is likely that they are masters of their own destiny. Increasingly, planned relocation, where entire communities move away from climate risk, is becoming an important reason to move into, or out of cities. When consultations are deep and ongoing, these processes can have positive outcomes for those moving. (For a summary of forms of human mobility in the context of climate change, see Oakes et al., 2023).

At present, **outcomes** for migrants (Vink et al., 2021) can be adverse as a result of insufficient action and resources to address the connection between mobility drivers and urban risk drivers, in combination with existing and emerging vulnerabilities and hazards. This leads to increased risks for both arrival and host communities. Other, associated outcomes, such as weak social cohesion, limited economic and social integration, and negative effects on well-being emerge and may feed back into the risk cycle.

However, these tangible and proximate outcomes are often only the visible tip of a deeper and more complex mechanism. Beneath the surface lie the systems and structures which shape how mobility and urban risk are framed and governed. The most visible layer is comprised of **practices**, which are strongly influenced by how national policy and international cooperation is organized and the prisms through which they are viewed. Decisions about what is possible at a local level are often not made locally, but are constructed through, and depend upon legislation, funding streams and priorities decided at other levels.

Below this, there are the **capacities** within cities to respond to the risks faced by mobile populations. These include physical features of cities, economic capacities, legal and institutional frameworks, willingness to include and integrate mobile populations, governance systems, and knowledge production. This layer includes the capacities of mobile populations as actors and agents of change. This can be at the individual or community level. Where these capacities are weak or restricted, risks tend to accumulate and persist.

At the deepest level are the **paradigms** that shape how mobile populations are perceived. These underlying assumptions often frame mobile people as a homogeneous, inherently vulnerable and passive group often associated with a drain on resources, a cause of infrastructure and service pressure, and even a threat to society. These paradigms strongly influence policies, institutional responses and ultimately lived outcomes.

By reading the case studies through this framework, the report moves beyond symptom-level diagnosis towards a deeper understanding of the conditions that produce and sustain risk.

2.5 THREE-TIER RECOMMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

The iceberg framework establishes where risk originates and persists: in paradigms, capacities, and practices that underly the visible outcomes experienced by mobile populations in secondary cities. The recommendations developed in this study respond directly to that structure. Rather than addressing symptoms alone, they are organised to enable intervention at each layer of the iceberg, from the deepest assumptions that shape policy to the operational conditions that determine what gets implemented on the ground.

To that end, the recommendations are structured in three tiers—inclusionary principles, strategies to increase capacities, and enabling practices—as illustrated in Figure 2. The responses directly address the components identified in the urban risk-development-mobility nexus.

Inclusionary principles form the normative foundation for action or lack thereof, addressing the exclusionary paradigms that define how mobile populations are perceived. They guide policy direction and shape decision-making. They directly challenge the paradigms that underpin current outcomes in the urban-development-mobility nexus. In this space of ideas, development actors can play a key role as agenda setters and contributors to international policy discourse on mobility, urbanization, humanitarianism, and climate. Inclusionary principles set the tone, through which strategies can be implemented.

Strategies to increase capacities translate these principles into concrete approaches to reduce risk and improve outcomes. They are aimed at increasing the capacity within cities

to respond to the risks faced by mobile populations. Strategies define the types of interventions development actors can support in their role as funders and implementers. They are interconnected measures that operate primarily at the local level and aim to strengthen urban capacities. **Physical planning** relates to material changes in the built environment. **Inclusion** targets the extent to which migrant communities can become active participants in urban life. **Governance** strategies are those that integrate and build capacity in the city, and **knowledge** includes its production and use.

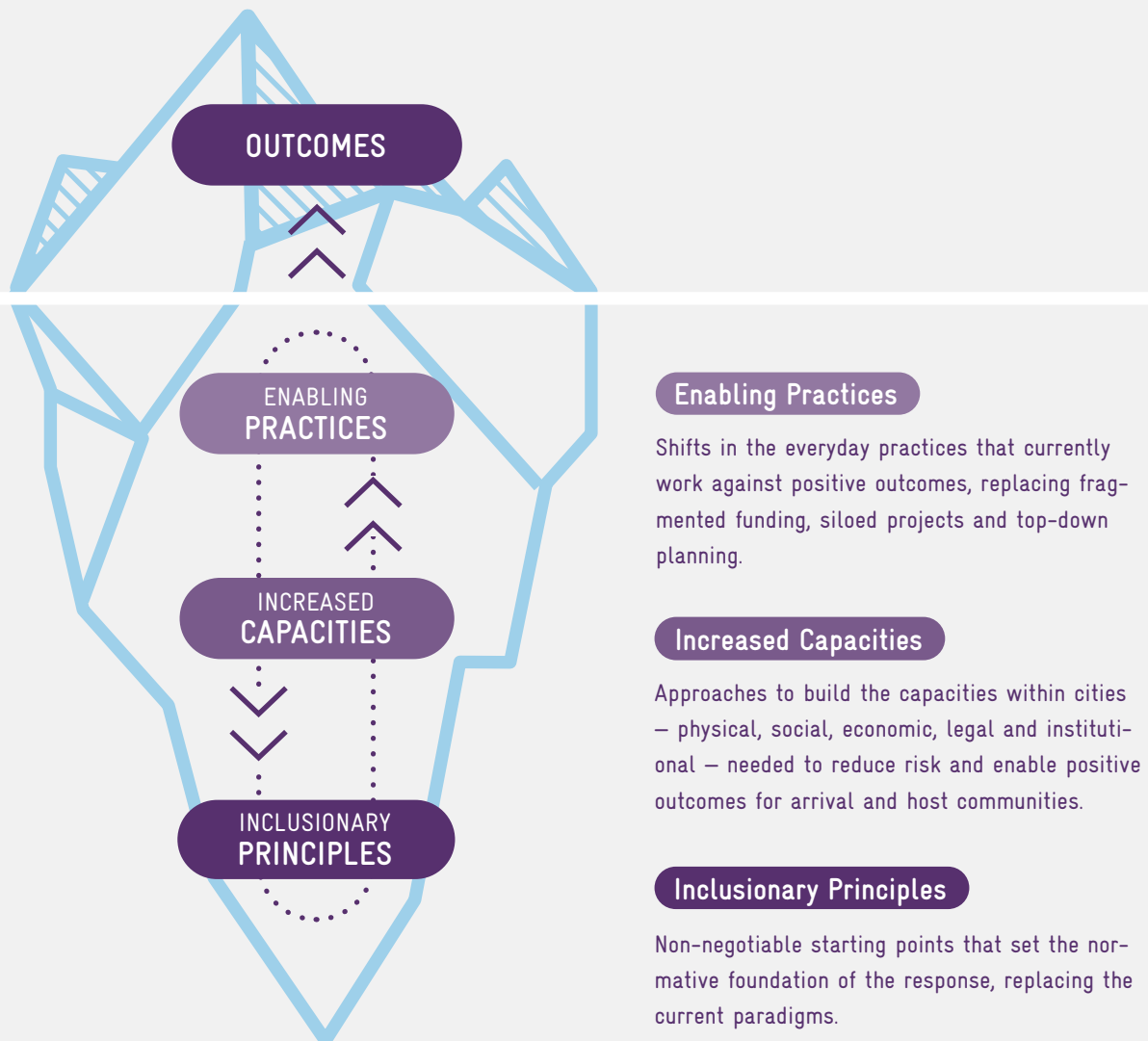
Finally, **enabling practices** refer to systemic requirements that directly influence how international cooperation and strategies are implemented, directly interacting with the current constraining practices identified in the urban Risk-development-mobility nexus. They refer to innovations and adaptations in institutional practices, internal structures, and ways of working within development organizations and their partners.

Changes in Inclusionary principles, strategies to increase capacities and enabling practices must occur at all levels, from city, through national to international actors. In the current study we focus on concrete strategies at the city level in the case studies and the full range within the global recommendations, aware that the inclusionary principles and enabling practices at city level must be driven through BMZ's leadership at the global level.

2.6 A WAY FORWARD

A feedback loop has been created that poses an increasingly significant threat to the well-being of those who have moved into secondary cities. Displacement and other forms of human mobility are projected to increase, with climate change being a contributing factor. This will lead to more people settling in secondary cities, which are already under strain due to systematic underinvestment and inadequate planning capacities. These mobile populations are often forced to live in high-risk areas and are therefore particularly vulnerable, a situation that is set to worsen as environmental and climate-related disaster risk increases. At the same time, while the number of people displaced and migrating globally has increased significantly over the last decade and pressures in secondary cities are mounting, the humanitarian system supporting mobile populations is “facing detrimental funding cuts, that will severely impact millions of people globally” (UNHCR, 2024, p. 12).

FIGURE 4: RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS MOBILITY IN SECONDARY CITIES



Investments and interventions in often-overlooked secondary cities, particularly in terms of planning and related institutional capacities, service delivery and risk management, are needed to break this feedback loop and create an inclusive environment for host communities and mobile populations alike. This will also have a dynamic effect, reducing pressure on primary cities, promoting more equitable regional development and strengthening the resilience of urban systems as a whole. This can only happen through raising awareness of the challenges faced by those working at the city level. However, it must also occur at a national and international level, as at this level it is possible to frame policy goals and build both the necessary institutional ca-

capacity and will to shift towards more climate-resilient urban development combined with humanitarian and human mobility-focused approaches in order to address the urban risk-development-mobility nexus.

CASE STUDIES

Cali, **COLOMBIA**
p. 66

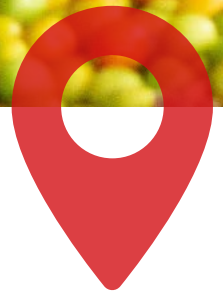
Makurdi, **NIGERIA**
p. 74

Bouaké, **CÔTE D'IVOIRE**
p. 84

This chapter presents seven case studies from secondary cities where mobility, urban development and disaster risk intersect: Buenavista and Tanay in the Philippines; Peshawar and Haripur in Pakistan; Cali in Colombia; Makurdi in Nigeria; and Bouaké in Côte d'Ivoire. Each case study follows the same structure to allow comparison across contexts. It opens with a brief country context and a profile of the city's mobility and urban dynamics, then examines how existing risk and displacement pressures manifest locally, drawing on national census data, institutional sources and primary fieldwork conducted for this study. Each case study also documents existing responses to these challenges. The subchapters close with findings that inform the city-specific and the global recommendations for development actors which are presented in [Chapter 4](#).



PHILIPPINES



3.1 PHILIPPINES

3.1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Philippines has a population of more than 112 million people, making it the second most populous country in Southeast Asia (UN DESA, 2025). Geographically located at the East Asia typhoon belt and in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the Philippines is among the world's most disaster-exposed countries, facing an average of 22 tropical cyclones per year, frequent earthquakes, volcanic activity, and rising sea levels.

As one of the fastest-growing economies in Southeast Asia, the Philippines is rapidly urbanizing, increasing from 51.2% in 2015 to 54% in 2020 and 55.8% in 2025 (UN-Habitat, 2023; UN DESA, 2025). Urban growth is heavily concentrated in the National Capital Region (NCR), home to approximately 14 million people (PSA, 2025).

Since 2002, the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) has sought to decongest the National Capital Region (NCR) by encouraging growth across a three-tier network of metropolitan, regional, and sub-regional centres. This strategy positions secondary cities as nodes for regional agglomeration and service delivery, explicitly reducing pressure on Metro Manila and other primary centres. This spatial logic is directly relevant to how urban vulnerability is distributed and managed at the regional level, as these settlement categories assign secondary cities as relievers of pressures on primary urban centres (Fulgar, 2024). As such, secondary cities are becoming main sites for regional agglomeration, connectivity, and vulnerability reduction.



Unsplash/Hiroshi Namura

The creation of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) in 2019 advanced urban governance in the country, consolidating the functions of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) and the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB). The department oversees the development of policies and programmes for the management of housing, human settlements, and urban development in the Philippines.

Human mobility is a defining feature of the Philippine context and is closely linked to disaster risk. Approximately 60% of the population has experienced migration within or outside the country during their lifetime. Of these, 46% are internal migrants whose mobility is driven mainly by employment (NMS, 2018). The National Migration Survey of Philippines (NMS) confirms this by noting that from 2013 to 2018, the five main reasons for internal moves were employment, followed by housing-related reasons, school, to live with parents, and to live with a spouse/partner.

Internal displacements are caused by both conflict and disasters. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC Philippines, 2025) reported that in 2024, there was a total of 193,000 internal displacements associated with violence. In 2021, the Philippines was ranked among one of the countries with the most climate-related displacement worldwide, driven by cyclones, monsoon rains, floods, and droughts (IDMC, 2022). The most recent data shows that out of the nine million displaced people countrywide, 86% were attributed to typhoons (IDMC Philippines, 2025). An estimated 182,000 people are living in protracted displacement due to conflict with some cases also intersecting with disaster-related factors (Migrants & Refugees Section, 2020).

With more than 50 years of international labour migration governance, the Philippines is known for sending migrants as overseas workers. Transient migration or short-term inflows also occur, although due to their dynamic nature, their patterns remain unreported.

As a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention, The Philippines has the responsibility to accommodate refugees and asylum seekers through the Refugees and Stateless Persons Protection Unit (RSPPU) (Department of Justice, n.d.). Reports show that there are a small number of refugees in the country, with 690 registered refugees from Turkey, Syria, the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Somalia, and Yemen.

3.1.2 BUENAVISTA AGUSAN DEL NORTE

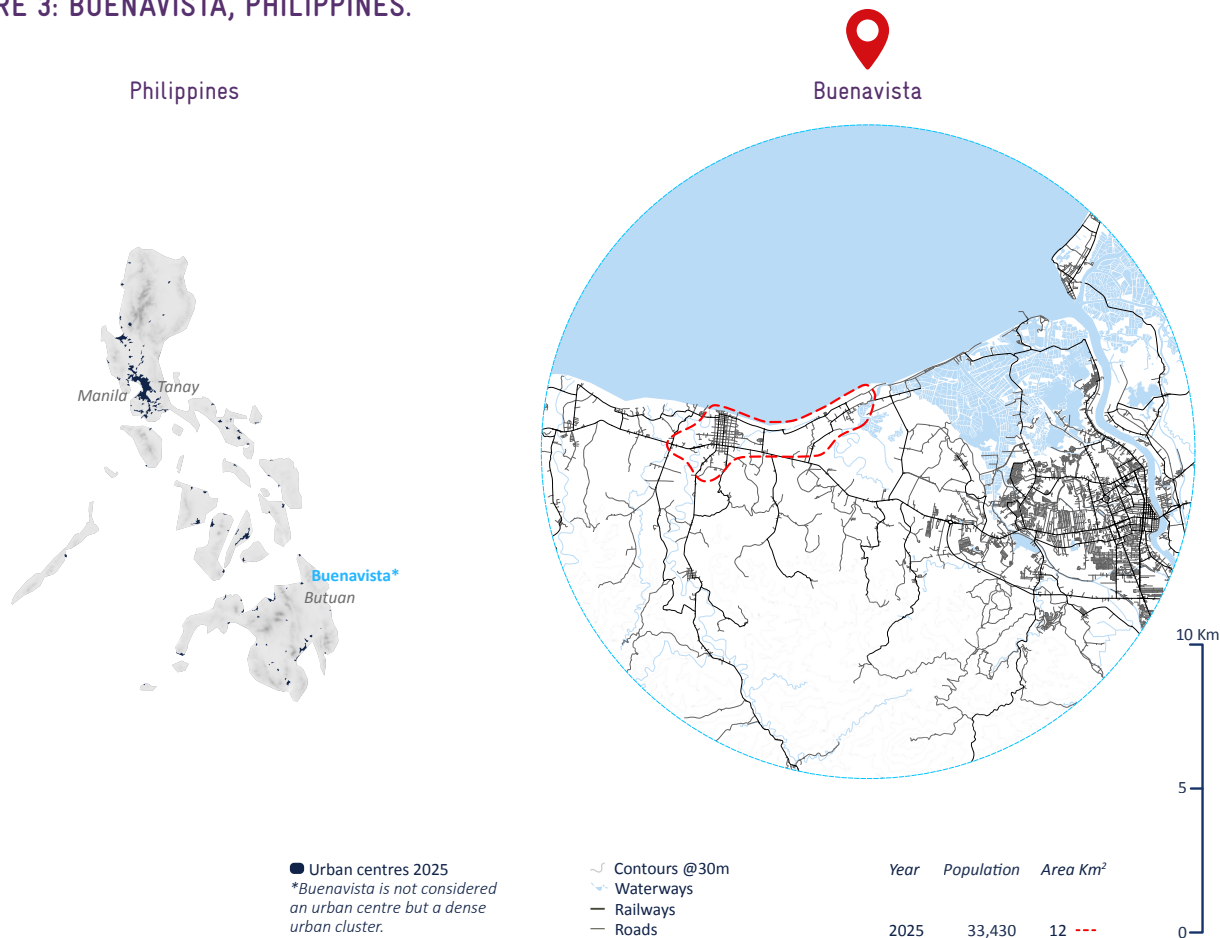


Summary

Buenavista is a coastal municipality of 68,892 residents and includes flows of urban-to-rural internal migrants, conflict-driven displaced persons, and itinerant Badjao communities. Drivers of mobility include declining upland agricultural yields caused by El Niño droughts, armed conflict, and the pursuit of a coastal livelihood. The municipality faces acute risks from floods, rain-induced landslides, and storm surges, exacerbated by tenure insecurity for marginalized groups displaced by the privatisation of coastal land. To mitigate these

structural risks, the local government should prioritize the development of relocation sites that are compatible with traditional fishing livelihoods, expand the implementation of the RBIM, and strengthen coastal zoning policies. A general improvement of the water and drainage infrastructure, coupled with inclusive governance strategies that integrate the Badjao community into participatory planning, is essential to address intergenerational poverty and disaster vulnerability.

FIGURE 3: BUENAVISTA, PHILIPPINES.



3.1.2.1 CONTEXT

Buenavista is a first-class coastal municipality located in the northern part of Agusan del Norte Province. According to the Philippine local government classification system based on Republic Act No. 11964, 2023, first-class municipalities are local government units with an average annual regular income of PHP 200 million or more, indicating strong and stable local revenues as well as greater local autonomy compared to most municipalities in the province. Buenavista has a total of 54,690 hectares of land area, and borders on the municipalities of Butuan, Nasipit, and Carmen and the province of Misamis. Buenavista consists of 25 barangays (the most local level of government), of which ten are urban and 15 rural. Flooding brought about by typhoons and rainfall tends to be frequent in Buenavista, as it is one of the low-lying municipalities in the Caraga region (World Bank Group, 2023).

Migration has been embedded in the history of Buenavista since its earliest settlements. The municipality traces its origins to nomadic Manobo communities who first settled in the area for fishing, later joined by Christian pioneers. The abundance of fishing grounds in Buenavista drew successive waves of migrants from neighbouring Butuan and surrounding areas, gradually transforming the small village into a thriving settlement. Enticed by rich marine resources and agricultural prospects, settlers continued to arrive between 1897 and 1907 (Buenavista.gov, n.d.).

Based on the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Buenavista has a total population of 68,892, up 12% increase from 61,614 in 2015 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). Women constitute 54% of the population, and men 46%. Children make up 37% of the total municipal population, while older people account for 10% (UNCHR Philippines, 2019). Buenavista is also home to many indigenous groups, such as the Manobo, Mamanwa, and Higaonon communities, considered to be the major groups in the province of Agusan del Norte (Philippine News Agency, 2025).

3.1.2.2 HUMAN MOBILITY IN BUENAVISTA

Internal migration in Buenavista is mostly from rural to urban areas (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021). Many residents from the rural, upland areas relocate to the lowland and coastal areas for livelihood opportunities, increasing the population in the barangays of Manapa, Matabao, Simbalan, Ginabsan, and Sangay, five of the most populated areas in Buenavista.

IDPs are also present in the municipality, mainly associated with armed conflict and climate-related risks. According to the Municipal Protection Profile project of UNHCR Philippines (UNHCR, 2019), 78% of displacements are due to disasters caused by natural hazards and 31% are due to conflict.

There is also a notable presence of Badjao (specifically from the Sama-Bajau indigenous group) settlements in the coastal areas of Barangays Matabao and Dumorog. According to the most recent profiling by the Office of the Municipal Social Welfare & Development (MSWDO) in Buenavista, there are 28 registered families from the Badjao community. However, the actual number may be higher due to their nomadic and itinerant lifestyle. Some members of the Badjao communities originate from the southernmost islands of Mindanao, having migrated to Buenavista for their livelihood and, in some cases, to escape conflict with their *datu* (local chieftain).

The local government has adopted an inclusive development perspective that formally recognises migrants as members of the community. However, tensions persist at the local level, particularly around the marginalisation of Badjao communities. The administration's commitment to inclusive growth is reflected in the participation of Badjao association representatives in municipal consultations. Moreover, in the 2025 national and local elections, Badjao residents of the Barangay Manapa registered and voted for the first time (Gambe-Diamante, 2025). Despite these milestones, Badjao communities remain highly vulnerable. They face persistent discrimination and fears of eviction due to the absence of designated coastal settlements, compounded by the growing privatisation of coastal lands for resort development. These pressures highlight the urgent need for stronger tenure security policies and community-sensitive coastal zoning to protect marginalised populations from being displaced.

3.1.2.3 RISK TO MOBILE POPULATIONS

In general, Buenavista is considered to have a medium level of risk to natural and human-induced hazards within a national-level assessment framework specific to the Philippines (UNCHR Philippines, 2022). A closer look at the municipal risk assessment shows low risk relating to volcanic hazards, medium risk of ground rupture and tsunamis, and high risk of flood, rain, earthquake-induced landslides, storm surges, strong winds, liquefaction, and ground shaking (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021). El Niño is also widely felt in Buenavista, causing drought and low crop yields during El Niño years.

Floods and landslides highly affect 65% of households, 64% of families and individuals. Barangays Manapa, Matabao, and Abilan have high to very high flood susceptibility within the municipality. On the other hand, Simbalan, Sangay, Guinbsan, Alubihid, and Lower Olave are the barangays mostly exposed to rain-induced landslides. These disasters often lead to a scarcity of catch, affecting the livelihoods and incomes of fisherfolk. Furthermore, communities could experience prolonged brownouts without an alternative power supply, deeply degrading the overall quality of life for both migrants and established residents of Buenavista (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021).

Buenavista's environmental capacity to sustain its population is under increasing strain. Illegal fishing, as well as wildlife and timber poaching, continue to degrade marine and forest ecosystems, eroding the natural resource base upon which communities depend. Typhoons and El Niño events further devastate agricultural output, leaving upland farming communities particularly exposed. Declining crop yields have driven residents to migrate to barangays in lowland areas in search of alternative livelihoods, such as tricycle driving, which is insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Meanwhile, typhoons and heavy rains trigger water contamination, causing waterborne illnesses, while stagnant water from poor drainage breeds mosquitoes. Improper solid waste management further aggravates land and water pollution. As a result, the municipality struggles to balance development pressures with basic public health and environmental standards.

Buenavista has a poverty incidence of 31.8%, with 4,980 residents falling below the poverty threshold and 525 households experiencing recurring food shortages. The local economy is primarily driven by agriculture, services, and trade, though incomes remain low relative to family size (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021). A notable teenage pregnancy rate further strains household economic capacity, limiting productivity and perpetuating intergenerational poverty cycles, especially among the Badjao communities.

3.1.2.4 RISK DRIVERS

For migrant Badjao communities with limited access to land and a lack of transferable skills, livelihood options are largely informal and precarious. Their primary source of living is buying and selling imitation goods and jewellery. In more desperate circumstances, they resort to begging, with some families forced to send their children out into the

streets. Those with fishing skills fare comparatively better, though opportunities remain limited. This heavy reliance on informal and marginal economic activities underscores the absence of viable formal pathways to earning a living.

Migrant populations, specifically the Badjao communities, frequently settle in high-risk or protected areas due to limited housing options, exposing them to frequent floods and health hazards. Poor drainage infrastructure creates localized flooding risks, while unresolved issues regarding road right of way, where settlements overlap with planned or existing infrastructure corridors, add to a lack of tenure, hinder infrastructure development, and further restrict physical mobility as well as access to basic services (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021).

Badjao communities in Buenavista face acute tenure insecurity, as the privatisation of coastal lands for resort development routinely displaces them from their foreshore settlements without adequate alternatives. While there are inland sites they could relocate to, these areas are incompatible with their traditional fishing livelihoods, effectively severing their connection to both shelter and subsistence. In response, the municipality is devising a mechanism to prioritize relocation for families that are not reliant on fishing and a coastal livelihood, while continuing to look for appropriate options for relocating communities that are heavily reliant on fishing.

The Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO) acknowledges that the overall infrastructure remains inadequate in Buenavista, with poorly constructed drainage, the absence of a municipal standby power source, and inconsistent communication services. Relocation sites lack proper facilities, pushing people back to informal housing options. Additionally, solid waste management poses a complex challenge; RA 9003 (the Philippines ecological solid waste management act from 2000) requires local governments to phase out open dumps and establish sanitary landfills, but local assessments deem such facilities impractical and potentially hazardous. Alternative approaches are therefore being explored.

Badjao communities face systemic discrimination rooted in language barriers and ethnic prejudice. Perceived as threats rather than community members, they are routinely excluded from employment opportunities, as evidenced by accounts of job applicants being rejected upon disclosure of their Badjao identity. Language inaccessibility further



deepens their vulnerability; limited literacy leaves Badjao individuals susceptible to exploitation, illustrated by cases where community members unknowingly signed documents relinquishing their rights to land settlement in exchange for minimal compensation, without any legal assistance or informed consent. Lastly, inadequate housing conditions also contribute to poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes, with overcrowding and lack of privacy linked to high rates of teenage pregnancy among Badjao women and girls.

There are structural challenges in addressing migrant and IDP needs. Programme mismatches have historically undermined municipal interventions. For instance, training to make hollow blocks provided to Badjao communities was unsuccessful due to a discrepancy between the community's interests, skills and the training provided. Improved Training Needs Assessments (TNA) are now being conducted to ensure context-specific programmes. Poor enforcement of the No-Build Zone Policy further exposes vulnerable communities to disaster risks. Meanwhile, electoral leadership transitions routinely disrupt governance continuity and institutional memory for programmes serving migrants and IDPs, underscoring the need for resilient, context-sensitive, and politically insulated coordination mechanisms at the local level (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021).

Buenavista's capacity to respond to migration and displacement challenges is significantly constrained by limited economic and human resources. The municipality operates with a Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF) of almost PHP 20 million (around

EUR 275,000), which must cover a broad range of disaster preparedness and response needs (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021). In addition, the local government suffers from chronic understaffing and high staff turnover driven by low compensation, undermining institutional continuity and service delivery capacity.

Furthermore, community participation in Buenavista is frequently hindered by fatalistic attitudes regarding disasters and health hazards, which are often perceived as inevitable consequences rather than addressable, manageable risks. This mindset, compounded by a prevailing 'dole-out culture' of dependency on external assistance, weakens community-driven accountability and proactive engagement in disaster preparedness and environmental stewardship.

Finally, Buenavista's spatial growth is increasingly under strain from informal settlements. While the municipality's official planning capacity can formally accommodate up to 28 Badjao families, a continuous inflow persists as newcomers seek temporary shelter that eventually becomes permanent. Relocation options remain severely limited, as available land is either privately owned or designated as a protected area. Urban planning and risk management capacities are equally inadequate, lacking comprehensive flood control systems, sufficient disaster manpower, a sanitary landfill, and universal barangay access to rescue vehicles (Buenavista MDRRMP, 2021). These compounding spatial and infrastructural deficiencies reflect a municipality whose formal planning framework fails to keep pace with the reality of growing informal settlements.

3.1.2.5 EXISTING RESPONSES

To address these intersecting crises, Buenavista has implemented a range of institutional and community-based responses in line with their overarching goals of resilience and integration.

To accommodate the growing population and influx of migrants, Buenavista actively encourages investment in manufacturing and the development of employment opportunities. In addition, the municipality continues to prioritize its agro-industrial and fishing industries, boosted by the presence of a strong agro-industrial zone. In partnership with the Philippine Fish Port and Development Authority, and as a beneficiary of their PHP 100 million project, the municipality is pursuing the construction of a fish port equipped with a cold storage facility to help fisherfolk better preserve and manage their catch. Concurrently, the local government has proactively identified and initiated development of a dedicated relocation site. The intention is to create a community that residents can genuinely call home, reflecting rights-based, long-term planning that goes beyond offering temporary emergency shelter. However, physical progress is still constrained by insufficient funding.

The municipality of Buenavista, through the MSWDO, actively maintains Violence Against Women and Children desks, Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children, and Gender and Development councils designed to protect refugees, IDPs, and migrants. Furthermore, to address acute vulnerabilities, Buenavista partnered with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) under the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) programme in 2024. This partnership successfully provided direct “cash for work” assistance and hygiene kits specifically to 27 profiled Badjao families, offering them an essential economic safety net (Buenavista.gov, 2024).

To transition away from purely reactive humanitarian responses, the MSWDO now conducts comprehensive TNAs aimed at strategically understanding the existing skills of internal migrants and providing needs-based, appropriate social welfare programmes to avoid past mismatches. Furthermore, Buenavista has actively sought horizontal coordination with national government agencies and civil society to augment its efforts to develop capacity. Previously, the municipality partnered with Assistance and Cooperation for Community Resilience and Development, Inc (ACCORD) and UNHCR to provide emergency equipment, protective gear, and basic life support training to strengthen

community-level emergency responses and address climate vulnerabilities through gender-responsive local planning in selected barangays.

In terms of governance, the mayor’s office conducts regular *Kumustahan sa Barangay* (barangay check-in) visits, which bring essential services, such as agricultural support, treasury services, and health consultations directly to the barangay level to ensure constituents are well-informed of the programmes carried out by the municipality. This is conducted once or twice a year, and all barangays are visited (Bue 6). In addition, the Sangguniang Bayan (or Municipal Council) of Buenavista publishes a weekly news bulletin with newly enacted and implemented policies, resolutions, and ordinances to keep the residents informed. Buenavista also utilizes social media platforms (e.g through its Facebook page) to announce and crowdsource grievances from its stakeholders.

Buenavista is highly focused on improving its data-driven approach to managing migration and development. The municipality established a Technical Working Group (TWG) for Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change II (HMCCC II) project in partnership with the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) and GIZ in the Philippines. The TWG aims to fundamentally strengthen the local implementation of the RBIM, a local database system that tracks both residents and migrants at the barangay level, thereby equipping local planners with the necessary localized, demographic data tracking to plan for dynamic mobility flows. However, since its launch in 2024, RBIM has so far been completed in only four of Buenavista’s 25 barangays: Manapa, Rizal, Agong-ong, and Talo-ao. At the time of writing, there has been no reported progress in scaling it up to the remaining 21 barangays, revealing constraints on institutional capacity, particularly in terms of the necessary resources and manpower to expand its coverage. Moreover, Barangay Population Volunteers (BPVs) and Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) often juggle multiple responsibilities with minimal or no compensation, while the continued reliance on manual, paper-based processes due to limited digital infrastructure further hampers efficiency. These challenges collectively undermine the overall quality, consistency, and reliability of the data gathered.

3.1.2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform Buenavista's urban governance from managing refugees reactively to a proactive, mobility-informed planning framework, provincial, district, and municipal authorities need to coordinate across four core strategic themes:

PHYSICAL PLANNING

- Co-design relocation sites with Badjao communities to ensure they are compatible with their traditional fishing livelihoods.
- Invest in flood control and drainage infrastructure, prioritising highly susceptible barangays that serve as arrival areas, such as Manapa, Matabao, and Abilan.

INCLUSION

- Establish community-sensitive coastal zoning to protect Badjao tenure, designating protected coastal settlement areas for this population before market pressure eliminates remaining options.
- Implement culturally and linguistically accessible legal aid and rights of information, overcoming language barriers that are a documented vector of dispossession in Buenavista.
- Expand formal livelihood pathways for Badjao and economic migrant communities, grounded in training needs assessments, since programmes designed without community input produce waste and reinforce distrust.
- Address sexual and reproductive health vulnerabilities linked to overcrowding as high rates of teenage pregnancy among Badjao women and girls are directly connected to inadequate housing conditions. This requires a dual response: improved housing and dedicated sexual and reproductive health programmes for young women in informal settlements.

GOVERNANCE

- Strengthen community participation, moving toward genuine participatory planning (analogous to Tanay's People's Plan model below). The inclusion of Badjao association representatives is already a good start.

KNOWLEDGE

- Conduct periodic RBIM re-surveys (every three to five years) to ensure that data remains accurate and reflects changing realities in the barangays.
- Prioritize the establishment of a Migration Information Centre (MIC), a centralised database of RBIM data at the municipal level to collect, manage, and update migration data in real time.
- Incorporate the agenda of sectoral associations in developing the MIC's operating model.
- Invest in trust-building alongside data systems, since data quality in Buenavista is hampered by community distrust.
- Mainstream climate-mobility linkages into municipal planning literacy
- Orientation programs for incoming migrants and capacity-building for barangay officials should explicitly address the climate-mobility nexus.

3.1.3 TANAY, RIZAL

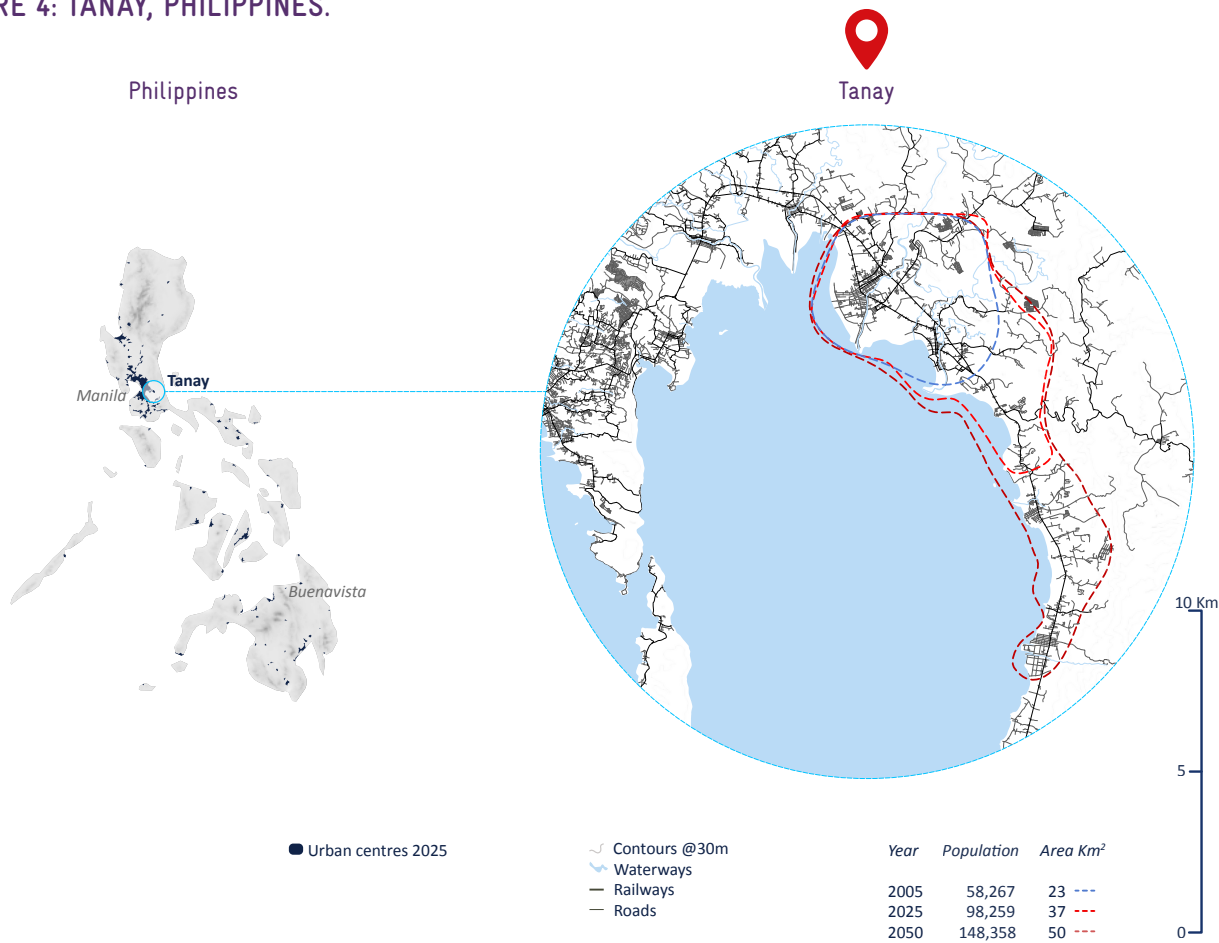


Summary

Tanay in the eastern part of Rizal Province functions simultaneously as an off-city relocation site for urban informal settlers and a site of internal displacement for indigenous Dumagat-Remontado communities, creating intense, competing pressure in demographic terms. Displacement in upland territories is driven by deforestation, typhoons, and infrastructure expansion, specifically the Kaliwa Dam project, which threatens to submerge extensive residential and agricultural areas. The municipality's development capacity is heavily con-

strained, as 95% of its land falls under strict watershed protection zones. Displaced populations face high exposure to rain-induced flooding and landslides. Deepening structural risks include insufficient housing, inadequate solid waste management, and governance failures. The systemic lack of accountability is evident as all barangays failed the 2023 Seal of Good Local Governance assessment, highlighting critical weaknesses in budget transparency, inter-agency coordination, and migration data management.

FIGURE 4: TANAY, PHILIPPINES.



3.1.3.1 CONTEXT

The municipality of Tanay is located in the eastern part of Rizal Province, with approximately 95% of its land area situated at the foot of the Sierra Madre Mountains. It is surrounded by the towns of Antipolo, Baras, Teresa, and Montalban, with Rizal in the north, Quezon Province in the east, Sta. Maria, Laguna in the south, and Laguna de Bay in the west. In total, Tanay has a land area of 33,170.7 hectares covering 20 barangays. The town is 57 kilometres away from the city of Manila.

In 1606, Tanay was founded as a separate *pueblo* (town) and named Monte de Tan-ay. After more than a decade, its administration was moved to San Antonio (now called Inalsan or Pantay) and Tandang Kutyo. The town was burned in 1638 during an uprising by foreign occupants and was successfully rebuilt in 1640 at its current geographic location. During the American occupation, Tanay was managed by the Taft Commission from 1900 to 1901. The leadership of the town remained under American rule from 1903 until the establishment of the Commonwealth government on March 24, 1934. It was declared a first-class municipality in 1996. In the Philippine local government classification system, “first-class” refers to municipalities with the highest income bracket, based on average annual revenue, indicating a relatively stronger fiscal capacity and better service provision.

The total population of Tanay stands at 139,420, based on the 2020 Census. It has the seventh largest population within the province of Rizal. The vast majority of the total population at 81.5% is classified as urban (Tanay CDP, 2025).

3.1.3.2 HUMAN MOBILITY IN TANAY

The inflow of migrants into Tanay is steadily increasing, mostly from nearby municipalities, cities, and surrounding provinces. Migrants account for 9% of the total municipal population, with almost equal gender distribution (49.78% female and 50.01% male). The vast majority of these migrants fall into the working age group (15-64 years). Designated an off-city relocation site by the metro city local government units and National Housing Authority (NHA), Tanay continually receives influxes of urban-to-rural informal settlers’ families (ISF), a term used within Philippine housing policy under Republic Act No. 11201 to refer to low-income households residing without formal land tenure or legal claims (Republic of the Philippines, 2019). Evicted from high-density areas in Pasig and Pasay City, these relocated populations concentrate in peripheral zones. Specifically, the population of Barangay Sampaloc swelled

to 31,000 residents in 2020 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020). At the same time, the Dumagat-Remontado indigenous communities, who maintain ancestral ties to the villages of Daraitan, Laiban, and Sampaloc near the Agos River, experience internal displacement pressures driven by environmental hazards compounded by an institutional appropriation of land, regarded by critical scholars as “green grabbing” for development-driven plans (Talamayan, 2024; Bueneventura, 2026). State-sponsored infrastructure development, particularly the construction of the Kaliwa Dam, has intensified these dynamics by threatening to inundate ancestral territories and disrupt local agrarian and fishing livelihoods (Chavez, 2024).

Migration in Tanay is also characterised by inter-barangay labour migration. Based on data from the RBIM, the most mobile groups are males aged 25-29 and females aged 30 to 34 (Viray and Jesuitas, 2025). This movement generally reflects migration from rural barangay areas to municipal centres, driven by the desire to escape local disaster risks and climate-related concerns, alongside strong pushes for employment and access to education. Other forms of migration include institutional flows of elderly migrants and military personnel. Elderly migrants are drawn to Barangay Sampaloc by the availability of specialised care services at “Haven for the Elderly”, a facility managed by the DSWD, and catering to the needs of “abandoned, neglected, and unattached older persons aged 60 years and above”. Lastly, the presence of a military camp, Camp Capinpin, in Sampaloc attracts soldiers, special forces, and trainee candidates from other provinces and countries to the municipality.

According to the 2018 NMS, from 2013 to 2018 the Eastern Visayas and CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon provinces) regions, where Tanay, Rizal is located, were the top two net gaining regions for internal migration nationwide, while the NCR and Central Luzon were the net losing regions (NMS, 2018). From these macro-trends, a shift can be observed in the internal migration flow from highly dense urban centres to rural areas, signalling a broad pattern of regional development (Lomibao, 2023) — a shift that aligns directly with the decongestion goals of the NSS.

3.1.3.3 RISK TO MOBILE POPULATIONS

Tanay is exposed to multiple environmental hazards, such as typhoons, earthquakes, flooding, landslides, and fires. While broad municipal risk assessments occasionally declare low-to-moderate overall severity, this masks extreme

localised vulnerabilities. Rain-induced flooding and landslides pose the main hazards in rural and upland areas. Urban areas primarily face inundation driven by extreme rainfall. Runoff from the municipality's multiple watersheds rapidly swells local water bodies, triggering riverine flooding from the Tanay River and expanding Laguna Lake into lowland zones. Under extreme rainfall, floodwaters threaten 517 hectares of land, with flood depths potentially reaching three meters (Pati & Cruz, 2017). Historical events validate these vulnerabilities. Typhoon Ketsana (Ondoy) on September 26, 2009, severely impacted Tanay when intense rainfall simultaneously flooded the Tanay River and expanded Laguna Lake. Typhoon Ulysses (November 2020) devastated Dumagat-Remontado communities in Barangay Laiban, displacing families and destroying livelihoods. With the Climate Change Commission indicating that changing weather patterns persistently complicate community rebuilding and recovery efforts (Subingsubing & Ramos, 2021).

Unprecedented, projected and permanent risks are also linked to the ongoing construction of the Kaliwa Dam, a major infrastructure project in the Philippines designed to supply an additional 600 million litres of water per day to Metro Manila. The project threatens to displace 1,485 families and submerge 9,700 hectares of land across Tanay, Rizal, as well as General Nakar and Infanta in Quezon. The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) confirmed that at least half of Barangay Daraitan's households will be inundated upon completion (Chavez, 2024), effectively threatening local biodiversity and submerging sacred indigenous sites such as the Tinipak Cave and River.

In terms of geological hazards, earthquakes are anticipated due to the fault lines located in the Tanay portion of the Marikina Watershed (Pinugay area). Across the broader Sierra Madre range bordering Tanay, vital forest cover continues to decline due to deforestation and forest degradation, driven by *kaingin* (slash-and-burn agriculture), timber poaching, small-scale mining, charcoal-making, and unchecked infrastructure expansion (Israel et al., 2024). This widespread deforestation directly contributes to soil erosion and water contamination. In response, active reforestation efforts have been initiated in Barangay San Andres, Tanay (Elf Global, 2023).

While the general atmosphere between migrants and non-migrants is harmonious, social tensions persist. Migrants remain structurally vulnerable due to their limited knowledge of local administrative agencies and hazard-prone

geographic areas. In the relocation sites within Barangay Sampaloc, where migrants comprise 80% of residents, conflicts often arise over the resale and sub-letting of housing units. It has been documented that some ISF families sell their housing rights informally or rent out their assigned units to acquaintances or friends, especially those unable to endure the challenges in the resettlement zones (Maningo, 2021). Furthermore, crime attribution, custody disputes, and cases of gender-based violence are observed to be high, particularly in relocation sites. Concurrently, upland protected areas face issues regarding illegal land sales to foreigners and unauthorized construction. On the flipside, migrant-owned businesses successfully generate local employment, fostering economic interdependence that broadly helps sustain social cohesion across Tanay's increasingly diverse and expanding communities.

3.1.3.4 RISK DRIVERS

The different migrants, refugees, and IDPs in Tanay face layered risks arising from climate change, weak governance structures, widening socioeconomic gaps, and fast-paced, unregulated development. While regional economic growth serves as a positive driver of voluntary migration, it also poses risks of an uncontrolled influx that may overwhelm the municipality's limited capacity due to increasing demand for housing, services, and infrastructure. New commercial enterprises recruiting workers from outside Tanay further intensify local demand for housing, particularly in Barangay Sampaloc. Meanwhile, rapid urbanisation converts more agricultural land into residential and commercial spaces, threatening long-term food security in rural areas (Tanay CDP, 2025).

Inadequate and insecure housing remains a pressing concern in Tanay, with 1,556 households classified as ISFs and 1,242 residing in danger zones (Tanay CDP, 2025). Residents living in flood-prone areas such as Daraitan, Laiban, and Kamagong Street rarely permanently relocate, instead moving temporarily to higher ground during typhoons, only to return once the waters recede. This occurs as their agrarian livelihoods remain tied to the land. Similarly, IDPs displaced by flooding typically shelter with relatives, receiving minimal support beyond evacuation centres. Yet after the flooding, displaced individuals repeatedly return to the land and waterways that are usually danger zones, a cycle the Municipal Planning Office openly acknowledges. This pattern of staying in high-risk zones, or returning even after evacuation, reflects a systemic "illusion of choice" born out of the absence of viable, liveable, and affordable

relocation alternatives for displaced communities which face deeply insecure land tenure, limited livelihood access, cycles of repeated displacement, and social stigmatisation.

Furthermore, land availability poses a significant constraint to development in Tanay. A substantial portion of its land falls under watershed protection zones, including the Marikina Watershed, Laiban Dam area, micro-watersheds, and ancestral domains, limiting the number of areas suitable for settlement. These restrictions heighten the need for well-planned housing and relocation programmes. The local zoning office in Tanay attempts to enforce building permits and clearances following national structural codes. However, settlement patterns across formal, informal, and peripheral areas remain exceptionally difficult to control. This drives vast unauthorized construction that frequently occurs without formal consent from landowners. Furthermore, overall urban mobility in Tanay is severely hampered by the absence of bike lanes, narrow roads, and intense traffic congestion along key evacuation routes. Compounding these issues are drainage deficiencies causing urban flooding, inadequate water pressure in upland barangays, and persistent power and telecommunications disruptions (Tanay CDP, 2025).

Weak inter-agency coordination and consultation mechanisms pose significant governance risks in Tanay, where development planning processes intended to benefit residents instead produce unfair and forced mobility. This is most evident in the case of Dumagat-Remontado indigenous communities. Their exclusion from genuine, early consultation regarding the Kaliwa Dam project leaves them vulnerable to displacement from their ancestral territories. Such exclusion not only violates their fundamental rights to free, prior, and informed consent but also disturbs their longstanding, intergenerational role as traditional stewards of upland ecosystems in the Sierra Madre mountain range (Coalition for Human Rights in Development, 2024).

Most critically, these converging pressures widen disparities between affluent immigrants and IDPs, exposing systemic gaps in service delivery, municipal planning, and social protection safety nets across Tanay's increasingly stratified communities. As recognized by the municipal officers of Tanay, these interconnected risks, if left unaddressed, would deepen the vulnerability of migrants, refugees, and IDPs. Therefore, municipal offices, especially those that are part of the Municipal Migration Information Committee (MMIC) must increase the resilience of Tanay as a receiving community through data-driven systems.

Institutional data collection efforts are further hampered by mistrust in the community. Residents frequently misconceive demographic registration drives, such as the RBIM, as humanitarian *ayuda* (aid) distributions. This expectation skews participation rates and entirely undermines the accuracy of municipal data. In addition, insufficient budget is allocated to Municipal Programs, Projects, and Activities (PPA) further constraining the delivery of targeted programmes and leaving vulnerable groups, particularly IDPs, relocated ISFs, and indigenous communities, without any safety net or support. Collectively, these administrative barriers continue to fragment social cohesion and limit the municipality's capacity to design and deliver inclusive, risk-informed interventions.

Economically, Tanay is reliant on four key sectors: agriculture, trade and commerce, tourism, and labour. However, due to a decrease in agricultural land and disasters induced by natural hazards, the agricultural sector faces multiple challenges. In terms of occupational distribution, service and sales lead with 26.4%, followed by elementary occupations with 21.3%, and crafts and related trades at 10.2%. The daily minimum wage ranges from PHP 303.00 to PHP 373.00, depending on the sector and size of the business (Tanay CDP, 2025).

Municipal and barangay officials see Tanay's broadening economic base as gradually creating more inclusive employment opportunities for both long-term residents and newcomers. However, as income and work opportunities become more concentrated in municipal centres, residents are also forced to migrate to different barangays for better employment opportunities. In Tanay, informal work and micro-enterprises employing one to four workers dominate, leaving many residents, particularly IDPs and vulnerable groups, outside formal social protection. The Tanay Technology and Livelihood Development Center addresses this gap by providing skills training and entrepreneurial development to support the economic lives of the residents, including migrants.

Infrastructure deficiencies in Tanay cut across multiple sectors. Many farm-to-market roads remain unpaved, limiting agricultural accessibility and rural connectivity. Electrification gaps persist in outlying barangays, and power supply disruptions remain frequent. Narrow roads and the absence of alternative routes compound traffic and mobility problems, especially during natural disasters, when roads may be blocked due to floods or landslides. Telecommunica-



Unsplash/Lance Lozano

tions facilities are insufficient. All of these combined constrain Tanay's development potential and disproportionately burden its most vulnerable and migrant residents (Tanay CDP, 2025).

Access to water, while relatively widespread with 20,522 households served by community water systems, is undermined by the lack of wastewater treatment infrastructure. The water supply is inadequate in several areas, with communities still relying on level I systems, meaning no water distribution system is in place but water could be supplied to 15 households from a protected well or spring water (PSA, 2020). Solid waste management poses a growing challenge. As urbanisation and population growth increase garbage volumes, inconsistent collection and the absence of a dedicated sanitary landfill put a strain on local capacities. Migrants are particularly disadvantaged in this regard, as they are often excluded from municipal budget allocations for sanitary garbage collection, leaving their waste management needs unmet. Transportation infrastructure similarly lags, with no designated bike lanes and inadequate road networks causing severe congestion at critical points such as the Wawa Bridge and the Tanay-Sampaloc route.

In terms of social welfare, Tanay lacks adequate facilities for children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, with limited essential social services (Tanay CDP, 2025). Registered elderly residents can access support through senior citizen certificates, while indigenous peoples' children face seasonal

absenteeism during harvest migrations to Quezon Province, further compounding vulnerabilities in terms of education and livelihood across Tanay's diverse communities.

Tanay's governance architecture also faces systemic coordination and accountability gaps. While individual municipal departments submit plans that are theoretically consolidated into the Comprehensive Development Plan and the Local Development Investment Plan, actual functional integration remains exceptionally weak (Tanay CDP, 2025). Barangay-level oversight is particularly concerning: In 2023, every single barangay in Tanay failed the Seal of Good Local Governance for Barangay assessment, indicating a massive, systemic accountability deficit across the municipality. In addition, assessments show that there are unclear municipal administrative structures, ongoing disputed territorial boundaries with neighbouring areas, and highly inefficient budgeting and auditing processes (Tanay CDP, 2025).

The results of the 2022 Public Financial Management Assessment Tool formally exposed two highly critical administrative gaps: weak policy-based budgeting, and a near-total absence of comprehensiveness and transparency regarding municipal budget information. These structural deficiencies explain the municipality's weakness in aligning spending with its development priorities and holding expenditures accountable. Tanay's municipal workforce is severely and precariously stretched—117% of its personnel complement are temporary job order or contract of service workers. Ac-

cording to reports, there is insufficient manpower to facilitate and sustain the municipal programmes and projects. At the barangay level, a lack of data encoders and trained barangay clerks hampers the quality of collected demographic data and prevents the implementation of the RBIM system. Tanay acknowledges a severe problem with low local tax revenues, driven by ineffective collection systems, poor taxpayer awareness, deteriorating financial records, and insufficient budget transparency, all of which undermine financial accountability and reporting (Tanay CDP, 2025).

Consequently, the RBIM system remains underfunded and inconsistently implemented, with ongoing challenges in the collection, cleaning, interpretation, and processing of data. Encoding backlogs and insufficient staff capacity undermine the reliability of the municipality's migration and population records, limiting any capacity for evidence-based planning and accurate service delivery for migrants and vulnerable groups. Strengthening RBIM implementation, reinforcing inter-agency coordination through bodies like the MMIC, and scaling staff capacity building are critical steps required to close these governance gaps.

3.1.3.5 EXISTING RESPONSES

Tanay has introduced several initiatives to bridge service gaps. The Department of Information and Communications Technology's "Free Wi-Fi for All" programme expands digital connectivity in underserved communities, while service caravans bring government programmes directly to remote barangays like Laiban. Solar panels are installed in schools to support sustainable infrastructure (Oxfam Pilipinas, 2022).

The MSWDO, as mandated by the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160), creates and implements programmes to protect and assist refugees, IDPs, and migrants. For instance, Tanay's MSWDO has implemented the Balik Probinsya programme to assist those returning to the province. They also offer social welfare programmes for individuals affected by disasters, single parents, relocatees from Metro Manila, and members of the various ethnolinguistic groups. At neighbourhood level, initiatives by homeowners' association play an active role in managing community concerns, mediating conflicts between migrants and non-migrants, and coordinating with barangay officials on housing and social integration, reflecting the critical role of informal governance structures in bridging gaps left by formal municipal systems.

Tanay also employs participatory governance mechanisms across planning and data systems to strengthen institutional capacity and coordinate migration responses. To proactively inform planning in response to the growing and diverse migration flow in the municipality, the Tanay administration released Executive Order No. 04, 2025 Series, which institutionalised the creation of the MMIC and the implementation of the RBIM. The municipality integrates sectoral representation into the CDP process, utilizing feedback mechanisms and stakeholder consultations. Barangay assemblies give communities a voice in local decision-making. Informal governance structures, including organised civil society and homeowner groups bridge operational gaps left by formal municipal systems. To supplement limited municipal resources and technical capacities, Tanay has also partnered with other local and international organizations, such as Save the Children Philippines, Foundation for the Disabled Persons Inc., Philippine Faith-Based Organizations, Caritas Philippines, Sabud La-o SLP Association, and many others in projects related to disaster risk capacity building, relief operations, and programmes to help improve access to technological needs. Combined, these approaches foster local ownership, improve data accuracy, and strengthen capacity for inclusive, evidence-based migration governance.

The municipality also utilizes structured data systems and indigenous knowledge to inform development planning. The shift from manual recording to a digitalized RBIM system enhances migration data management and planning by making it more accessible and efficient, despite requiring additional funding. The RBIM rollout followed a four-phase participatory approach: community consultation, IT readiness assessment, capacity building for enumerators, and system deployment. This structured methodology improves data accuracy and builds local ownership of migration governance. As such, partnerships with international organisations further supplement limited municipal resources and technical capacity. Complementing formal data collection, community-led adaptation in Tanay draws on both indigenous knowledge and organised civil society. The Dumagat/Remontado tribe serves as potential forest resource managers, leveraging their in-depth ecological knowledge and long-standing presence in upland areas to support sustainable land stewardship (Moussavi & Navarra, 2021). Together, these initiatives reflect an emerging culture of proactive governance and solidarity in response to Tanay's rapidly evolving migration and development challenges.

3.1.3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform Tanay's urban governance from managing refugees reactively to a proactive, mobility-informed planning framework, provincial, district, and municipal authorities need to coordinate across four core strategic themes:

PHYSICAL PLANNING

- Revisit and rework the local Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), especially on physical infrastructure, resources, and facilities to: (1) strategically identify and improve alternative routes to Samlay Road to reach Kaliwa Watershed Brgs., in case of road blockage due to landslides and flooding, (2) construct additional service roads that connect other units to decongest traffic on main roads in municipal centres, and (3) pave the way for farm-to-market roads to ease accessibility of goods and farm inputs and products.
- Develop higher water level systems (II and III) for upland areas and far-flung sitios relying on level I water systems, such as Laiban and Daraitan.
- Further invest in telecommunication infrastructures in partnership with CSOs to improve connectivity in schools, hospitals, and offices, especially in remote barangays, such as Santa Inez and Tinucan.
- Provide sustainable sanitary and landfill systems and strengthen waste segregation practices at the household level, with regular coordination at the barangay level for garbage collection and the municipality level for overall waste management.
- Uphold the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement with partner local government units (LGUs), ensuring liveable relocation sites for ISFs that are accessible to schools, health centres, markets, and barangay hall with adequate access to water and electricity.
- Develop sturdy and functional evacuation centres with storage spaces for food and non-food items both in upland and lowland barangays.

INCLUSION

- Strengthen inclusive profiling and monitoring of incoming migrants through RBIM to ensure equitable access to social support, such as through social amelioration programmes.
- Establish comprehensive orientation programmes to ensure newcomers and vulnerable residents are informed of their responsibilities, rights, and the available local services.
- Adhere to the plan stipulated in the CDP to decrease the number of ISFs in the municipality by providing decent relocation for at least 50% per year by 2025-2035
- The Tanay local government and NHA should collaborate and revisit, reassess, and institutionalise mechanisms to address issues on the land tenure process for ISFs who have rented or sold their units to other residents.
- Strengthen and prioritise the People's Plan, based on consultation and sectoral representation, particularly with marginalised groups such as the Dumagat-Remontado, in the CDP to ensure development is inclusive and sensitive to the needs of the sectoral groups.

GOVERNANCE

- Adopt an intersectional and culturally sensitive planning approach for disaster risk and migration, recognising the distinct vulnerabilities of different sectoral and migrant groups, including IDPs, Dumagat-Remontado indigenous communities, single parents, and the elderly.
- Improve budget allocation for MSWDO, Municipal Planning Office (MPO), and Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) as the main municipal offices responsible for the implementation of PPAs for migrants, refugees, and IDPs in relation to their experience of environmental risks and hazards.

- Direct and streamline funding to sectoral associations whose members include migrants, ISFs, and IDPs (e.g. Tanay Dumagat Remontado Ancestral Domain Development, Inc., homeowners' associations of Southville, E-Shine Residence, and Hauzville) to ensure implementation of programmes at grassroots level.
- Actively convene and support the MMIC to mainstream migration and governance in the development plan.
- Ensure the adoption of the National Integrated Protected Areas System framework in the zoning and local spatial planning to avoid unauthorized activities and selling of land at the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape, the Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve, and the Masungi Georeserve.

KNOWLEDGE

- Formally recognise human mobility as a critical factor in development planning and prioritise migration-sensitive indicators in land use, housing, and disaster risk reduction frameworks, especially when drafting the local government's CDP.
- Secure funding for the wider implementation of RBIM, as well as capacity building for barangay encoders, secretaries, and clerks, and sustained trust-building efforts with communities who remain sceptical about data collection.
- Improve RBIM tools to address ambiguous cases involving duplicate records, inconsistent household counts along disputed barangay boundaries, and households with multiple dwellings, ensuring greater data quality and accuracy.

PAKISTAN



Unsplash/Muhammad Amir

3.2 PAKISTAN

3.2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Pakistan's current demographic and spatial landscape is profoundly shaped by historical and ongoing waves of human mobility. The 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent triggered what is widely documented as one of the largest mass displacements in recorded history, forcing an estimated 14.5 million people to cross newly drawn borders to resettle in the nascent nation (Talbot & Singh, 2009). This initial migration, displacement, and subsequent resettlement established patterns of urban growth that continue to influence the country's demographic, social, and political landscape.

From the movement of *muhajirs* (Urdu: migrants) during the partition into emerging municipal cores, to Pakistan's pivotal role since the Soviet-Afghan War in late 1979 as a primary host country for millions of Afghan refugees, hu-

man mobility has functioned as a central driver of urban development (Alimia, 2022). Rather than being a peripheral phenomenon, the spatial distribution of migrating populations has historically dictated the expansion of regional economies, real estate markets, and public infrastructure networks (Mohtasim et. al, 2025).

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reports a national population baseline of approximately 241.5 million people, with an average annual growth rate of 2.55%. Rapid urbanization has accompanied this demographic expansion, with the formal urban population reaching 38.82% (PBS, 2023). While a significant portion of the population remains rural, municipal centres continue to expand rapidly under the dual pressures of rural-to-urban migration and displacement driven by both armed conflicts and disasters. Between



2008 and 2025, Pakistan recorded more than 34 million internal displacements, including approximately 28.7 million associated with disasters and a further 5.4 million linked to conflict and violence (IDMC Pakistan, 2026). Within this internal displacement landscape, Pakistan's official terminology also requires clarification. Since 2014, federal authorities have often referred to conflict-affected displaced families as Temporarily Dislocated Persons (TDP) rather than IDPs, arguing that these movements followed temporary evacuations during operations to re-establish the writ of the state rather than a conventional war or occupation (Ali, 2014). Humanitarian and academic literature, however, continues to use IDPs because these populations were forced to leave homes due to conflict, violence, human rights risks, disasters, or other crises while remaining within Pakistan's borders (Ferris, 2009). This distinction matters for urban

planning because the TDP label can make displacement appear temporary in administrative terms, even when return is delayed, while unregistered IDPs who have been displaced due to disasters and live in host communities remain harder to count than camp populations (Sayeed & Shah, 2017).

Pakistan's urban landscape is characterised by high demographic concentration in a small number of vast metropolitan centres, accompanied by a growing network of rapidly expanding secondary cities. While primary cities like Karachi and Lahore dominate national economic output, provincial capitals such as Peshawar play a critical intermediary role. These cities support provincial administrations, attract rural migrants from adjacent districts, and host vital cross-border trade, security, and humanitarian infrastructures in frontier regions (Latendresse, 2007)

Following the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010, significant administrative and financial authority was devolved from the federal government to the provinces. Provincial governments are legally responsible for urban planning, municipal service delivery, and disaster management within their jurisdictions. (Abbas, 2023; Hussain, 2025) However, migration and refugee governance remains a complex, multi-layered federal-provincial reality. Refugee administration and the management of Afghan foreign nationals are governed at the federal level by the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees (CAR) in close coordination with international agencies such as the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (UNHCR Pakistan, 2023).

Conversely, internal displacement falls under the purview of national and provincial disaster management authorities, with the localised response in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province led by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), and is frequently dependent on assistance from local and international non-governmental organizations. This division of authority creates deep institutional silos, where municipal-level planners are often excluded from decisions regarding the very populations that utilize their local infrastructure (Hote & Koike, 2025). Under the post-2023 Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP), these dynamics have become highly securitised, forcing a critical division of "persons on the move" into consistent legal categories: registered Proof of Registration (PoR) cardholders, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, and undocumented or illegal residents (UNHCR Pakistan, 2026).

3.2.2 HARIPUR

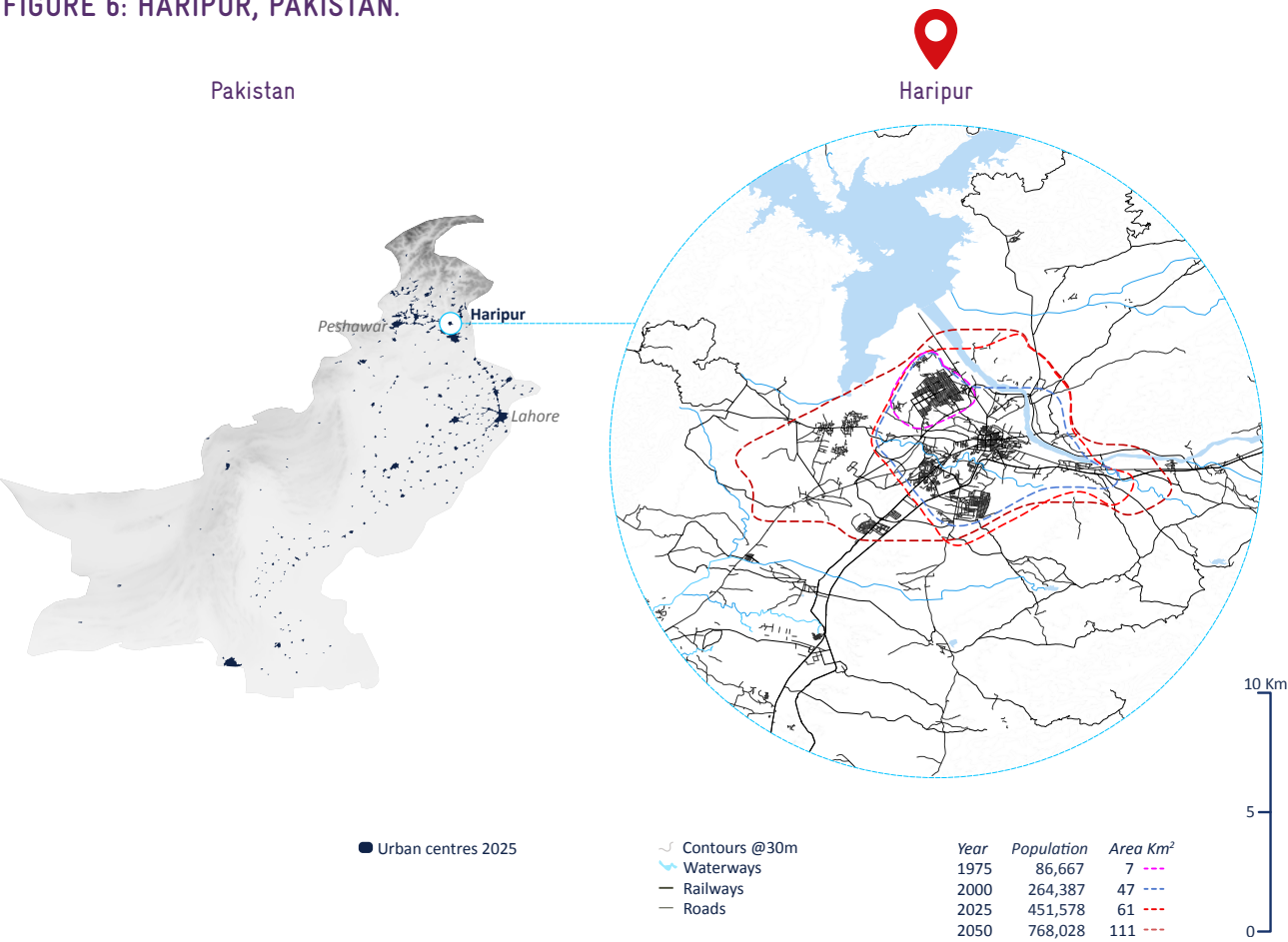


Summary

Haripur’s mobility landscape is highly stratified, shaped by long-term Afghan refugee settlement, Tarbela Dam development-induced displacement, and rural-to-urban labour migration. The district, with a population of 1.2 million, faces an acute regulatory crisis following the 2025 de-notification of major refugee camps under the federal IFRP. This policy shift forced thousands into precarious urban rentals and triggered arbitrary arrests, evictions, and panic marriages. Mobile populations are pushed toward peripheral fringes, reservoir shorelines,

and the Hattar industrial corridor, exposing them to localised flooding and severe heavy-metal pollution from industrial wastewater. Urban planning is severely compromised by the “ghost population” dilemma, where budgets and infrastructure exclude de facto residents, compounding severe tenure insecurity and forcing vulnerable groups to rely on informal, high-risk occupancy agreements.

FIGURE 6: HARIPUR, PAKISTAN.



3.2.2.1 CONTEXT

Haripur is located in the Hazara Division of KP province, approximately 65 kilometres northwest of Islamabad. The city lies within the Haripur district, which forms part of the broader Hazara region characterised by mountainous terrain, agricultural valleys, and expanding urban settlements. Haripur occupies a strategic position along major transportation corridors connecting KP with Punjab province and the Islamabad metropolitan area. The development of the Hazara motorway (part of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor, CPEC) has further strengthened regional connectivity and increased the city’s economic integration with surrounding urban centres (Rahim et al., 2022). The district also hosts several significant infrastructure and industrial projects such as the Tarbela Dam, one of the largest earth-filled dams in the world, which lies approximately 50 kilometres from Haripur.

According to the 2023 census, Haripur district has approximately 1.2 million residents and a 12.6% urban population, while Haripur city has 91,915 residents, placing it firmly in the medium-sized urban tier (PBS, 2023). Linguistically, as Haripur is part of the Hazara division, most of the locals speak Hindko (940,000 speakers), as opposed to Pashto (170,000), the latter being the dominant language across the rest of KP. Alongside these, there are also smaller Urdu and Punjabi-speaking populations within the city (PBS, 2023). The demographic mix of the city also contributes to a multi-ethnic social landscape with a wide range of Afghan refugees (comprising Pashtun, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek, and Hazara backgrounds) that help shape social cohesion and access to services. While Haripur remains largely rural at scale, the district contains both the city and rapidly urbanizing corridors such as Hattar with its industrial complex and Khalabat township. These industrial and peri-urban areas have weak formal municipal planning, while settlement expansion is highly dynamic reflecting broader patterns of peri-urban transformation and infrastructure-driven urbanisation observed across Pakistan (Kedir et al., 2016).

3.2.2.2 HUMAN MOBILITY IN HARIPUR

Human mobility in Haripur is characterized by a unique and complex mix of long-term Afghan refugee settlements, internal and seasonal labour migration, development-induced displacement, and commuter dynamics linked to its proximity to the capital. Historically, Haripur has been a critical reception point for mobile populations, hosting some of the province’s largest and most enduring refugee populations since the late 1980s. This includes the major Panian, Basu Mera, and Padhana Refugee Villages, with long-standing

social structures, schools, and opportunities for earning a living (Khan et. al., 2023). However, the refugee landscape shifted under the IFRP in 2023. This was expanded significantly in 2025 when the government moved to close refugee camps. Panian, Basu Mera, and Padhana with a combined population of 63,547 were formally de-notified in September 2025 and rapidly dismantled: By February 2026, Basu Mera was fully vacated, Padhana has only 615 remaining residents, and Panian’s population had declined to 4,999, forcing thousands of families into onward displacement or precarious urban rentals (UNHCR Pakistan, 2026; IOM Pakistan, 2026). Besides Afghan refugees, Haripur attracts internal and seasonal migrants, including winter arrivals from northern KP escaping extreme highland weather, and rural labourers seeking employment in construction, services, and industrial activities around the Hattar corridor. Other distinct arrival groups include the Mohana/Sindhi fishing communities linked to Tarbela Reservoir, and peripatetic Khanabadosh (nomadic) groups residing in highly precarious conditions along railway lines and waterfronts.

These diverse mobility pathways are shaped by a range of overlapping factors. Development-induced displacement is a key historical driver of migration; the construction of the Tarbela Dam between 1968 and 1976 submerged at least 120 villages and displaced more than 96,000 people, pushing many to resettle permanently in Haripur city or along the reservoir’s shoreline where they established informal fishing communities (Azhar, 2016). Modern mobility is also heavily influenced by climate change, which acts as a major risk multiplier across origin districts. KP has seen a rise in mean temperature of roughly 0.3°C to 1.2°C over the last three decades, alongside shifting precipitation patterns and more frequent extreme events like droughts, flash floods, and landslides (Provincial Disaster Management Authority, 2025). These escalating environmental changes undermine agrarian livelihoods in northern and southern districts, prompting rural households to seek economic security in secondary cities. Regionally, labour flows are directed toward the Hattar Industrial Estate, which draws workers from surrounding rural areas, while the city’s strategic location near Islamabad (65 kilometres) has triggered a distinct pattern of commuter migration, with residents working in the capital region but living in Haripur to benefit from lower housing costs. Haripur’s IDP profile is therefore dispersed rather than concentrated in camps. Research on displacement from KP’s merged districts shows that most IDPs move to live with relatives, in the host community, and in low-rent accommodation in the city rather than in formal

camps, making secondary cities and peri-urban corridors part of the displacement system even when they are not listed as primary camp locations (Ferris, 2009; Sayeed & Shah, 2017). For Haripur, this means that newer IDP arrivals from the merged districts are likely to appear as low-income renters, daily wage workers, or relatives within host households, layered onto existing displaced populations from the Tarbela Dam rather than forming a single visible settlement.

The choice of Haripur as a primary destination is driven by its unique regional position, milder climate, and socio-cultural landscape. Unlike the Pashto-dominated capital of Peshawar, Haripur is linguistically distinct; Hindko is the dominant regional language with approximately 940,000 speakers, compared to 170,000 Pashto speakers, alongside smaller Urdu and Punjabi-speaking populations (PBS, 2023). This multi-ethnic social landscape interacts with the diversity of Afghan refugees (including Pashtun, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek, and Hazara backgrounds) to create a historically cohesive and adaptable social fabric. For decades, this linguistic and cultural adaptability facilitated day-to-day integration, business ties, and host-Afghan intermarriages, making the city a relatively safe and welcoming secondary node. However, the sudden enforcement of the IFRP has severely strained these networks. As camp closures and forced repatriations escalated, families originally living in Sindh and Punjab increasingly moved toward KP, and

then to Haripur, seeking family ties, proximity, and perceived protection within established social networks. This perceived sense of security was partly shaped by early signs of reluctance within the KP provincial government to fully endorse the federal government's deportation approach, particularly its emphasis on forced repatriation, although the province has since aligned with and participated in the implementation of the IFRP (Express Tribune, 2025; The News, 2025). Based on qualitative interviews, these movements have been accompanied by a range of informal and often precarious coping strategies at the household level. However, many have encountered localised enforcement drives, contributing to a growing sense of insecurity and uncertainty. In response, some households have been forced to split, while others have resorted to informal survival strategies, including hastily arranged marriages, in an effort to navigate documentation constraints and reduce the risk of detention or deportation. At the same time, some families have dispersed to adjacent urban centres such as Mardan, Charsadda, or Peshawar to reduce the risk of being exposed to enforcement and be able to continue earning their living.

The diverse forms of migration and displacement that currently define Haripur's demographic dynamics are synthesised from fieldwork (including interviews and on-the-ground observations) and existing literature, and are summarised in the table below:

Migration type	Key characteristics	Settlement patterns	Primary drivers
Afghan refugees and migrants	Present 40+ years; currently facing intense pressure to repatriate.	Panian, Basu Mera, Padhana camps (closing); peri-urban rentals.	Long-term conflict, regional safety, and social networks.
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	Formerly displaced persons due to the Tarbela Dam (96,000+); recent displaced persons due to conflict from KP's merged districts.	Fishing settlements on the edge of Tarbela Lake, low-rent peri-urban fringes.	Tarbela Dam construction, military operations, and local security.
Rural-urban migrants	Economic labourers from Hazara and rural districts in KP.	High-density urban rentals, cheap industrial fringes.	Job opportunities in Hattar, construction, and services.
Pastoral/seasonal migrants	Transhumant herders and nomadic gujjar groups.	Temporary roadside tents, relatives' homes in winter.	Severe mountain winters and search for accessible service networks.
Peripatetic groups (Khanabadosh)	Chronically mobile, facing severe social stigma, highly undocumented.	Roadside and riverbank shelters, makeshift camps near rail lines.	Traditional nomadic life-style and intergenerational economic practices.

3.2.2.3 RISK TO MOBILE POPULATIONS

The risk profile for mobile populations in Haripur is defined by a combination of industrial pollution, environmental hazards, high socio-legal vulnerabilities, and poorly integrated urban governance. While Haripur has a milder climate than upper KP and lies in a lower-risk category for extreme monsoon threats, it is far from hazard-free (PDMA, 2025). The district faces localised flash flooding, drainage overloads, and slope instability tied to the Haro River system, low-lying drainage zones, and foothill environments. For communities settled along the Tarbela Reservoir and outflow-adjacent zones, water-level fluctuations represent a constant threat, causing repeated localised flooding that regularly uproots makeshift shelters along the shoreline. Environmental degradation from the Hattar Industrial Estate is a more immediate, chronic hazard than large-scale disasters. Persistent air, water, and noise pollution compromise local resources, with a 2026 study confirming that wastewater, soils, and crops around the industrial estate exhibit a worrying accumulation of heavy metals, specifically, nickel and chromium levels that pose significant carcinogenic risks (Khan et al., 2026). At the household level, a lack of utility access in marginalized settlements forces a reliance on firewood for cooking, exposing women and children to dangerous indoor carbon dioxide and volatile organic compound (VOC) levels (Abdeullah et al., 2020). Beyond physical and chemical threats, the IFRP constitutes an acute legal and protection hazard, unravelling decades of peaceful co-existence and exposing unregistered or status-stratified families to arbitrary arrests, evictions, and loss of assets (UNHCR Pakistan, 2026).

These physical and industrial hazards are highly concentrated in specific, unmonitored spatial zones where poorer mobile populations are forced to settle due to a lack of affordable housing. This spatial exposure focuses on three main hotspots: the peripheral zones surrounding the de-notified refugee villages, the Tarbela Reservoir shoreline and outflow-adjacent settlements, and the industrial-peri-urban interfaces around Hattar. Because district has weak formal municipal planning, urban sprawl extends along highways and peri-urban edges, with camps and informal settlements historically placed 30 to 50 kilometres from the urban centre, reproducing spatial segregation. Within these exposed peripheries, arrival families live in substandard mud- and brick-based structures with poor insulation, limited ventilation, poor road access, and unstable electricity grids, leaving them highly vulnerable to extreme weather stress and structural collapse (Khan et al., 2023). To cope with municipal service gaps, communities resort to self-help

measures, such as converting motorbikes into “Motorbike Dalas” (mini water-tankers) for informal water distribution and storing water in open buckets, which inadvertently turns their dense, unmonitored neighbourhoods into breeding hotspots for dengue and malaria.

Socio-spatial vulnerability in these exposed zones is highly stratified by legal status, age, gender, and socio-economic position. Undocumented Afghan nationals and PoR and ACC holders represent the most fragile groups from a legal standpoint, as they face systemic exclusion and the constant threat of deportation. This legal precarity has a severe gender and age-based impact: The sudden de-notification of refugee camps led to the closure and sealing of 25 refugee village schools run by the NGO Khwendo Kor, which historically served as vital formal education and informal psycho-social support networks for women, children, and elderly people. This mid-year school closure creates a severe risk in terms of lost academic years, child labour, early marriage, and statelessness for refugee children, while restricting women’s access to safe spaces. Older persons, individuals with disabilities, and those with chronic illnesses are further marginalised by service networks that are rarely designed to accommodate their needs. This vulnerability is also acute for the peripatetic Khanabadosh and nomadic fishing communities, who live in temporary canvas tents along railway lines and shorelines and are entirely excluded from formal social protection. Pakistani IDP households are vulnerable due to lacking documentation. This is different to Afghan legal precarity but can mean a similar kind of exclusion. Studies on displacement from KP’s merged districts show that registration for assistance was tied to having an National Identification Card (NIC), narrow enrolment windows, and verification by government agencies, while women from KP’s merged districts were especially likely to lack their own NICs and therefore depended on male household documentation for access to aid or compensation (Amir-ud-Din & Malik, 2016; Sayeed & Shah, 2017). As a result, widows, women separated from their husbands, and households that missed registration windows are particularly vulnerable to being excluded from official service counts although they are living in the city.

The timing of these risks is dictated by both seasonal environmental cycles and sudden institutional shocks. Seasonal winter peaks drive cold-weather migration from mountainous zones, placing additional strain on under-insulated peripheral housing, while monsoon rains and summer water-level fluctuations along Tarbela Reservoir repeated-

ly trigger displacement. These seasonal hazards are compounded by unpredictable regulatory shocks. The de-notification of camps and subsequent enforcement phases of the IFRP acted as sudden crisis moments, triggering record levels of arrests, evictions, and distressed asset sales. Furthermore, service cuts such as gas and electricity restrictions imposed on camps to compel people to repatriate have forced families to return to burning wood, creating immediate respiratory health hazards during winter peaks (Khan et al., 2023). This climate of administrative pressure has also driven a rise in “panic marriages” of refugee girls to host nationals as families desperately attempt to secure local residency and documentation.

A forward-looking, long-term perspective should also consider the fact that mobility-related precarity does not end when refugees leave. A significant portion of Afghan refugees in Haripur consists of skilled agricultural and technical workers. Their forced repatriation creates localised labour and skills gaps in the KP construction and farming sectors. On returning to Afghanistan, these individuals also face acute livelihood precarity, as they are unable to utilize their skills due to severe technological, infrastructural, and labour-market limitations

3.2.2.4 RISK DRIVERS

The vulnerability of Haripur’s mobile population is driven by an combination of factors including environmental degradation, economic inequalities, insecure housing, and weak municipal governance.

While Haripur’s core remains relatively orderly, growth has sprawled rapidly along highways, industrial corridors, and peri-urban edges. Environmental degradation in these fringe areas acts as an immediate driver of urban risk. Around the Hattar Industrial Estate, wastewater, soils, and agricultural crops have shown a worrying accumulation of heavy metals, with nickel and chromium posing significant carcinogenic risks (Khan et al., 2026). Poorer households, seasonal workers, and newly arrived renters are disproportionately exposed to these risks, as they are more likely to live near these industrial areas and depend on contaminated groundwater. This is worsened by the “self-help” practices to which communities are driven: informal dumping of solid waste in open drains leads to clogging and localised flooding, and the storage of water in open buckets creates breeding hotspots for malaria and dengue.

Haripur’s economic base covers agriculture, fisheries, services, and industrial employment. However, these opportunities are distributed unevenly. There is a sharp divide between established host and long-settled refugee households running retail or skilled trades, and poorer newcomers who rely on daily wage labour, seasonal fishing, and insecure rentals. Families with assets can withstand shocks, while poorer households are forced to lose their assets, be put in debt, and have to move to unsafe fringe areas. These economic inequalities translate directly into nutritional and health inequalities: weak incomes and low food diversity are linked to food insecurity and malnutrition, especially for pregnant women and children, making livelihood precarity in Haripur a direct public health vulnerability (Khan et al., 2023).

Local institutional governance is reactive, managing mobility through ad hoc provincial or federal directives rather than strategic municipal planning. Refugee governance is under federal and commissionerate systems, while services are provided by under-resourced local actors. This creates a fragmented landscape with weak bottom-up accountability. Crucially, urban planning and budgeting are tied to formally counted residents, completely ignoring de facto users like refugees, undocumented migrants, and displaced fisherfolk. This “ghost population” problem leads to chronically under-provided schools, overcrowded clinics, utility cuts, and severe infrastructure strain in transition zones.

Haripur’s core has few visible *Katchi Abadis* (informal settlements), but tenure remains highly insecure. To access basic services, refugees rely on “shadow integration” using the NIC of host intermediaries (“sponsors”) to secure bank accounts, SIM cards, utility meters, and rental leases. Long-standing informal arrangements, such as *Zubani* renting (word-of-mouth occupancy), leave arriving families highly vulnerable to having their sponsors withdrawn, sudden eviction, and their assets being captured. In peri-urban zones and around the Tarbela Reservoir, fragmented land ownership has led to local disputes. Displaced families originally settled on private lands with informal consent, but as urban expansion has driven up land values, local clans and landowners have moved to reclaim these plots, entangling mobile populations in tribal land claims.



Unsplash/Umar Farooq

3.2.2.5 EXISTING RESPONSES

Haripur has developed several community-based and institutional responses to cope with displacement. Nationally, the CAR maintains the Urban Refugees Support Unit (URSU), which operates a desk in Haripur intended to connect Afghans with varying legal status to education, health, protection, and voluntary repatriation services and offering a partial bridge between federal refugee administration and municipal systems (GIZ Pakistan, 2023).

At the non-governmental level, civil society organisations like Khwendo Kor have historically supported the refugee village system, operating established schooling programs and employing a mixed host-refugee teacher workforce to foster social cohesion. Within the camps, community-led structures, such as parent-teacher committees (PTCs), mother committees, WhatsApp informational networks, and direct-calling trees, have played a critical role in sustaining informal education and protection, even during crackdown phases and camp closures.

Historically, Haripur was renowned for its high social cohesion in daily life, driven by Hindko-Urdu-Pashto linguistic adaptability, strong neighbourhood ties, host-refugee intermarriages, and long-term business partnerships. In crises, host families frequently took in displaced neighbours. However, the repatriation policy after 2025 has severely unravelled these local economies and social relations. Rising geopolitical tensions and the scaling up of forced returns under the IFRP have contributed to a shift in perceptions of Afghan refugees, from being culturally proximate “brothers” to a security threat, eroding previously fragile forms of coexistence and reinforcing exclusionary “us versus them” narratives (Berg, 2025). Although community-led coping mechanisms remain active, they are increasingly strained by administrative crackdowns, utility cuts (including gas and electricity restrictions used to force people to move), and the overall atmosphere of hostility. Adding an IDP lens to Haripur's response profile would therefore mean extending support beyond Afghan refugee institutions toward the quieter systems that host dispersed IDP families: local clinics, schools, landlords, mosque committees, kinship networks, and community leaders. Evidence from IDP and child-protection research suggests that local leaders and pre-existing social networks often facilitate settlement in unfamiliar urban areas, while community-based protection committees can act as semi-formal bridges between families, service providers, and authorities when formal case-management systems are weak or poorly known (UNICEF, 2025).

3.2.2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform Haripur's urban governance from managing refugees reactively to a proactive, mobility-informed planning framework, provincial, district, and municipal authorities need to coordinate across four strategic themes:

PHYSICAL PLANNING

- Upgrade settlements in the Panian, Basu Mera, and Padhana transition zones and the Hattar industrial periphery, and stop eviction.
- Prioritise the extension of piped drinking water networks to replace contaminated shallow wells near the Hattar Industrial Estate.
- Prohibit settlement allocations and informal plot subdivisions in active drainage paths and high-risk Tarbela overflow zones.
- Deploy low-cost household energy alternatives in peripheral settlements to eliminate exposure to CO² and VOC from burning firewood indoors.

INCLUSION

- Adopt sensitive transition protocols for camp closures if these are unavoidable, e.g. legally allowing students to complete the academic year before schools are closed.
- Create legal pathways to register and formalise informal renting and shadow tenancy agreements, protecting families from arbitrary eviction and their assets being captured.
- Establish one-stop Urban Cohesion Hubs, expanding the URSU desk model to cover legal aid, health referrals, psychosocial support, and provide secure spaces for women and children.
- Implement asset protection and business relocation pathways for small business owners and farmers displaced by sudden camp closures.
- Support voluntary repatriation pathways and monitoring post-return to address the acute humanitarian crises faced by returning women and children

GOVERNANCE

- Mandate horizontal coordination between Tehsil Municipal Administrations, district authorities, PDMA, and Hattar industrial zone managers to collectively control environmental hazards.
- Allocate municipal budgets based on verified service-use tracking rather than static citizen census counts to eliminate the infrastructure deficit leading to "ghost populations".
- Offer direct municipal funding to grassroots structures, specifically parent-teacher committees and mother committees already run by CSOS, such as Khwendo Kor, etc., to sustain local integration and psychosocial support networks.
- Adopt culturally sensitive and intersectional planning approaches that address the specific protection needs of children, women, and vulnerable communities.
- Shift administrative frameworks from parallel emergency humanitarian aid toward permanent integration into provincial health, education, and social protection systems.

KNOWLEDGE

- Fund and maintain mobility-informed digital registries at the Union Council level to capture real-time migration flows and exposure to hazards.
- Although data of repatriated refugees exists, there is no accurate system of tracking numbers of IDPs, refugees or migrants within cities. Build an active system to monitor migrants and address the "ghost population" gap.
- Train Union Council encoders and secretaries in data cleaning and privacy management to process mixed-status family data without exposing undocumented individuals to arrest or detention.
- Integrate community-based networks, specifically local mosque committees and WhatsApp informational channels, into district early-warning and risk-mapping systems.

3.2.3 PESHAWAR

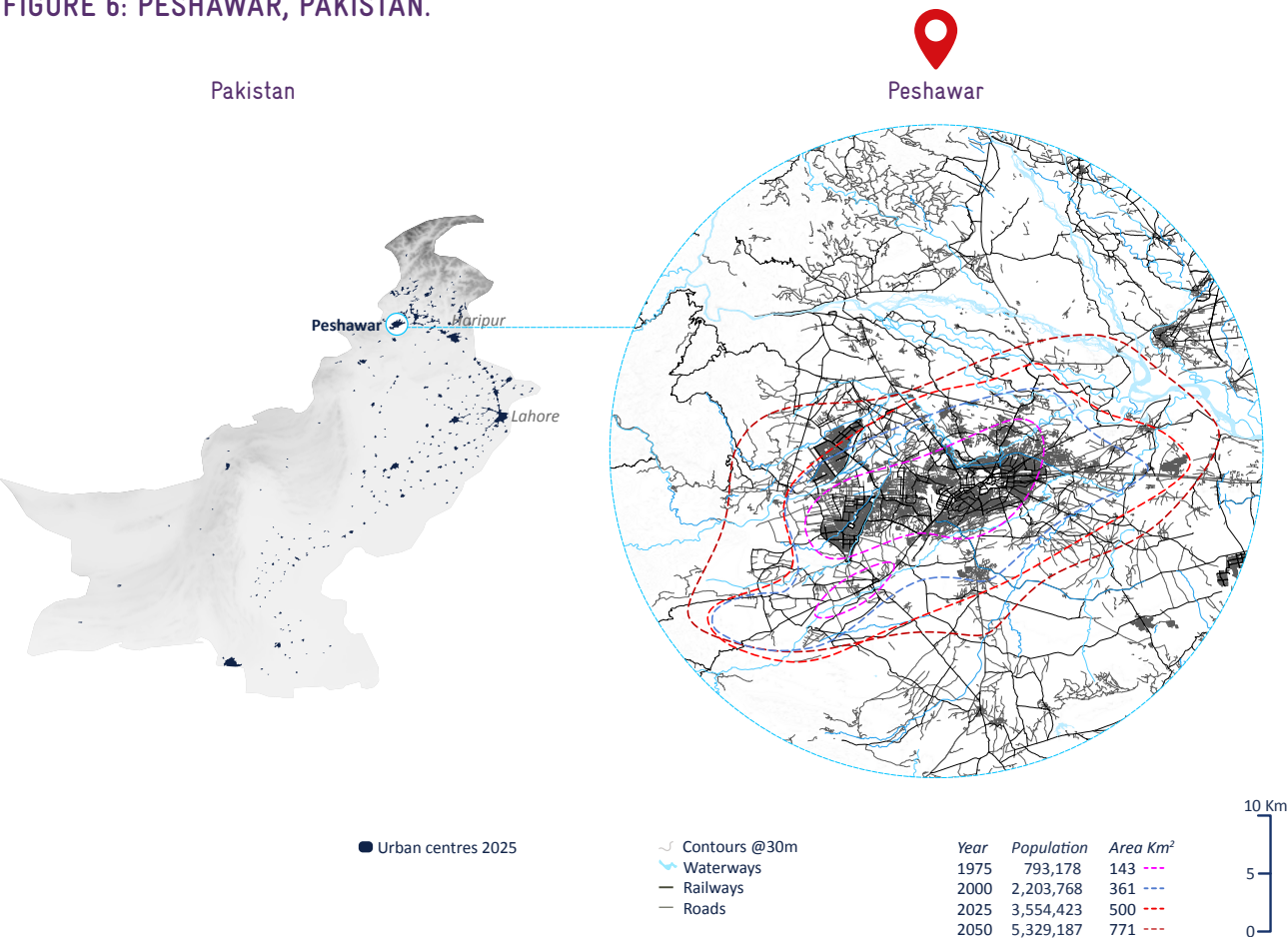


Summary

Peshawar manages 1.8 million municipal residents alongside a complex influx of registered Afghan refugees, undocumented migrants, internally displaced persons, and peripatetic groups. Unregulated urban sprawl drove a 224% relative expansion of built-up area between 1990 and 2020, severely degrading natural drainage capacity and encroaching on vital ecological zones. Consequently, mobile populations forced into low-rent peripheral corridors face acute urban flooding, particularly along the encroached Budhni Nullah Basin,

where dozens of settlements remain at immediate risk. Extreme air pollution and intense summer heatwaves further compound the survival challenges for informal workers. The regulatory environment constitutes an active hazard: Enforcement of the IFRP subjects undocumented Afghan migrants to legal violence and eviction. This environment forces refugees into “proxy urbanism”, relying on host identity cards to secure basic tenancy and services amid highly siloed municipal governance structures.

FIGURE 6: PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN.



3.2.3.1 CONTEXT

Peshawar is the capital of KP province and one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in South Asia. Situated near the Khyber Pass, the city historically served as a major trade and cultural corridor linking South Asia with Central Asia and the Middle East. This strategic location has shaped its development as a commercial hub and gateway between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The modern city lies within the fertile Peshawar Valley, surrounded by agricultural lands and mountainous terrain. While its strategic location has fostered economic trade, it has also exposed the city to regional geopolitical instability and rapid population influxes. Over time, Peshawar has expanded significantly beyond its historic core, with new residential housing schemes and commercial areas emerging along major road corridors surrounding the city.

The PBS lists Peshawar's municipal population as 1.8 million with an average household size of 6.9 (urban), with the greater Peshawar district (covering the peri-urban settlements) hosting a population of 4.7 million (PBS, 2023). This rapid demographic pressure drove a 224% relative expansion of the city's built-up area between 1990 and 2020 (Ullah et al., 2022). The expansion is characterized by ribbon sprawl along major highways and leapfrog development in fringes such as Ring Road and Kohat Road (Ali et. al., 2022; Urban Policy Unit, 2024). Driven primarily by private developers and unregulated informal housing schemes, this massive spatial transition consumed prime agricultural land in the Peshawar Valley, degraded the natural drainage capacity, and severely weakened the city's resilience to environmental hazards.

3.2.3.2 HUMAN MOBILITY IN PESHAWAR

Human mobility in Peshawar is characterized by a complex, multi-layered landscape of overlapping displacement and migration flows that have turned the city into one of the most prominent urban displacement hubs in South Asia. Situated near the border with Afghanistan, the city has historically served as a primary entry point and transit hub for refugees, migrants, and internally displaced populations moving within the region. Since the Soviet-Afghan war of 1979, millions of Afghan refugees have crossed into Pakistan, concentrated heavily in the KP province (Mosel & Jackson, 2013). Today, the Afghan population in Pakistan remains highly heterogeneous in terms of legal status, with a total of approximately 1.81 million individuals. This population breaks down into approximately 841,000 PoR cardholders, 666,000 ACC holders, and 169,000 undocumented migrants (UNHCR Pakistan, 2026). Within this

urban system, Peshawar district hosts one of the largest concentrations of Afghan refugees in the province, with many residing within host communities and in peripheral neighbourhoods.

The primary drivers behind this mass movement toward Peshawar include a wide range of security, economic, and environmental pressures. For decades, regional conflict, military operations, and local law-and-order situations within Afghanistan and the adjacent merged tribal districts of KP (such as Kurram, Mohmand, and Parachinar) have forced successive waves of families to relocate. At the provincial level, KP has experienced a rise in mean temperature of roughly 0.3°C to 1.2°C over the last three decades, alongside shifts in precipitation patterns and more frequent extreme events such as floods, heatwaves, droughts, hailstorms, and landslides (Babar et al., 2015; Provincial Disaster Management Authority, 2025). These escalating environmental changes undermine agrarian livelihoods in rural districts and act as a powerful push factor, driving rural families toward Peshawar where jobs, education, and specialised services are assumed to be better. In addition, pastoralists and northern highlanders engage in seasonal migration, with Kochi/Kochian pastoral groups arriving in the Peshawar Valley for three to four months to escape severe mountainous winters and search for winter grazing and health services. Chronically mobile peripatetic groups, known as the Khanabadosh, also move continuously in line with their nomadic traditions, although they face severe social stigma and exclusion due to a lack of documents. The reality of IDPs within this mobility system is especially important for Peshawar because displacement from KP's merged districts has rarely followed a single linear pathway. IDPs from Khyber district have historically moved towards adjoining Peshawar, while populations from Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber and other districts have also moved through the Peshawar-Nowshera-Jalozai corridor, with Jalozai Camp hosting IDPs largely from Khyber, Bajaur, and Mohmand agencies (Sayeed & Shah, 2017; Ullah et al., 2017). Many households avoid or leave formal camps, preferring to live with relatives, host families, in rented rooms, or low-cost peripheral neighbourhoods because these options provide privacy, social familiarity, and access to work and services, even though they make the population much harder for planners to count (Ferris, 2009).

Migration routes connect these regional, provincial, and international places of origin to specific reception zones within Peshawar's urban fabric. Newcomers enter through

major western routes and are concentrated in low-rent, under-serviced peripheral neighbourhoods and informal settlements. Reception zones include Tajabad, Changarabad, Board Bazaar, Regi Lalma, Darmangi, and peripheral corridors extending toward Warsak Road and Bara Road. These areas function as key entry points because they offer cheaper rental housing and critical co-ethnic social networks, but they also expose residents to high flood risks and infrastructure deficits. Furthermore, sudden federal policy shifts have significantly altered these migration routes. Under the IFRP, many Afghan households originally residing in Sindh and Punjab provinces moved to KP for protection. However, as KP later aligned with federal enforcement efforts in 2025 ([Express Tribune, 2025](#); [The News, 2025](#)), these households moved toward Peshawar to reduce enforcement risks, access voluntary return procedures, and obtain documentation or assistance.

Peshawar's role as a major regional service hub and commercial centre is the primary reason why migrating populations choose this city over other urban destinations. Located just

50 kilometres from the Torkham border crossing with Afghanistan, its geographical proximity allows cross-border migrants to maintain vital social, cultural, and trade connections. For internally displaced families, the city's established infrastructure acts as a powerful pull factor. In particular, interview respondents framed Peshawar as a “medical haven”, with tertiary care facilities like the Lady Reading Hospital having historically served patients from as far as eastern Afghanistan. The availability of informal labour markets and shared linguistic and ethnic networks (primarily within the broader Pashtun community) further facilitate initial integration and survival for incoming families, establishing the city as a central node within wider regional mobility networks.

The overlapping forms of migration and displacement that currently define Peshawar's demographics have been synthesised from fieldwork (including interviews and on-the-ground observations) and existing literature, and are summarised in the table below:

Migration type	Key characteristics	Settlement patterns	Primary drivers
Afghan refugees and migrants	Present for 40+ years; currently facing repatriation	Formal & informal neighbourhoods citywide	Employment, education
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)	Waves from KP's merged districts (Kurram, Mohmand, Parachinar) since 2000s; also climate-displaced	Low-rent informal areas, camps near Peshawar	Law & order operations, climate shocks
Rural-urban migrants	Economic workers from KP rural districts accessing health and education services	Katchi Abadis; low-rent informal areas	Job opportunities; drought/poverty push from southern KP
Pastoral/seasonal migrants	Northern KP residents + Kochi/Kochian pastoralists; stay for 3–4 months over winter	Relatives' homes; peri-urban tents with livestock	Severe winters, service access
Peripatetic groups (Khanabadosh)	Always mobile, severely stigmatised, often undocumented	Roadside/riverbank fringes; Changarabad; makeshift camps	Nomadic lifestyle

3.2.3.3 RISK TO MOBILE POPULATIONS

Mobile populations in Peshawar face various risks due to a combination of climate change, physical environmental hazards, and unplanned urban growth. The primary physical hazard is urban flooding, which has repeatedly devastated the city in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2022, and 2025, and is often linked to an overflow or backflow from the Kabul River system and the Budhni Nullah Basin (Jan et al., 2026). Landslides in the surrounding rugged terrain, fires in dense settlements, and extreme summer heatwaves are major physical hazards, with Peshawar's built-up environment and traffic emissions intensifying the urban heat island (UHI) effect. Air pollution further exacerbates heat vulnerability and creates a severe, year-round respiratory health risk; in 2024, Peshawar ranked 12th among the world's most polluted cities for air quality (IQAir, 2025). Water insecurity and deteriorating water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions are linked to repeated outbreaks of acute diarrhoea, typhoid, polio, dengue, and malaria, with studies and UNICEF experts suggesting that only 20% of the city's water sources are safe for consumption (Inamullah & Alam, 2014; *The Express Tribune*, 2025). Beyond environmental shocks, the threat of eviction, police scrutiny, and legal violence hang over undocumented migrants and refugees under the IFRP, leading to mass coerced returns, arrests, and detentions (UNHCR Pakistan, 2026).

These physical hazards are highly concentrated spatially, exposing arriving families in low-lying, flood-prone fringes, unmapped informal settlements, and active drainage corridors. The Budhni Nullah Basin is a major area of high exposure. Encroachment, unregulated expansion, and construction along the floodplain have narrowed the nullah's width dramatically, risking 84 settlements and exposing a population of over 922,000 residents, with peripheral settlements along Warsak Road, Darmangi, and Regi Lalma classified by disaster management authorities as high-risk flood zones (Jan et al., 2026). Within these exposed zones, arrivals reside in substandard mud, brick, or corrugated-sheet structures with poor insulation against extreme temperatures. These dense, informal neighbourhoods lack municipal sewerage plans and formal waste management, leading to accumulated garbage and stagnant wastewater that breeds disease and exposes residents to daily hazards like open manholes and drainage failures. Socio-spatial vulnerability in Peshawar is highly stratified by legal status, age, gender, and socio-economic position; among IDPs, refugees (PoR cardholders, ACC holders, and undocumented) experience differing levels of legal precar-

ity. Fear of arrest and deportation under the IFRP forces these families to avoid formal leases and public health-care, relying heavily on informal intermediaries. Women and children face distinct protection and health risks under forced return conditions (Hanif et al., 2025). Border reporting from UNICEF and UNHCR describes women and children arriving at Torkham cold, exhausted, and in urgent need of shelter, hygiene, and protection support (UNICEF, 2025; UNHCR Pakistan, 2026). The psychological distress and socioeconomic marginalization resulting from this forced mobility drive some displaced women to use drugs as a coping mechanism (Khan et al., 2024). Increased deportation pressures have also resulted in a rise in panic marriages of Afghan refugee girls to Pakistani nationals to secure residency and protect daughters. IDPs displaced from conflict-affected tribal agencies face the suspicion of local administrations and checkpoints, while the peripatetic Khanabadosh who live in temporary canvas tents on vacant railway land or riverbanks completely lack identification documents. Khanabadosh women face gender-specific risks, in particular high exposure to harassment and exploitation due to the matriarchal structure of their community (Ali et al., 2024).

Psychosocial harm is also a core risk, rather than a secondary outcome. Qualitative research with North Waziristan IDPs identified people with adjustment difficulties, confused identities, deep anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and intense uncertainty over their return to Afghanistan, with women reporting deeper despair and having less freedom during displacement (Khan et al., 2025; Saqib & Nareen, 2015). Studies also reveal that internally displaced children in urban and peri-urban Pakistan face psychosocial risks linked to constant uncertainty, discrimination by origin, and a lack of awareness of mental health and psychosocial support services (UNICEF, 2025). For Peshawar, this means that risk assessments should treat checkpoints, eviction threats, uncertainty about having to return, and service discrimination as mental-health stressors as well as governance problems.

These risks and their timing also show that vulnerabilities peak during specific seasonal periods and sudden crisis moments. During the monsoon season (July–September), intense, erratic precipitation triggers rapid flash flooding along the Budhni nullah, causing sewage backups and property damage. In contrast, summer heat peaks (May–July) severely impact daily-wage labourers, waste pickers, and brick-kiln workers who work outdoors, while rapid tem-



Unsplash/Adel Shabir

perature drops during winter (November–February) put a strain on families living in poorly insulated mud, brick, or canvas structures. These seasonal hazards are punctuated by unpredictable crisis moments, such as the initial arrival phase of displaced families, sudden evictions by landlords, or enforcement phases of the IFRP which act as severe institutional and regulatory shocks, driving record levels of arrests, detentions, distressed asset sales, and evictions (Jan et al., 2026; UNHCR Pakistan, 2026). A longitudinal perspective shows that vulnerability continues post-return rather than ending when refugees leave. A significant number of refugees in Peshawar are skilled labourers in technical and agricultural work, and their forced repatriation creates local labour gaps in KP while exposing them to severe reintegration and livelihood challenges in Afghanistan, where they struggle to use their skills due to technological, infrastructural, and labour-market limitations.

3.2.3.4 RISK DRIVERS

The vulnerability of Peshawar's mobile population is driven by a combination of environmental hazards, economic insecurity, informal housing, and structural planning gaps.

Unplanned growth has converted agricultural and open land into housing, commercial strips, and peripheral settlements, weakening natural infiltration, shrinking ecological buffers, and increasing stormwater runoff (Ali et al., 2019). This rapid expansion has accelerated the loss of agricultural land and green spaces while increasing ecological stress, reducing the city's natural resilience to flooding and heat (Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2023).

Peshawar remains a regional commercial hub, but much of its growth has been absorbed through precarious and informal livelihoods: daily wage labour, transport, vending, repair work, low-end services, construction, waste collection, and retail. For displaced groups, the informal economy is both an entry point and a trap. A study identified 52.5% of surveyed Afghan refugee households in urban Peshawar as being highly vulnerable, with access to safe drinking water being named as one of the strongest determinants of lower vulnerability (SDPI, 2026). Displaced households cluster in the city's poorest rental and informal areas and depend on precarious work such as transport services, chai stalls, market vending, tandoors, waste collection, and recycling. It is hard to earn a living, and environmental shocks, arrests, illness, or rent increases can immediately destabilise the household economy. Poorer households are pushed further toward hazard-prone sites because they cannot afford safer

land, making poverty and exposure mutually reinforcing.

A core risk driver is that urban planning remains misaligned with the actual service-using population. Water, health, education, and sanitation systems are budgeted and planned around formal population counts, while refugees, undocumented migrants, and some displaced groups are de facto users of these services but remain poorly represented in the data that drives budgets and plans. This planning gap is reinforced by deep institutional fragmentation. Refugee data is associated with the CAR, citizen identity with National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), disaster displacement with PDMA, and municipal service delivery with Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP), the Capital Metropolitan Government, and the Peshawar Development Authority. Official investments in development tend to flow more consistently toward formal, electorally visible host neighbourhoods, while mixed areas with large number of refugees, or highly informal localities remain under-served, deepening spatial inequality. This also highlights a broader operational problem: Systems designed around fixed or formally recognized populations struggle to respond to mobile and partially visible urban residents, even though these groups are already embedded in service systems and local economies. Future planning should also align with the KP Province Climate Action Plan 2022 to better integrate vulnerable and mobile populations.

Secure land tenure is substantially weaker among refugee households than among host communities. Refugee property arrangements often depend on informal agreements with host households, making legal recourse difficult in cases of eviction or dispute as some are even *Zubani* (word-of-mouth). This has led to a "proxy urbanism" in which many non-citizens or undocumented residents rely on the NICs of host intermediaries to secure rental contracts, SIM cards, utility connections, access to banking, or other basic urban functions. Likewise, a local *Intiqal* paper system exists through which rights of usage circulate informally without the legal security of registered ownership, creating dependency and legal insecurity. In parts of peri-urban Peshawar, similar fragmented ownership structures have led to disputes as urban expansion raises the value of land. When military operations in districts such as Khyber and Kurram pushed large numbers of households into Peshawar, displaced families settled temporarily on privately owned land, but tensions later emerged when landowners sought to reclaim the land (Wajid et al., 2025). For example, in 2018 elders of the Khalil Mohmand tribe in Peshawar

war accused families displaced from Khyber of occupying agricultural land along Mattani–Bara Road that had initially been provided on humanitarian grounds, causing the IDPs to become entangled in local land claims and tenure disputes ([Dawn News, 2018](#)).

A further risk driver is the perception of displaced people as a threat to security. IDPs from merged districts and Afghan refugees are stigmatised through different legal categories, but both are framed as security threats rather than rights-bearing residents. Research on IDPs shows that displaced Pashtun families are under suspicion of being linked to militants, and as a result face hostile treatment at checkpoints, in labour markets, and in host communities; recent media analysis similarly shows a shift in Afghan refugee coverage from humanitarian narratives to issues surrounding security, illegality, and threat ([Cineen & Chitrali, 2025](#); [Sayeed & Shah, 2017](#)). These shifts in perception limit access to services because families avoid police, formal leases, schools, and clinics when they expect questioning, harassment, or reputational harm.

3.2.3.5 EXISTING RESPONSES

Peshawar has implemented several physical and institutional responses to manage rapid urbanisation and displacement. At the institutional level, the CAR works in close coordination with UNHCR to operate Voluntary Repatriation Centers (VRCs) in Chamkani and Nowshera (Azakhel) to process families opting to return. In 2021, NADRA, CAR, and UNHCR conducted the Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise (DRIVE), verifying the biometrics and updating the details of more than 500,000 registered Afghan refugees and issuing renewed smart identity cards to improve their access to healthcare and education ([UNHCR Pakistan, 2022](#)).

At the physical infrastructure level, the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system represents a major transit-oriented development ([ITDP, 2022](#)). Launched in 2020 with a 26-kilometre Gold Standard trunk corridor, it operates a fleet of low-emission hybrid buses serving a peak of over 267,000 passengers daily. The BRT has significantly enhanced inclusion by incorporating safety and accessibility features, including dedicated women-only entrances, separate seating sections, and designated spaces for elderly, disabled, and transgender passengers. The share of women using public transport in the city rose to 20% (up from just

2% previously). The project also integrates non-motorized transport, including bicycle lanes and wide footpaths. Commercial plazas at the Hayatabad, Dabgari, and Chamkani terminals are designed to include retail spaces, with a set percentage of businesses reserved for female entrepreneurs.

Despite these advances, formal planning remains highly reactive, and municipal service systems are disconnected from humanitarian interventions. Under-served arrival communities rely heavily on informal coping strategies and local solidarity. These include mutual lending, WhatsApp and Telegram information-sharing groups, and local mosque-based warning systems to coordinate rapid evacuation during floods. Communities also adapt structurally by raising plinths in houses and building informal protective mud barriers. Historically, social cohesion has been ensured by an older ethos of hospitality, brotherhood, and Pakhtunwali-mediated dispute resolution, although this is increasingly under strain due to economic pressures, security-focused media narratives, and the repatriation climate since 2025 ([Mosel & Jackson, 2013](#); [Ginsburg, 2011](#); [Levine et al., 2023](#)). The strongest IDP-relevant responses in Peshawar are therefore partly institutional but largely social. Research shows that displaced communities often preserve village networks after relocation, with elders coordinating information, concerns about aid provision, and representation even when households are scattered across rented rooms or host settlements ([Sayeed & Shah, 2017](#)). Community leaders, education providers, health workers, and local child-protection committees can function as first points of contact and referral, although awareness of these services remains weak among displaced children and parents ([UNICEF, 2025](#)). Strengthening these semi-formal mechanisms would make the existing response more actionable than a camp-only or repatriation-only model.

3.2.3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform Peshawar's urban governance from managing emergencies reactively to proactive, inclusive planning, provincial and municipal authorities should coordinate across four core strategic themes:

PHYSICAL PLANNING

- Embed de facto mobility indicators into the Peshawar Master Plan to strictly limit future residential construction in active floodplains.
- Execute place-based infrastructure upgrading, prioritising stormwater drainage, paving, and heat-related interventions along the Budhni Nullah Basin, Warsak Road, Darmangi, and Regi Lalma.
- Mandate WSSP water and sewerage network extensions in low-rent peripheral areas to replace contaminated shallow wells and mitigate outbreaks of waterborne disease.
- Construct sanitary landfills under WSSP jurisdiction to eliminate informal solid waste dumping that clogs drainage channels and exacerbates urban flooding.
- Devolve planning authority and bridge institutional silos by mandating joint operational planning between CAR, NADRA, PDMA, WSSP, and Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) for all infrastructure projects in high-arrival zones.
- Apply intersectional planning frameworks to address the distinct physical and legal vulnerabilities of women, children, and peripatetic Khanabadosh communities.
- Change the municipal strategy from one focused on security and emergency framing toward long-term, mobility-informed urban governance. Integrate mobility within climate action plans for the KP province.
- Improve the allocation of the municipal budget for departments to public projects in risk-exposed and informal neighbourhoods, basing budgets on real usage rather than just formal census counts.

INCLUSION

- Treat legal documentation as a central urban risk factor by deploying multi-sectoral helpdesks within transit nodes (e.g., BRT commercial plazas) to offer legal aid, tenancy mediation, and livelihood support.
- Formalize *Zubani* verbal agreements and *Intiqal* property systems to create legal pathways that protect tenants and host intermediaries from arbitrary evictions and local land disputes.
- Direct long-term urban resilience financing to grassroots community organisations representing both host and displaced groups to reduce local risks.

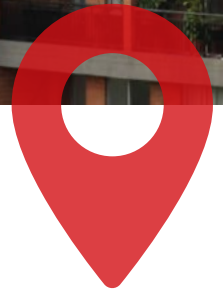
GOVERNANCE

- Create decentralised onestop Urban Cohesion Hubs to connect households to healthcare and protection services and livelihood opportunities in mixed-status neighbourhoods.

KNOWLEDGE

- Establish a unified urban tracking system for internally displaced persons and undocumented migrants to supplement the existing federal repatriation datasets. Adapt data tools to handle mixed-status families and guarantee data privacy, ensuring that registration is data-sensitive and does not expose undocumented people to arrest.
- Implement a mobility-informed local data system linking migration flows, settlement expansion, and hazard exposure to bypass the reliance on static census-based citizen counts.
- Build the technical capacity of local Union Council clerks to carry out secure, privacy-compliant data collection that protects vulnerable populations from enforcement.
- Invest in digital data systems and build community trust to improve registration accuracy and close the "ghost population" planning gap.

COLOMBIA



3.3 COLOMBIA

3.3.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Colombia has a population exceeding 52 million ([World Health Organization, 2025](#)) with a population growth rate of 1.1% by 2024 ([World Bank, 2026](#)). Its urban population accounted for a share of 82% as of 2023, and the urbanisation rate was approximately 1.5% ([World Bank, 2025b](#)). The country has a polycentric urban system (*Sistema de Ciudades*) with 58 cities covering approximately 65% of the national population ([OECD, 2022](#)) and organised in a hierarchy of primary metropolitan areas (Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali), intermediate cities, and smaller centres ([Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2025](#)). Colombia's territorial planning is led by the National Planning Department (DNP) and guided by the National Urban Policy (Ciudades 4.0) and the National Planning System ([Sistema Nacional](#)

[de Planeación, 2025](#)). Territorial associativity is a principle endorsed by the Organic Law on Land Use Planning (Ley 1454/2011), fostering municipal partnerships to achieve common development objectives, economies of scale, and competitive alliances.

Within Colombia's national urban policy, strengthening secondary cities is a priority aimed at reducing spatial inequality while promoting regional decentralisation ([Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2025](#)). These cities serve as connectivity hubs linking rural areas and major metropolitan centres to support economic diversification. Formally established Metropolitan regions include Bogotá's Región Metropolitana Bogotá-Cundinamarca and



Medellín's Área Metropolitana del Valle de Aburra, while Cali's Área Metropolitana del Suroccidente (AMSO) is still defining its institutional framework.

The influx of Venezuelan refugees and migrants dominates cross-border migration, with approximately 2.83 million as of November 2025 (*Migración Colombia, 2025*). According to the Observatorio de Migración Colombia (OM3), this includes 1,957,256 regularised individuals, 325,771 in the process of regularisation, and 520,195 without legal status (*OM3, 2026*). Concurrently, Colombia has approximately 9.09 million forcibly displaced persons due to internal conflict (*Unidad para las Víctimas, 2025*). Since the 2016 peace accord with FARC, non state armed groups

have expanded territorial control, especially across the Pacific region, driving ongoing displacement (*IDMC Colombia, 2025*). Disaster events, primarily frequent floods and landslides, also generated approximately 91,000 new internal displacements in 2024 (*IDMC Colombia, 2025*). Protracted displacement remains the norm, with many experiencing repeated or secondary displacements. While Colombia hosts millions of Venezuelans, few are formally recognised as refugees; there were 29,305 pending asylum applications as of late 2024 (*UNHCR Colombia, 2024*), with only 118 recognitions processed in 2024 (*Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2025*).

3.3.2 CALI

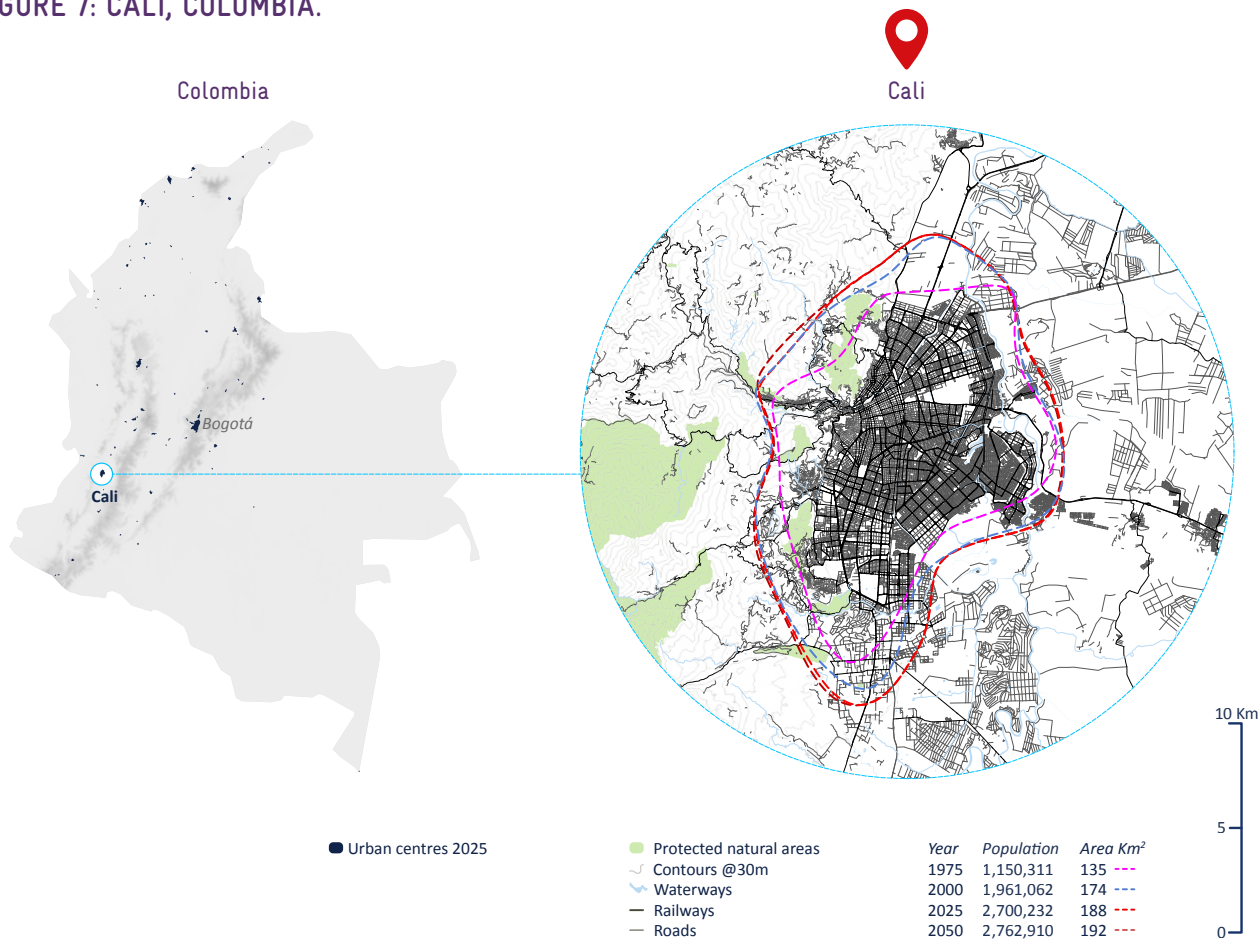


Summary

Cali functions as a primary receiving centre for mixed demographic flows, with approximately 132,000 Venezuelan migrants and 243,000 individual displaced by conflict. Population movement is driven by the expansion of armed groups in the Pacific region, economic instability, and El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO)–linked climate variability. Migrants are concentrated in areas of multidimensional poverty, specifically the eastern Aguablanca district lowlands and the western hillside communes, where low-cost informal housing intersects

with severe exposure to floods and landslides. The progressive occupation of natural buffers, such as the El Pondaje wetlands and the Jarillón del Río Cauca floodplain further degrades urban ecological resilience. Vulnerability is entrenched by a 75% reliance on informal labour, placing 80% of registered migrants in poverty. Municipal governance remains reactive and constrained by critical data silos between national registries and severe fiscal limitations following the withdrawal of international funding.

FIGURE 7: CALI, COLOMBIA.



3.3.2.1 CONTEXT

Cali, the third-largest city in Colombia, is the capital of the administrative department of Valle del Cauca. Situated in the Cauca River valley at an elevation of around 1,018 metres above sea level, Cali covers an area of 619 km², with approximately 121 km² of urbanised land. Between 2013 and 2023, 52.8 km² of land was converted into developed land, replacing vital wetlands and agricultural fields (Davidson-Gomez et al., 2024). Geographically, Cali is strategically positioned to offer the only major urban access to the Pacific coast through the nearby Buenaventura port, making it a crucial regional trade and cultural exchange corridor.

Cali's historical development spans from its pre-Colombian occupation and the colonial foundational grid established by Spanish authorities to the expansion of valley estates and transport networks. The development of the railways in the early 20th century helped connect it to the Pacific coast and other parts of the country. This was followed by rapid urban expansion and formal planning in the mid-20th century, culminating in the recent densification and consolidation of peripheral settlements from the late 20th to the early 21st century (Eusse González et al., 2020).

Cali is recognised for its diverse ethnic composition, including significant Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities. In 2019, Cali's municipal population was over 2.2 million, with an estimated 3.4 million living in the broader metropolitan area (DANE, 2025). The city functions as a key receiving node that absorbs a mixture of mobility flows, placing substantial pressure on local public services and infrastructure, while its metropolitan area (AMSO) continues to develop its inter-municipal coordination framework.

3.3.2.2 HUMAN MOBILITY IN CALI

Human mobility in Cali is characterised by a high volume of mixed inflows of migrants, primarily from Venezuela, and individuals displaced by conflict. Cali hosts approximately 132,077 Venezuelan migrants (~4.65% of the national total), of whom 93,072 (70.5%) are regularised via a Temporary Protection Permit (PPT), 11,007 (8.3%) are in the process of being regularised, and 26,646 (20.2%) are undocumented (OM3, 2026). In 2025 alone, Cali registered a substantial annual baseline inflow of approximately 6,500-7,000 IDPs. Concurrently, 295,871 conflict victims have registered statements in Cali, representing around 2.45% of the national total; of these, 242,966 reported forced displacement, with 222,774 living directly within the city limits (Unidad para las Víctimas, 2025). In terms of urban risk, there is no strong evidence suggesting that

Venezuelan migrants and IDPs should be treated separately. Both groups settle in the same low-income peripheral zones, are exposed to identical physical and environmental hazards, and navigate the same hurdles in accessing municipal services. According to an interviewee who conducted participatory workshops on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning frameworks, Cali should recognize these mobile populations as active agents, city-makers, and key socioeconomic actors, instead of viewing them as passive beneficiaries.

The underlying drivers of human mobility in Cali are multifaceted and strongly gendered. Women make up 52% of the migrant population, many arriving with children and dependents, which adds to the burden of caregiving and having to earn a living. For those originating from conflict areas, patriarchal dynamics and physical violence often mean that men are left behind or absent, leaving women to bear the sole emotional and economic responsibility for the family's survival. Displaced and migrant women typically find work in low-wage, informal domestic service and caregiving roles that lack formal labour protection. Regional dynamics include the expansion of non state armed groups in the Pacific region since the 2016 peace accord (IDMC Colombia, 2025) and deep-seated economic precariousness (Migration Policy Institute, 2025). Climate change and environmental degradation are active contributing factors, as climate variability directly undermines agrarian livelihoods in rural source zones, prompting families to seek refuge in urban centres. Historical data indicate that extreme drought cycles in Cali are strongly correlated with ENSO events (Loaiza Cerón et al., 2020). This evidence illustrates the city's vulnerability to climate variability, suggesting that climatic stress may increase the likelihood of regional population displacement.

Spatially, human mobility flows connect international and regional origin corridors to specific peri-urban reception zones. Cross-border Venezuelan migration involves long-distance, self-directed movement, with Cali's Transport Terminal serving as the initial urban receiving hub, whereas internal displacement connects Pacific corridors (primarily Cauca, Nariño, and Buenaventura) directly to the city. Upon arrival, families settle in the eastern lowlands of the Aguablanca district (communes 13, 14, 15, and 21) or the western hillside communes (1, 18, and 20), where networks exist and low-cost informal rentals are available. These areas are undergoing rapid informal densification, with single-family dwellings frequently overcrowded with multiple households. These movements are subject to sea-

sonal spikes, such as a notable increase in group arrivals from Cauca during the December–January period, and sudden surges triggered by regional security escalations, such as the mass displacement from Cauca in late 2025.

Migrants and IDPs choose Cali over other destinations due to its strategic regional importance, dynamic economy, and established institutional response routes. Newcomers perceive the city as being comparably “easier” to navigate because of its visible coordination networks, responsive municipal offices, and historical experience with population inflows. Cali’s diversified economy, dominated by manufacturing, logistics, and export services, contributes 44.4% of the regional GDP (*Cámara de Comercio de Cali, 2025*). Although formal employment is highly restricted, the city’s vast informal labour markets absorb 75% of active newcomers, offering immediate opportunities for earning a daily wage. Furthermore, education is consistently accessible, as Colombian law guarantees all minor children the right to school enrolment regardless of their documentation status.

3.3.2.3 RISK TO MOBILE POPULATIONS

The risk to mobile populations in Cali is compounded by a combination of severe environmental, physical, and socio-legal hazards. The city is highly exposed to flooding in its lowlands, landslides in its hillsides, and region-wide heatwaves and droughts. Hillside communes face mass movement and landslide hazards, which have historically resulted in the need for risk-based resettlement interventions (*Columbia University & World Bank, 2025*). In contrast, the low-lying eastern communes face chronic drainage failures, extreme heat stress, and public health threats. These physical threats are compounded by socio-legal hazards, including localised violence, extortion by non-state actors in low-income sectors, and the constant threat of eviction due to informal, verbal lease agreements. WASH infrastructure deficits in informal settlements further drive public health hazards, such as outbreaks of vector-borne and waterborne illnesses. These are concentrated in specific, unmonitored spatial zones where arriving families are forced to settle due to affordability constraints.

In return, these settlements exacerbate risks to the environment and inhabitants. The progressive build-up of environmentally sensitive flood buffers, such as the wetlands of El Pondaje and Charco Azul, directly undermines their natural flood-retention capacity and exposes residents to severe inundation. Similarly, the Jarillón del Río Cauca floodplain dike structure has seen a large number of in-

formal settlements, requiring complex mechanical water pumps as the occupied terrain lies below the river level. In these highly exposed zones, families live in substandard housing with critical deficits regarding clean water provision, drainage, and public lighting, which further increases their vulnerability to disaster shocks and limits access to emergency relief.

Socio-spatial vulnerability is highly stratified by legal status, gender, age, and livelihood. Irregular Venezuelan migrants face extreme precarity due to their lack of PPT documentation, which excludes them from formal employment and limits their access to non-emergency healthcare. Female caregivers are subject to acute intersectional vulnerabilities, as they carry the double burden of having to earn an income and provide caregiving under severe emotional and economic distress. Informal daily-wage workers, such as street vendors and recycling collectors, face severe income shocks during extreme weather events because of the lack of formal social safety nets. It is likely that people with disabilities face distinct barriers in terms of physical mobility, access to services, and economic integration. Similarly, legal and documentation barriers may create persistent hurdles to social integration for children and older adults.

The timing of these risks is tied to seasonal cycles and regulatory shocks. Vulnerability peaks during the intense wet seasons, which trigger flash floods and landslides, and during summer heat peaks, which exacerbate water scarcity and heat stress (*Loaiza Cerón et al., 2020*). These environmental cycles are punctuated by crisis moments, such as immediate eviction from informal rentals or the initial, chaotic arrival phase of displaced families. Response mechanisms are mainly applied during crisis spikes, such as the late 2025 mass displacement from Cauca, which required quick multi sectoral mobilisation.

3.3.2.4 RISK DRIVERS

Risk in Cali is driven by the structural intersection of climate change, ecological degradation, poverty, and limitations in institutional planning. Newcomers are clustered in areas of multidimensional poverty, specifically the eastern lowlands and western hillsides, where structural deficits in housing and infrastructure are combined with high exposure to physical hazards. To identify vulnerable urban areas and verify exposure towards different hazards, the municipality has developed an interactive risk management map (*Mapa Interactivo de Gestión del Riesgo*) (*Municipio de Santiago de Cali, 2025*).



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Climate change acts as a primary risk multiplier. World Bank projections indicate a steady rise in the annual mean temperature for Cali and the broader Valle del Cauca. Under Shared Socioeconomic Pathway (SSP) 3-7.0, the region's reference mean temperature of 20.75°C (1995–2014) is projected to rise to 21.42°C by 2020–2039, and to 22.17°C by 2040–2059 (World Bank, 2025a). Rising temperatures could intensify UHI effects and worsen water scarcity in densely populated, low-income neighbourhoods. Concurrently, increased rainfall intensity and seasonal variability may elevate landslide and flood risks in hillside and eastern communes, potentially triggering secondary displacement among already vulnerable mobile populations.

Environmental degradation further accelerates risk, driven by rapid urbanisation and the loss of natural ecosystems. Remote sensing analyses show that extensive wetland areas have been transformed and filled, thereby severely reducing natural drainage and flood-mitigation capacities (Tallis Monteiro et al., 2024). Weak environmental governance, land-use conflicts, and the exclusion of local communities from conservation efforts have driven ecosystem degradation (Díaz-Pinzón et al., 2024). At a metropolitan scale, agricultural expansion and unplanned urban sprawl have degraded biocultural landscapes and critical watershed structures, undermining regional ecological resilience (LaRota-Aguilera et al., 2024). Conflicts related to over-extraction and water governance further reduce the capacity of local river basins to provide clean water (Arias-Arbeláez & Castro-Botina, 2022).

Socioeconomic precarity and structural inequality reinforce this risk landscape. Cali's highly segmented economy pushes mobile populations into precarious economic niches regardless of their previous education. While 61% of newcomers report some economic activity, informal self-employment serves as the primary survival strategy for 75%, exposing families to highly unstable earnings and a complete lack of social protection. This income precarity forces families to rent substandard, low-cost housing in hazardous areas, trapping them in a cycle of exposure. The depth of this material deprivation is reflected in the SISBÉN social registry, which serves as a key entry point to social programmes and enables access to local inter-institutional services, where approximately 70,000 migrants are registered, with nearly 80% falling into categories A and B, representing extreme and moderate poverty.

Finally, weak governance and planning limitations act as institutional risk drivers. Cali's rapid spatial expansion outpaces formal planning systems, resulting in a significant discrepancy between demographic pressures and urban land-use policies. Local planning responses remain reactive, operating under a "receive first and plan later" logic due to fiscal constraints and sustained pressure on basic services. Although Cali's annual municipal budget for 2026 was approved at EUR 1.8 billion, the city's economic capacity remains insufficient to meet these growing social and service demands. This fragmentation is exacerbated by the fact that municipal planning offices often treat human mobility as falling outside their institutional mandate, deepening the divisions between planning and social services. Crucially, data siloing prevents evidence-based planning; database platforms for SISBÉN, the Victims Registry (RUV), and the Single Registry of Venezuelan Migrants (RUMV) together with the PPT run in separate administrative domains with no integrated data sharing or interoperable architecture.

3.3.2.5 EXISTING RESPONSES

At the national level, Colombia established the Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants (ETPV) in 2021, providing a 10-year protection framework composed of the RUMV and the PPT (UNHCR Colombia, 2025). Of the nearly 2.4 million migrants surveyed nationally, the top three reasons for moving were to improve their living, working, and health conditions; only 0.41% cited disaster or climate change as their primary reason for displacement (Migración Colombia, 2024). Nationally, refugee status is regulated under Decree 1067 of 2015 and managed by the Advisory Commission for the Determination of Refugee Status (CONARE), which provides basic safe-conduct passes to applicants. Internal displacement is governed by Law 1448 of 2011, which coordinates humanitarian aid, assistance, and comprehensive reparation through the National System for Comprehensive Victim Support and Reparation (SNARIV) and the national Victims Unit.

In Cali, these national frameworks are implemented locally through various municipal entities and a coordinated multi-sectoral committee. For Venezuelan migrants, Centro Intégrate (located near the Transport Terminal) serves as a key institutional hub, offering guidance on RUMV/PPT registration, healthcare, education, and employability. These services are coordinated by the Municipal Migrants Committee, which was reformed in 2019 and 2023 to grant voting rights to migrant and returnee representa-

tives. These efforts are systematically integrated with the Committee for Migrant Attention and the legally mandated Territorial Justice Committee (*Comité Territorial de Justicia Transicional*) to align social and physical services. The local Ombudsman (*Personería*) guides asylum seekers in filing health-related claims and legal protection requests (*tutelas*) to secure essential services. For IDPs, the Regional Centre for Victim Attention (CRAV) and the municipal Victims' Committee channel emergency humanitarian aid (spanning 30–90 days) and coordinate service referrals.

However, Cali's formal planning responses remain highly reactive and are constrained by available resources. Municipal authorities operate under a “receive first and plan later” approach, and the urban planning office declines to be actively involved, claiming that human mobility falls outside its mandate. To manage inflows, the Secretariat of Social Welfare and SISBÉN rely on targeted social registries, service fairs, and rapid geolocated mapping to direct aid to Aguablanca and the hillside communes. Coordination with national and humanitarian actors is case-driven and fragmented due to the use of separate administrative databases for SISBÉN, RUV, and PPT. Additionally, local capacity was severely impacted by the withdrawal of USAID funding in 2024–2025, which reduced support for Centro Intégrate. Current municipal leadership relies heavily on European cooperation partners, including GIZ, Expertise France, and the French Development Agency (AFD), to sustain project-based interventions.

At the community level, interactions between host neighbourhoods and newcomers are generally stable and peaceful, with open xenophobia remaining limited. Mobile service caravans (*ferias/brigadas*) help mitigate local tensions by pooling documentation, health checks, and anti-xenophobia campaigns in vulnerable zones. To foster local solidarity, international cooperation initiatives, such as MERA (*Mujeres Echando Raíces*), CoNexo (a partnership between KOICA and IOM), and initiatives supported by the Hilton Foundation in Marroquín specifically target women's economic integration, anti-xenophobia campaigns, and social cohesion. Neighbourhood-level community action boards (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*) and migrant networks actively disseminate institutional information and mobilise residents, serving as crucial informal networks for building solidarity and trust.

3.3.2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform Cali's urban governance from managing emergencies reactively to a proactive, mobility-informed planning framework, municipal and departmental authorities should coordinate across four strategic themes. These recommendations aim to build upon Cali's existing strengths, such as its robust local organisations and established mobile brigades, to help address systemic risks and foster greater social cohesion between newcomers and host communities.

PHYSICAL PLANNING

- Consider targeted, localised micro-upgrading (e.g., drainage, flood control, water networks, and street lighting) in high-exposure informal neighbourhoods of the eastern lowlands (Aguablanca district, communes 13, 14, 15, and 21) and western hillside communes (1, 18, and 20), which could reduce the exposure of vulnerable and mobile populations to seasonal flooding and landslide risks.
- Explore the potential to establish existing schools as climate resilience hubs in high-arrival neighbourhoods, integrating school-based risk-awareness and community-centred disaster preparedness programmes.
- Prioritise the use of Urban Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to reduce risks and restore the environment, including the wetlands of El Pondaje and Charco Azul, and river buffers along the Jarillón del Río Cauca floodplain, thereby preventing new high-risk informal settlements while restoring natural hydrological retention.

INCLUSION

- Promote the expansion and deployment of regular multi-agency mobile caravans (*ferias/brigadas*) in arrival hotspots such as Aguablanca and hillside sectors. These could bundle PPT registration, documentation, legal aid, psychosocial support, and early protection routing.
- Strengthen community-based decision-making by formalising the participation of migrant and IDP representatives in the reformed Municipal Migrants Committee, local planning councils, and participatory budgeting processes.

- Explore partnerships with the private sector to secure funding and establish vocational training and entrepreneurship pathways, especially in sectors such as solid waste management and urban agriculture, to support households where women carry a double care burden under conflict and displacement-related stress.
- Consider mechanisms to support grassroots-led integration and social cohesion by providing direct, streamlined municipal funding to community action boards (*Juntas de Acción Comunal*) and migrant-led groups to implement local neighbourhood development projects.

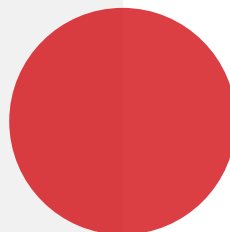
GOVERNANCE

- Support the gradual transition of the multi-sectoral committee (social welfare, health, education, housing, planning, and risk management) from reactive emergency management towards adopting a permanent, anticipatory governance approach. This could include strengthening longer-term planning and better integrating coordinated service provision into risk management and urban planning processes.
- Reduce risks from natural-hazard-induced disasters by enhancing the capacities of trusted local leaders, women's groups, and migrant representatives to disseminate hazard alerts and response guidance rapidly.
- Promote the development of a stable public-private co-funding model to help offset reductions in international support (e.g., USAID's withdrawal in 2024-2025) and sustain critical reception infrastructure, such as Centro Intégrate and the Transport Terminal support space.

KNOWLEDGE

- Collaborate with community organisations, such as *Juntas de Acción Comunal*, on community-led, geocoded household-level mapping, which could help identify localised risk clusters, strengthen community trust, and inform the prioritisation of public interventions via participatory budgeting and municipal planning processes.

- Promote the integration of currently fragmented database systems, including SISBÉN, RUV, and RUMV/PPT, towards more interoperable data-sharing practices. This reconciled architecture could improve information silos and service delivery.
- Consider using combined analytical tools, such as overlaying the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) with geocoded hazard maps to identify overlapping vulnerabilities (e.g., irregular status, female-led caregiving, and physical disabilities) and to guide more targeted, place-based interventions at a neighbourhood level.



NIGERIA



3.4 NIGERIA

3.4.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

Nigeria possesses one of the largest and most complex urban systems in Africa, structured around megacities, major metropolitan centres, and numerous secondary cities. At the top of this hierarchy is Lagos, the country's economic centre and one of the fastest-growing megacities globally. Other key metropolitan centres include Abuja, Kano, Port Harcourt, Ibadan, and Kaduna, which function as important administrative, commercial, and industrial hubs ([National Population Commission, 2022](#)). Secondary cities play a critical role in linking rural economies with national markets and services ([Roberts, 2014](#)).

Africa accounts for almost half of IDPs worldwide ([IDMC Nigeria, 2024a](#)), with an estimated 3.3 million IDPs. Ni-

geria is one of five African countries that account for about 80% of conflict-related displacement on the continent ([IDMC Nigeria, 2024b](#)).

At the national and sub-national levels, displacement dynamics are particularly severe in Nigeria's Middle Belt region. Data from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) indicate that of the seven states that form the Middle Belt, Benue State hosts approximately 500,182 IDPs, representing about 38% of the region's displaced population ([IOM Nigeria, 2024](#)). Benue State's displaced populations are spread across 26 formal camps and some 185 host communities, many of which are located around Makurdi and neighbouring local government areas, largely due to



persistent farmer-herder conflicts, communal violence, and rural insecurity. In 2019 the DTM identified over 404,622 IDPs in Benue, accounting for about 42% of the displaced population in the North-Central and North-West crisis areas, with high concentrations in Guma, Gwer West, Agatu, Makurdi, and Ukum local government areas ([IOM Nigeria, 2019](#)), indicating a growth in numbers.

Migration patterns in Nigeria are heavily influenced by economic opportunities, environmental risks, and insecurity. In recent years, conflict-related displacement linked to insurgency, banditry, and farmer-herder clashes has forced millions of people to leave their homes ([IDMC Nigeria, 2023](#); [Agaigbe, 2023](#)). In Benue State alone, over 500,000 people were living in internally displaced persons camps as of 2024, with millions displaced over time ([Amnesty International, 2025](#); [Benue State Government, 2025](#)). Many originate from rural areas such as Guma, Agatu, Logo, Ukum, Gwer-West, and Katsina-Ala. Environmental hazards also contribute to displacement: For instance, the 2022 floods displaced tens of thousands of residents across communities along the River Benue and River Niger floodplains ([Benue State Government, 2025](#)). Migration to urban centres largely occurs through internal movements within Nigeria. This includes rural–urban migration triggered by environmental shocks and localised insecurity, intra-state migration within Benue, and inter-state migration from neighbouring Nasarawa, Plateau, and Taraba states. Many of these households experience multiple stages of relocation before settling in urban areas, resulting in protracted displacement and the emergence of semi-permanent settlements.

Nigeria's legal framework for displacement includes commitments to the 1951 Refugee Convention ([UNHCR, 2026](#)), the OAU Refugee Convention ([OAU Convention, 1969](#)), and the Kampala Convention ([African Union, 2026](#)), which provides protection and assistance mechanisms for displaced populations. Implementation is led by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, supported by humanitarian actors including IOM, UNHCR, and the National Emergency Management Agency, though an effective response is frequently constrained by gaps in capacity and coordination at the state and local levels ([UNHCR Nigeria, 2024](#)). Consequently, the growing inflow of migrants and displaced populations places increasing pressure on urban planning, housing, environmental management, and social services in receiving cities across the country.

3.4.2 MAKURDI

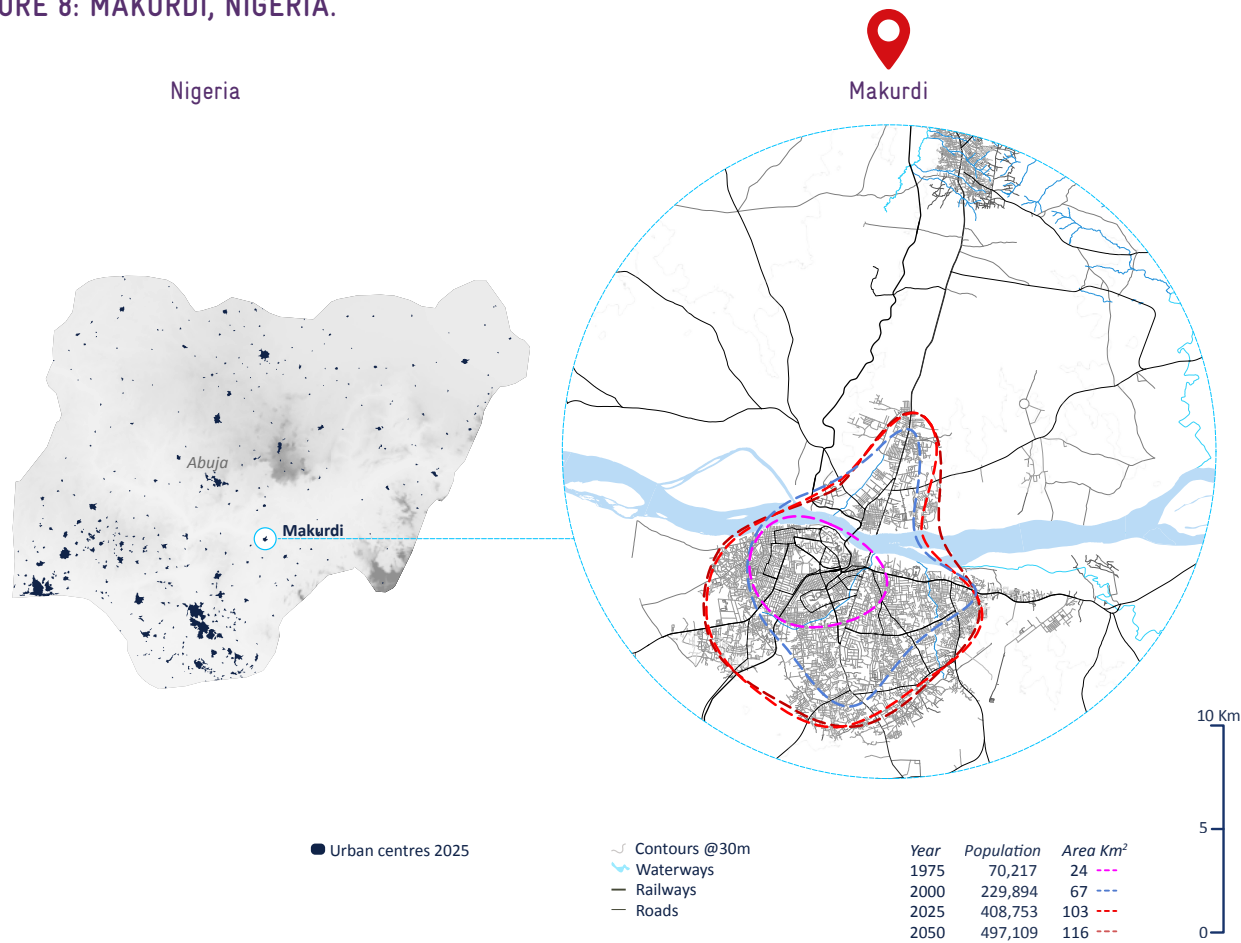


Summary

Makurdi is the primary urban refuge for populations fleeing protracted farmer–herder conflicts, communal violence, and climate stressors across Nigeria’s Middle Belt. Within Benue State that hosts 500,182 internally displaced persons, the city absorbs massive demographic pressure. A lack of affordable accommodation forces displaced households into unmonitored informal settlements along the River Benue floodplains. These are situated in the 25.7% of the urban area classified as high-risk for severe seasonal river flooding, leading

to recurrent secondary displacement and waterborne disease outbreaks. Extreme social vulnerabilities include critical child trafficking risks and exposure to severe gender-based violence linked to infrastructure deficits. The institutional response is fragmented across overlapping state agencies and undermined by political gatekeeping, which systematically excludes urban IDPs from federal social protection programmes and formal budgeting processes.

FIGURE 8: MAKURDI, NIGERIA.



3.4.2.1 CONTEXT

Makurdi is situated along the banks of the River Benue. Originally established in the 1920s, it regained prominence after 1927 as a provincial centre, with growth accelerating after the opening of the combined rail and road bridge over the River Benue in 1932. After Benue State was created in 1976, Makurdi was designated the state capital. Today, the urban area encompasses multiple wards and districts including High Level, Wurukum, Wadata, North Bank, and New GRA, reflecting spatial expansion over decades of economic and administrative development. Makurdi is the administrative and commercial capital of Benue State, with a strategic position as a regional transport hub connecting agricultural communities through road networks and the River Benue corridor. Its economy relies heavily on public administration, commerce, agriculture-related trade, and informal activities.

Makurdi's population has grown steadily over the past decades from 240,000 in 1991 to 475,000 in 2025 ([World Population Review, 2026](#)). The rapid growth puts a strain on available resources, land and the environment ([Shaibu et al., 2025](#)). The city's demographic profile is ethnically diverse, drawing people from the dominant Tiv ethnic group and significant minorities including Idoma, Igede, and others due to its commercial, educational, and administrative functions.

Makurdi lacks the institutional capacity, infrastructure, and financial resources to absorb sudden population influxes. As a result, migration intensifies existing urban vulnerabilities resulting from unplanned urban growth and expansion, weak planning institutions and poor enforcement mechanisms, and overburdened infrastructures and services. Displaced populations often depend on shared or informal service arrangements. In some instances, public buildings are converted into temporary shelters, further limiting their availability for regular use. This dual pressure on services deepens urban inequality and weakens overall city resilience, making the study of mobility and risk in Makurdi highly critical for broader regional policy planning.

3.4.2.2 HUMAN MOBILITY IN MAKURDI

Human mobility in Makurdi is characterized by a rapid shift from voluntary rural-urban migration to forced migration driven by conflict and insecurity, turning the city into a key destination for displaced populations fleeing rural violence and livelihood crises. Migrants include internally displaced persons, agricultural labourers, rural-urban migrants, and cross-border inflows, notably Cameroonian

refugees fleeing conflict ([Amnesty International, 2025](#); [Benue State Government, 2025](#)). Particularly since 2014, Makurdi has experienced an intermittent influx of IDPs fleeing protracted violent conflicts between sedentary farmers and itinerant pastoralists in neighbouring rural areas ([Adzande, 2025](#)). The choice of Makurdi as a primary destination over other urban nodes is driven by its strategic role within the region.

Recent biometric registration data from IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) indicate substantial displaced populations in municipalities in Benue State, with several thousand registered within Makurdi Local Government Area itself as part of broader movements caused by protracted farmer–herder conflicts and related insecurity ([IOM, 2024](#); [UNHCR Nigeria, 2024](#)). The migration pattern is typically phased and selective, often beginning with women, children, and the elderly, while younger men remain behind temporarily, joining later if conditions worsen. Additionally, the transhumance dimension remains highly relevant, with the movement of herders from northern Nigeria into the Middle Belt in search of fertile land, vegetation, and water due to changing weather patterns contributing directly to the intensity and scale of the crisis.

The primary drivers of mobility are conflict-related, particularly farmer-herder clashes, general insecurity, and banditry, which represent defining features of this case study because they involve mass displacement affecting more than five local government areas at once ([Agaigbe, 2023](#)). Climate-related factors act as critical contributing drivers, with flooding along riverbanks, erratic rainfall in the Lower Benue Basin, drought, heat stress, and the loss of groundwater and grazing land in rural zones eroding agricultural livelihoods and pushing families toward urban destinations ([Idakpo et al., 2022](#)). Spatially, these movements connect rural origin communities such as Guma, Agatu, Logo, Ukum, Gwer-West, and Katsina-Ala, as well as adjacent states including Nasarawa, Plateau, and Taraba, with Makurdi town and its peri-urban fringes. Guma Local Government Area (LGA) records the highest number of arrivals, with most displaced households eventually moving toward Makurdi metropolis. Within Makurdi, neighbourhoods such as Wurukum, North Bank, and Kanshio are preferred due to relatively affordable informal housing. Many originating from rural areas relocate several times before settling in urban areas, resulting in protracted displacement and the emergence of semi-permanent settlements. This continuous inflow of migrants and displaced

populations is placing increasing pressure on urban planning, housing, environmental management, and social services in the city.

Nevertheless, displaced populations in Makurdi are not merely passive recipients of humanitarian assistance; evidence shows that IDPs actively rebuild their livelihoods through social networks, informal economic activities, and collective initiatives, including the establishment of informal markets that serve both IDPs and host communities (Adzande, 2025).

3.4.2.3 RISK TO MOBILE POPULATIONS

Mobile populations in Makurdi face deep, layered risks arising from the interaction of environmental hazards, high spatial exposure, social vulnerabilities, and sudden regulatory or economic shocks. The primary physical and environmental hazards confronting these populations include seasonal river flooding, extreme heatwaves, landslides, fires, disease outbreaks, customary land eviction, and gender-based or communal violence. Flooding is the most prominent hazard, occurring mainly between July and October in low-lying neighbourhoods, due to the city's position along the floodplain of the River Benue. Historical events such as the catastrophic flood in 2012 displaced thousands, while major floods in 2017 and 2022 again severely affected riverbank communities (Ikyapa et al., 2020; Shabu et al., 2025; Akaahar et al., 2026). The physical hazard of flooding is compounded by public health risks, as poor waste management and water contamination in informal settlements heighten exposure to outbreaks of disease such as acute diarrhoea, typhoid, cholera, and malaria (Anuye et al., 2025; Semaka et al., 2026).

These hazards are highly concentrated in specific spatial hotspots where poorer mobile populations are forced to settle due to land availability and affordability and the absence of formal housing choices. This spatial exposure is focused on unmonitored informal settlements, peri-urban areas, floodplains, wetlands, and poorly drained zones such as Wadata, North Bank, Kanshio, Angwan Jukun, and parts of Wurukum, which overlap extensively with residential and urban agricultural areas (Ndabula & Oyatayo, 2021). Unregulated expansion along these floodplains means that both displaced and host populations reside in substandard housing that lacks basic infrastructure such as drainage systems, paved roads, and waste management services, thereby multiplying their exposure to environmental hazards. Urban agriculture and related livelihoods in these floodplain

areas are impacted equally: Over 66% of farmland in some zones is classified as highly flood-prone, directly threatening food production and household survival for both host and migrant communities (Kunda et al., 2021).

Socio-spatial vulnerability in these exposed zones is highly stratified by legal status, age, gender, and socio-economic position. Vulnerable groups including women, children, the elderly, undocumented migrants, refugees, and those with specific precarious livelihoods face disproportionate risks. Women and girls shoulder the domestic burden of water collection to a greater extent; without basic services and water, they are forced to walk long distances, exposing them to elevated gender-based violence (GBV) and protection risks, with transactional sex and trafficking emerging as widespread coping strategies and protection threats. In addition, there is a severe child protection gap, with cases of IDP households giving children to strangers or intermediaries as domestic workers in big cities. For example, a Daudu community leader recounts an instance where a man took more than 200 children who were volunteered by their parents, according to interviewees. Young people are also trafficked to major cities like Abuja, Port Harcourt, and Lagos, or to other West African countries such as Ghana, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire. Persons with disabilities face significant physical and institutional access barriers in camps and public services despite the state's Disability Rights Law. This vulnerability is also acute for displaced households engaging in casual daily-wage labour, street hawking, and petty trading, who face rental discrimination and lack local political networks. This leaves them entirely excluded from state or federal social protection schemes (such as school feeding programmes and the N-Power employment scheme targeting youth unemployment), access to which is often influenced by political affiliation.

The timing of these risks is dictated by seasonal environmental cycles and sudden regulatory or economic crisis moments. Seasonal risks peak during the rainy season between July and October, when river flooding occurs and persists for several days, and during heat peaks and prolonged dry spells. These seasonal cycles are punctuated by sudden crisis moments, such as the initial arrival phase of displaced families when they lack basic sanitation, shelter, and documentation. Crisis moments are also triggered by customary land evictions, as land tenure insecurity in informal settlements and customary land systems leaves arriving households vulnerable to eviction by traditional authorities or landowners (World Bank, 2016). Sudden income shocks,

driven by rising house rents, market saturation, and the loss of agricultural assets and livestock, further compromise household resilience, forcing families into a perpetual cycle of temporary evacuation to higher ground and repeated return to hazardous danger zones because they cannot afford safer land.

3.4.2.4 RISK DRIVERS

Urban risk in Makurdi is driven by a combination of environmental, socio-economic, and governance factors that determine the vulnerability of both host and displaced populations. Climate change acts as a primary driver, as rainfall variability and extreme rainfall events have become increasingly erratic in the Lower Benue Basin, directly affecting agricultural productivity and triggering rural-urban migration (Idakpo et al., 2022). Hydrological and spatial modelling indicates that rainfall intensity accounts for 44.9% of flood risk, morphometric terrain characteristics contribute 34%, land-use changes 12.8%, and soil conditions 6.3%, with 25.7% of the urban area classified as high-risk (Ndabula & Oyatayo, 2021). This is severely exacerbated by environmental degradation caused by rapid population growth and unplanned urban expansion. Land-use studies show a significant conversion of natural vegetation and farmland into built-up areas over the past three decades, reducing the absorption of natural runoff and increasing the risk of floods (Iortyom et al., 2020). Poor waste management, including dumping in drainage channels, further clogs drainage pathways, compounding flooding and water pollution in informal settlements (Hula et al., 2019).

Socio-economic risk drivers, including poverty, inequality, and extreme livelihood vulnerability, add to these physical threats. High unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young people and migrants, contribute to highly precarious livelihoods (Mile et al., 2022). IDPs often engage in low-productivity petty trading, casual labour, or small-scale agriculture to survive. As they cannot afford the high rents in the municipal centre, they are forced to occupy floodplains where land is cheap, but tenure is insecure (Agaigbe, 2023; World Bank, 2016). This land tenure insecurity restricts housing investments, increases exposure to eviction, and deprives low-income residents of legal protection.

Weak municipal governance and structural urban planning limitations act as critical institutional risk drivers. Although hazard-related information exists, it is rarely mainstreamed into land-use planning, zoning regulations, or infrastruc-

ture decisions, and planning institutions operate in silos with limited collaboration between the agencies responsible for disaster risk management, urban planning, and environmental protection (UN-Habitat, 2020; World Bank, 2015). Local governments are underfunded and heavily dependent on insufficient, unpredictable central allocations, leading to a shortage of skilled professionals in geospatial analysis and urban risk assessment. This creates the “ghost population” dilemma, where urban planning and budgeting are strictly tied to formally counted residents, completely ignoring the thousands of de facto users such as refugees, undocumented migrants, and arrivals in informal settlements, thereby placing immense, unbudgeted pressure on water, health, sanitation, transport, and education networks.

3.4.2.5 EXISTING RESPONSES

At the programme and physical planning level, multi-sectoral initiatives such as Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) and Strengthening Peace and Resilience in Nigeria (SPRiNG) have been cited as positive examples that link environmental resilience with development objectives. To support self-reliance, the Benue government has allocated 5,600 hectares of land to 5,600 IDP households for farming, while IOM-supported initiatives help IDPs settle near farms with shelter materials and seeds. Water boreholes installed by partners in Ortese and Naka have significantly reduced the distance women and girls have to travel to collect water. In some emergency cases, state authorities have allocated land—such as 230 hectares supported by the UNDP to accommodate Cameroonian refugees—enabling arrivals to farm and rebuild their lives.

Institutional and governance responses in Makurdi involve multiple tiers of administration and a suite of policy instruments designed to address displacement and environmental risk. At the state level, formal policies include the Benue Internally Displaced Persons Policy, a State Durable Solutions Action Plan, a Disability Rights Law, and a draft climate change policy. Operational leadership is divided among agencies: The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) functions as the principal responder for emergencies and camp coordination; the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHDM) is tasked with policy leadership and coordination; the Bureau for International Development and Cooperation (BICD) plays a planning and coordination role; and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) provides protection and legal pathways.

International agencies, notably the IOM and UNHCR, contribute vital technical support, with IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) serving as a core data source for tracking population movements and needs. Despite these foundations, translating policy into consistent operational action remains a persistent challenge due to severe systemic constraints. MHDM's intended coordinating role is undermined by limited funding, insufficient staffing, and gaps in technical capacity, meaning that coordination functions frequently overlap, producing duplication and inefficiencies. Operationally, Benue's SEMA and partners are constrained by logistics and staffing shortages that limit their ability to respond to the massive, protracted scale of displacement.

The data ecosystem itself is a critical bottleneck: Primary data registers are not routinely harmonised, update cycles are irregular, and disaggregation by sex, age, and disability (SAD) is often incomplete, meaning that informal settlements and peri-urban arrivals are frequently undercounted. Furthermore, although the IOM has trained officers from MHDM and provided equipment to build local ownership of displacement tracking, trained staff lack ongoing technical mentorship, and budgetary responsibility for recurrent monitoring costs has not been transferred to state actors, leaving local offices equipped but highly inconsistent. This is compounded by exclusion from federal social protection programmes (such as school feeding programs and the N-Power scheme), where the choice of beneficiaries is often influenced by political affiliation, leaving displaced households without local political networks entirely excluded.

Consequently, communities must develop solutions in parallel to support migrant populations. Displaced populations have created active informal savings groups, faith-based networks, and neighbourhood associations to support vulnerable households during crises, as well as establishing informal markets that serve both IDPs and host communities (Adzande, 2025).





3.4.2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform Makurdi's urban governance from managing emergencies reactively to proactive, inclusive, and risk-informed development, state, local, and municipal authorities must coordinate across four strategic themes:

PHYSICAL PLANNING

- Implement immediate municipal flood-mitigation measures, including clearing drainage channels, removing solid waste dumped in waterways, and establishing sandbag barriers in highly exposed, low-lying wards such as Wadata, North Bank, and Wurukum that are home to many migrant households.
- Partner with international donors (such as BMZ) to expand municipal water and sanitation infrastructure, for example by constructing solar-powered water boreholes and community water networks in reception sites like Ortese and Naka to reduce the distance migrant and non-migrant women and girls have to travel to collect water, and the associated GBV protection risks, and introducing low-cost, sustainable waste-to-resource programmes to handle solid waste in informal settlements.
- Mainstream migration and displacement dynamics directly in spatial development strategies, land-use planning, and zoning regulations to ensure that residential housing is expanded towards safer, climate-resilient peri-urban zones, preventing unplanned sprawl in active River Benue floodplains.

INCLUSION

- Scale up community-based child protection committees and safety audits in camps and host communities to detect, refer, and prevent child trafficking and exploitative labour arrangements (such as those observed in Daudu and Guma).
- Expand integrated livelihood programmes supporting both host and displaced populations through vocational skills training, access to microfinance, and agricultural support (providing fast-maturing seeds, fertilizers, and small-scale irrigation tools to help displaced farmers rebuild their incomes quickly). Design public service centres and camps to be more accessible and implement (and provide funding for) the execution of the Disability Rights Law.

- Initiate mediated dialogues with traditional leaders and municipal authorities to establish pragmatic, secure interim tenure mechanisms and recognition certificates to protect informal arrivals from arbitrary eviction, thereby promoting lasting land tenure and housing solutions.

- Eliminate political gatekeeping to ensure urban IDPs have equal, non-discriminatory access to state and federal social protection programmes (such as school feeding and employment schemes like N-Power).

GOVERNANCE

- Create dedicated, institutionalised budget lines for IDP protection and assistance within urban centres and municipal budgets to move away from reactive, underfunded, and short-term emergency responses. This should include support for implementing protection programmes at grassroots level by providing direct, streamlined funding to sectoral associations.
- Clarify and streamline operational mandates across state agencies, establishing clear division of labour and bringing together mechanisms between SEMA (emergency response/camp coordination), MHDM (policy leadership), BICD (planning coordination), and NCFRMI (protection and legal pathways) to prevent duplication.
- Translate local findings from Makurdi into regional policy discussions within the ECOWAS Commission to inform transhumance protocols and regional migration management. Encourage member states to move beyond simply ratifying the Kampala Convention to actively domesticate the treaty through national and state legislative measures to enable improved urban action.

KNOWLEDGE

- Launch local orientation and awareness campaigns in camps and host communities to inform newcomers of their responsibilities, rights, and available health-care and social services.
- Establish formal dissemination steps to share research findings, data, and policy insights with local contributors and community leaders (such as those

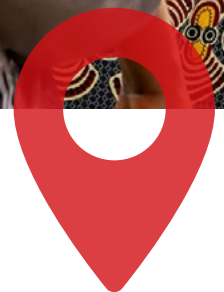
in Daudu, Guma, and Makurdi city) to ensure that research is not experienced as being extractive.

- Combine existing registers maintained by SEMA, BICD, and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in a unified, routinely updated, and standardised monitoring system to eliminate duplicate data and inconsistencies. Secure dedicated funding to prevent data collection from stopping when project cycles dry up.
- Standardise the collection of disaggregated data—sex, age, and disability (SAD) data—to capture the distinct vulnerabilities of women, children, and persons with disabilities (PWD). Improve the recognition and standardisation of displacement-related documentation, considering introducing regionally recognized, digital, or harmonised ID for displaced populations across the ECOWAS region, ensuring strict compliance with appropriate data protection standards.
- Stop the practice of repurposing public Local Government Education Authority (LEGA) school buildings in Wurukum as temporary camps, which compromises and disrupts education for host-community and displaced children and creates harm in the long-term.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE



Unsplash/Eva Blue



3.5 CÔTE D'IVOIRE

3.5.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

The current demographic and spatial landscape of Côte d'Ivoire is profoundly shaped by historical and ongoing waves of human mobility, establishing the nation as the primary host country for migrants in West Africa (OECD, 2022). This situation is rooted in colonial-era agricultural plantation labour and has been consolidated by open migration policies adopted following independence in 1960 (OECD, 2022) and national open-door policies and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) free movement protocols, which have made Côte d'Ivoire the principal destination for labour migration in the West African sub-region.

Today, the country has around 6.5 million foreign nationals, represent approximately 22% of the total population of roughly 29.4 million inhabitants (RGPH, 2021). Among foreign nationals, Burkinabé migrants constitute the largest group at 64.7%, followed by Malians (19.2%), Guineans (4.5%), Togolese (2.3%), and Beninese (2.2%).

Abidjan is the largest city in Côte d'Ivoire, producing approximately 70% of national industrial output and housing 6.3 million inhabitants. This drives strong urban primacy and leaves secondary cities structurally underpowered. The rate of urbanisation of Côte d'Ivoire rose from 32% in 1975



to 52.5% in 2021, with the urban population more than doubling to 15.7 million inhabitants. The national urban hierarchy comprises three levels: Abidjan as the metropolitan core, five first-tier regional cities (including Bouaké and San-Pédro), and a broader network of secondary cities. This structure matters because the distribution of investment and capacity across these tiers is highly unequal.

Territorial development is governed through a fragmented institutional landscape, with responsibility split across at least four national bodies, complicating coordinated planning, particularly for secondary cities. Under national

planning frameworks, territorial development is led by the Ministry of Construction, Housing and Urban Planning (MCLU) for urban master plans, the Ministry of the Interior for local authorities, the National Environment Agency (ANDE) for environmental assessments, and the Local Government Development Fund (FODECAT) for financial transfers.

This institutional configuration makes coordination difficult. On one hand, the involvement of several ministries and agencies can lead to fragmented decision-making, limited vertical and horizontal coordination, and potential delays in the implementation of coherent territorial development strategies, particularly for secondary cities with weaker administrative capacities. On the other hand, this multi-actor arrangement also allows for sector-specific expertise to be integrated into territorial planning when coordination mechanisms are effective. Overall, the governance structure can be characterised as multi-level but weakly integrated, reflecting broader challenges in terms of decentralisation and local governance practice in Côte d'Ivoire (Paumahoulou Guiriobe, 2021).

Decentralisation policies that have been in place since 1980 and were reinforced by the 2003 law on districts and regions formally grant local authorities autonomy in urban planning and land management, yet fiscal and technical capacities remain highly unequal across municipalities. Secondary cities function as economic relays between Abidjan and rural agricultural areas, which is particularly visible in the coffee-cocoa, cotton, and cashew value chains. Together, these urban centres serve a regional catchment population of more than five million inhabitants (World Bank, 2016).

This rapid urban growth, driven by both rural-to-urban migration and cross-border population movements, places increasing pressure on secondary cities that often face chronic infrastructure deficits, limited municipal capacity, and persistent underinvestment (UN-Habitat 2023; UN-Habitat 2024). These broader national and regional dynamics can be seen in Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire's second-largest city and a key intermediary urban centre.

3.5.2 BOUAKÉ

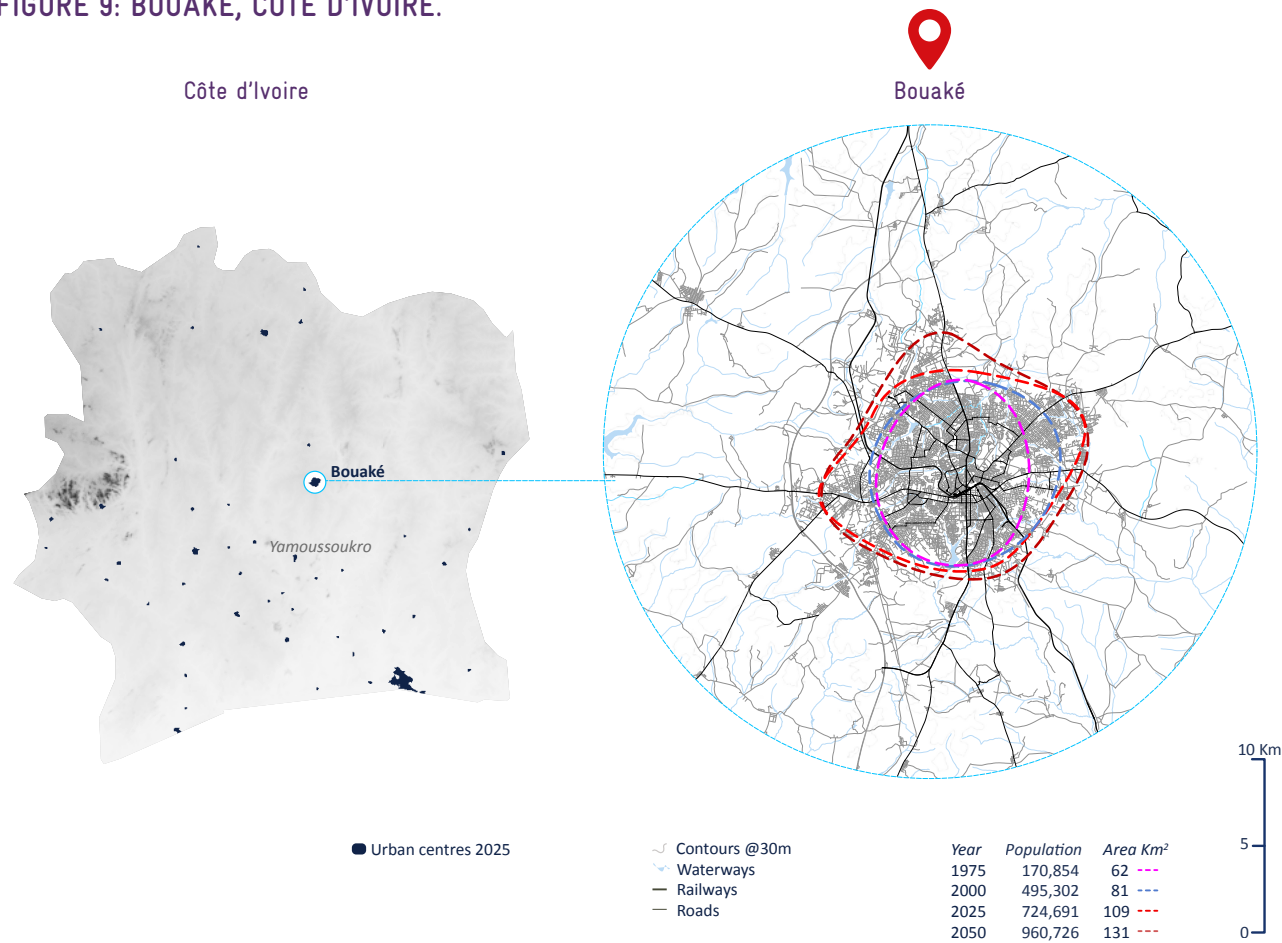


Summary

Bouaké operates as a central node in the West African mobility corridor, hosting a population of approximately 1.35 million and absorbing internal economic migrants, cross-border arrivals, and internally displaced persons. Mobility flows are driven by overlapping factors: economic precarity attracting labour migrants from the sub-region, the legacy of past politico-military crises generating internal displacement, and ongoing Sahelian land degradation pushing cross-border arrivals from the north. Because formal land is inaccessible, newcomers settle in peripheral, unplanned neighbourhoods like Dar-es-Salaam and N'Gattakro, where severe seasonal flooding and critical infrastructure deficits create acute

living conditions. Urban risk is compounded by a massive informal economy and deep institutional failures. A severely constrained 2026 municipal budget of CFA 11.165 billion, the complete non-application of existing urban master plans, and an absolute lack of disaggregated migration data trap the municipality in a reactive planning cycle. In the absence of a formalised local migration policy, service delivery is left to under-resourced community networks and faith-based organisations, an informal substitution that masks structural gaps and limits the scalability and equity of support for mobile populations.

FIGURE 9: BOUAKÉ, CÔTE D'IVOIRE.



3.5.2.1 CONTEXT

Bouaké, the second-largest city in Côte d'Ivoire, lies at the heart of the country geographically, approximately 340 kilometres north of Abidjan on the Abidjan-Ouagadougou corridor. Founded as a French colonial military post in 1898 and reinforced by the construction of the Abidjan-Niger railway in 1912, the city originally densified between 1952 and 1966 around its historic districts, including Koko, Commerce, Air-France, and Dougouba. Bouaké's population grew steadily from around 85,000 in 1965 to approximately 536,000 by 2014, then accelerated sharply to an estimated 1.35 million by 2021 (ANSTAT, 2022). Urban growth exceeded 5% per year between 1960 and 1990, moderated to around 4.5% between 1988 and 1998, and slowed to 3% during the crisis years. The commune comprises both a dense urban core and an extensive peri-urban ring of 143 villages within a 20-kilometer radius, many of which are being progressively absorbed by informal settlements. The indigenous population is Baoulé, coexisting with long-established communities of Bété, Agni, Malinké, Sénoufo, and Akyé Ivorians, alongside significant Burkina-bè, Malian, and Guinean communities.

Bouaké functions not only as a destination for migrants but as a multi-functional transit, reception, and reintegration hub. Human mobility, informal peripheral expansion, land insecurity, flood exposure, and weak municipal capacity interact dynamically in Bouaké to produce a distinct pattern of cumulative vulnerability.

The disaggregated census data from the 2021 General Population and Housing Census (ANSTAT, 2022), published in July 2025, shows a dual profile: Bouaké is simultaneously a long-term emigration basin and an increasingly significant migration destination. On one hand, the Gbêkè region has long seen high emigration, with an exit index of 39.1% (meaning a large share of residents born in the region have left) and a negative migratory balance of -23.7%. On the other hand, it has recently emerged as a major destination for internal and international migrants, accounting for 4.3% of recent national inflows and hosting 37,246 lifetime international migrants (persons born abroad who now reside in the region), 82.4% of whom reside in urban areas, the second-highest urban concentration in the country after Abidjan.

Taken together, this shows that Bouaké's development trajectory cannot be understood or planned for without taking into account the full complexity of its mobility patterns, from long-term emigration to recent in-migration driven by displacement.

3.5.2.2 HUMAN MOBILITY IN BOUAKÉ

Bouaké's mobile population comprises five distinct groups, from internal economic migrants and cross-border arrivals to displaced persons, forced returnees, and vulnerable migrant children, each following different pathways and presenting different needs. The primary groups arriving in the city include internal economic migrants from the northern regions (Poro, Hambol, Tchologo) and the Centre-West, drawn by the commercial and service economy. Alongside these internal flows are cross-border migrants from Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, and Nigeria, who have long settled in Koko, Sokoura, and other central districts, with Malinké people constituting the largest group in recent flows. Additionally, the city hosts IDPs from politico-military crises in 2002 to 2011, during which an estimated 709,000 Ivorians were displaced with many settling permanently in secondary cities such as Bouaké rather than returning to rural areas of origin.

Another distinct arrival group consists of post-crisis and forced returnees from failed distress migration to countries such as Libya, Nigeria, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. This flow is monitored closely by the Ministry of Youth Promotion (MYP) in Bouaké, which has taken 27 returnees into care to date in partnership with the IOM and Save the Children. Finally, vulnerable migrant children, notably Talibé children who beg on the streets, represent a significant child protection concern that is consistently flagged by local institutional actors.

Economic factors, particularly the search for employment and improved living conditions, are the primary drivers, accounting for approximately half of the historical migration. Family factors, including reunification and marriage, account for over 30% of reasons to migrate and 32.7% of recent emigrants from Gbêkè (ANSTAT, 2022). Conflict and political instability from past crises produced massive, protracted internal displacement of people who have since become permanent residents of the city.

Climate change acts as a critical pressure intensifier and risk multiplier across rural origin areas. Sahelian land degradation, soil fertility loss, and land pressure in the agricultural centre and north of the country are explicitly identified as key push factors driving rural households toward Bouaké, in line with regional evidence on climate-conflict interactions (IOM, 2023; Guebs & Zutterling, 2021). Distress migration to third countries generates forced-return flows when these journeys fail—a pattern documented by local actors in Bouaké. Among 718 recent emigrants from

Gbêkê recorded over twelve months (ANSTAT, 2022), the majority were male (181.7 men to 100 women), suggesting that it is predominantly young men who undertake these high-risk migration routes.

These migration pathways connect regional and international origins to specific reception zones within Bouaké's urban fabric. Historically, Gbêkê has functioned as an emigration basin and a leading source of internal migrants to Abidjan. Recent trends, however, show a significant reversal. Over the 2020 to 2021 period, net migration was slightly positive (+0.3%), with 73,220 recent inflows compared to 69,102 outflows, ranking Gbêkê third nationally as a destination for recent internal migrants (4.3% of national inflows), behind only Abidjan (17.2%) and Haut-Sassandra (6.8%). Upon arrival, as central land and formal housing are economically inaccessible, new migrants settle predominantly in peripheral reception neighbourhoods, including Dar-es-Salaam, N'Gattakro, Sokoura, and Belleville, which are characterized by precarious housing and a complete absence of basic public services.

The choice of Bouaké as a primary destination over other urban areas is driven by its strategic geographic position and regional economic role. Located on the Abidjan-Ouagadougou rail and road corridor, the city serves as a crucial transit and commercial hub linking Côte d'Ivoire to landlocked West African nations. As the country's second economic pillar, its active commercial centre around the massive Koko market and its agricultural processing industries (cotton ginning, oil mills, cashew processing) provide extensive opportunities for informal labour. This informal sector absorbs most incoming migrants and returnees, offering a critical economic entry point. For many cross-border and internal migrants, the presence of long-established co-ethnic and co-national diaspora networks in historic commercial districts provides essential mutual aid, informal housing, and socio-cultural integration, establishing Bouaké as a central node in the West African ECOWAS mobility system. This intense concentration of diverse mobile populations directly interacts with physical and environmental hazards, defining the risk profile for arrivals in the city.

3.5.2.3 RISK TO MOBILE POPULATIONS

The risk profile for mobile populations in Bouaké is defined by a combination of climate exposure, physical environmental hazards, unplanned peripheral expansion, and high socio-economic vulnerability. Physically, the primary environmental hazard is seasonal flooding, which heavily affects low-lying, poorly drained peripheral neighbourhoods. Bouaké lies in the Sudano-Guinean transition zone, experiencing two distinct rainy seasons (April to July and September to November) and two dry seasons. Average temperatures have risen by approximately 0.8 °C since 1970, with increasing rainfall variability and more frequent extreme events. Projections from the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) and the updated Côte d'Ivoire National Adaptation Plan (NAP 2025) indicate a temperature increase of 1.5 to 3°C by 2050 and a reduction in annual rainfall of 5 to 15% in the centre and north of the country, with intensifying extremes that are likely to amplify migration flows toward Bouaké.

Beyond flooding, other chronic hazards include extreme heatwaves that regularly push temperatures above 35°C during the dry season, convective storms and strong winds at the end of the dry season that cause recurrent damage to precarious settlements, and localised outbreaks of fire and disease. These physical hazards are exacerbated by the accelerated ecological degradation and deforestation of the surrounding Bandama watershed.

These physical hazards are highly concentrated in specific, unmonitored spatial zones where poorer mobile populations are forced to settle due to affordability. This spatial exposure is concentrated in informal settlements, peri-urban zones, and absorbed villages along the city's fringes, which lack basic municipal infrastructure. Bouaké's urbanised footprint has grown from 23.32 square kilometres in 1965 to approximately 80 square kilometres in 1998, and 292.5 square kilometres by 2014, driven by the unplanned peripheral absorption of customary lands and villages (Ouattara et al., 2025). In these exposed peripheries, arrival families reside in substandard housing with poor insulation, limited ventilation, and no access to formal electricity, water, or sewerage networks. This exposure is highly concentrated in neighbourhood hotspots such as Dar-es-Salaam, N'Gattakro, Sokoura, Belleville, Nimbo, and Odienné-Kourani. To illustrate where these complex dynamics of mobility, risk, and planning intersect geographically, the following table details the primary neighbourhood hotspots within Bouaké:

Neighbourhood	Relevance to mobility	Main risk drivers	Why it matters for planning
Dar-es-Salaam	Major informal peripheral reception area for recent internal and cross-border migrants; absorbed peri-urban village.	Severe seasonal flooding (episodes recorded in 2018 and 2020); absence of drainage; informal land tenure; no SODECI water network.	Highest-priority neighbourhood for resilient drainage, sanitation investment and land tenure regularisation.
N'Gattakro	Low-lying peripheral neighbourhood receiving rural-origin internal migrants from the northern regions.	Recurrent flooding; degraded informal housing; weak sanitation coverage; precarious access to drinking water.	Co-located flood risk and migrant settlement make it an entry point for migration-sensitive risk mapping.
Sokoura	Long-standing reception area for Burkinabè, Malian and Guinean cross-border migrants; commercial hub.	Dense informal housing; land tenure overlaps inherited from the 1999 to 2014 crisis; limited basic services.	Anchor neighbourhood for migrant community associations; priority for land regularisation and service upgrading.
Koko	Historic commercial district hosting the Koko market and long-established cross-border traders.	Service saturation; ageing urban fabric; high concentration of informal economic activity.	Strategic for managing the migration-economy interface and ECOWAS trade governance.
Air France	Historic densified district with mixed indigenous and migrant population.	Infrastructure pressure; partial degradation of formal housing stock.	Reference area for revising the 2017 Urban Master Plan to reflect actual host-neighbourhood realities.
Kennedy	Planned extension district from the 1970s and 1990s; receives intra-urban migrants and post-crisis returnees.	Partially degraded formal housing; service gaps; emerging informal pockets.	Test bed for rehabilitating planned districts that have evolved into de facto reception areas.
Belleville	Host neighbourhood identified during interviews.	Informal expansion; limited basic services; weak inclusion in formal planning documents.	Often absent from official planning instruments despite documented migrant presence.
Nimbo	Peri-urban absorbed village now functioning as a migrant settlement zone.	Hybrid land status; weak service coverage; exposure to peri-urban environmental degradation.	Requires land tenure clarification and integration into municipal planning.
Odienné-Kourani	Peripheral reception sector receiving migrants from the northern regions and cross-border flows.	Informal settlement; limited road and sanitation infrastructure; precarious housing.	Underserved despite migrant concentration; priority for inclusive service extension.

Socio-spatial vulnerability in these exposed zones is highly stratified by age, gender, legal status, and economic position. Women, particularly migrant and displaced women, are overrepresented in the precarious informal economy, face limited land access in their own name, and are highly exposed to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation in informal settlements, with cases of sexual exploitation documented among returnees. Vulnerable children and young people constitute another highly fragile group. Talibé children (aged 10 to 15 years) are subject to exclusion from school education, begging on the street, health risks, and a complete absence of institutional care, while children of Burkinabè seasonal workers are frequently excluded from the formal school system. Young returnees (aged 15 to 18 years) from traumatic journeys in third countries are left with severe psychological trauma and are highly vulnerable to economic marginalisation due to the absence of reintegration safety nets beyond under-resourced local initiatives. Elderly and undocumented migrants face further exclusion from national social protection programmes, remaining largely invisible to formal planning frameworks.

The timing of these risks shows that vulnerabilities peak during specific seasonal periods and sudden crisis moments. During the rainy seasons, intense flooding causes immediate destruction to property, water contamination, and outbreaks of disease (such as cholera and malaria), severely disrupting the precarious livelihoods of informal workers. Conversely, extreme heat stress peaks during the dry season, creating severe respiratory and cardiovascular health risks. These seasonal environmental hazards are punctuated by unpredictable crisis moments, such as the initial arrival phase when migrants lack established social networks and financial capital, sudden evictions by landlords as urban development increases land values, and severe income shocks resulting from localised failed crops in origin regions or wider macroeconomic volatility. These physical hazards and socio-spatial vulnerabilities are not isolated occurrences but are intensified by deep-seated institutional, fiscal, and planning gaps.

3.5.2.4 RISK DRIVERS

The vulnerability of mobile populations in Bouaké is rooted in governance and fiscal deficits: a fragmented administrative structure, a constrained municipal budget, and weak institutional capacity. At the institutional level, Bouaké is administered by an elected mayor and municipal council, while also serving as the seat of the Gbêkê Regional Council. The coexistence of these two administrative levels, with

frequently overlaps and ill-defined planning competences, complicates urban service delivery and land management. This governance gap is severely exacerbated by fiscal constraints.

The municipality's approved 2026 budget stands at CFA 11.165 billion (approximately USD 19.9 million), divided between operations (CFA 4.94 billion / USD 8.8 million) and investment (CFA 6.22 billion / USD 11.1 million). Local tax revenues are severely limited by the vast informal economy and weak collection capacities, leaving the municipality structurally dependent on irregular and insufficient transfers from FODECAT. The Regional Directorate of Social Protection, the primary body responsible for supporting the vulnerable population, faces equivalent budgetary constraints, preventing it from delivering targeted programmes to mobile and displaced populations.

These fiscal limitations compound deep-seated institutional weaknesses, including a critical shortage of qualified staff in urban planning, land management, and risk planning. Existing planning instruments, particularly the 2017 Urban Master Plan, are not applied systematically, while coordination between the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of the Family, Women and Children (MFFE), and Social Cohesion ministries remains slow and fragmented.

Proactive planning is further undermined by six interrelated data gaps:

1. First, the National Census (RGPH, 2021) has not yet published data disaggregated by origin for secondary cities, leaving Bouaké without reliable data on the size, profile, or spatial distribution of migrant populations by district.
2. Second, no maps exist of flood-risk areas that also shows vulnerable migrant populations.
3. Third, no operational municipal geographic information system (GIS) is in place for monitoring land cover, urban sprawl, and settlement dynamics.
4. Fourth, MYP data covers only the 27 direct beneficiaries of return programmes, failing to capture the wider returnee population.
5. Fifth, the rich empirical and qualitative knowledge held by community actors, such as migration trajectory-

ries documented by the Forum of Religious Confessions and returnee profiles tracked by the MYP, has not been formalised or integrated into official databases.

6. Sixth, health records held by the Regional Directorate of Social Protection are not disaggregated by migration status or geolocation. Consequently, the Deputy Mayor confirms that no formalised local migration policy exists in Bouaké, notwithstanding its strategic role as an ECOWAS mobility hub.

These institutional, socio-economic, environmental, and informational risk drivers combine to form three reinforcing cycles of cumulative vulnerability. The first cycle links poverty, informality, and land insecurity: Recent migrants are forced to settle in informal peripheral neighbourhoods exposed to seasonal flooding; precarious housing conditions and insecure tenure restrict their employment options to the precarious informal economy; the resulting loss of local tax income in turn weakens the municipality's capacity to invest in upgrading those same neighbourhoods. The second cycle links weak governance, data gaps, and the absence of a migration policy: The lack of disaggregated migration data prevents targeted territorial planning; without a reliable diagnostic base, public action remains entirely reactive; institutional inaction is then justified by the very absence of information the state has failed to produce. The third cycle concentrates risk on migrant children and youth: Talibé children are excluded from school education, forced to beg on the street, and are subject to health risks with an absolute absence of institutional care; young returnees with traumatic experiences find themselves without a safety net beyond under-resourced local mechanisms; structural unemployment closes off formal socio-professional pathways, reinforcing cycles of marginalisation and re-migration.

3.5.2.5 EXISTING RESPONSES

In the absence of a structured and formalised public policy for urban migration and climate-resilient integration, mobile populations in Bouaké rely heavily on informal arrangements and community-led coping strategies. Communities and organisation (based on origins), including Malinké, Burkinabè, Malian, and Guinean networks, provides essential mutual aid, initial reception, informal housing, and social mediation, yet these structures operate without official recognition or public funding from the municipal government. Similarly, since 2006, the Forum of Religious Confessions, comprising 13 Christian and Muslim religious guides, has provided a primary safety net, psychological follow-up, and mediation for returnees from Libya, Nigeria, and Guinea, partially filling the void left by the absence of formal state reception centres. The informal economy itself acts as a massive, adaptive coping mechanism, absorbing the majority of migrant workers and ensuring minimum economic survival, but also perpetuating their exclusion from formal social protection and financial services.

At the institutional level, two major decentralised initiatives stand out as critical models for future intervention. First, the regional youth employment agency (MYP Bouaké) operates a holistic care and orientation system for returning migrants, currently supporting 27 direct beneficiaries in partnership with the IOM and Save the Children to facilitate social and professional reintegration. Second, the MIGRET-Enabel project, led by the Gbêkê Regional Council and funded by the European Union, represents the most structured and collaborative decentralised co-operation framework in the region. The MIGRET territorial diagnostic workshop held in Bouaké in May 2025 brought together 51 participants from 28 public, private, and non-governmental structures to identify four distinct profiles of service-seekers: accompanied returnees, spontaneous returnees, women returnees, and other vulnerable seekers. The workshop documented eight operational challenges to sustainable integration: the absence of a formal coordination framework; low capitalisation of good practices; service fragmentation; low awareness among returnees of available mechanisms; weak post-integration follow-up; major financing constraints; a high concentration of vulnerability among unaccompanied profiles; and a general reluctance among different actors to collaborate. A subsequent co-construction workshop in Yamoussoukro in February 2026 consolidated these findings, recommending the establishment of a local one-stop shop and a regional system to bridge these institutional siloes.

3.5.2.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

To transform Bouaké's urban governance from a reactive, emergency-based model into a proactive, migration-sensitive planning framework, municipal, regional, and national authorities must coordinate across four strategic themes. The strategic recommendations below address the systemic gaps in planning, inclusion, coordination, and knowledge production identified in this study. These interventions are structured into an actionable, multi-sectoral planning framework designed to break the reinforcing cycles of cumulative vulnerability:

PHYSICAL PLANNING

- Prioritise resilient drainage, paving, and sanitation investments in Dar-es-Salaam, N'Gattakro, Sokoura, and the northern and western peripheral sectors, which combine high migrant concentration with severe seasonal flood exposure.
- Develop low-cost, climate-resilient social housing and regularise land tenure in informal settlements, formally recognising the occupancy rights of long-established migrant households to prevent arbitrary evictions.
- Revise the Urbaplan 2014 / 2017 Urban Master Plan to reflect host-neighbourhood realities, officially mapping active floodplains and excluding high-risk zones from future urban sprawl.
- Adopt localised and Use Plans (SOPs) that Bouaké currently lacks, ensuring coordination with the broader regional planning framework and protecting the Bandama watershed.

INCLUSION

- Strengthen and scale socio-professional integration and vocational training programmes for young migrants and returnees, leveraging resources from the MYP, Regional Council, and the MIGRET-Enabel project.
- Formulate a coordinated institutional and social protection response to the phenomenon of Talibé children, actively involving the MFFE, Direction de la Protection Sociale (DPS), MYP, local NGOs, and religious communities.

- Establish a territorial one-stop shop and a standardized regional system and referral mechanism for returnees and vulnerable migrants, building on the national referral mechanism being finalised by the Direction Générale des Ivoiriens de l'Extérieur (DGIE, General Directorate of Ivorians Abroad).
- Expand the MYP holistic care model for forced returnees in partnership with the IOM and Save the Children, and extend its psychosocial and legal support to protect women from gender-based violence and sexual exploitation.

GOVERNANCE

- Develop and adopt a formalised local and regional migration policy jointly led by Bouaké City Hall, the Gbêkê Regional Council, and the Prefecture, defining clear mandates across all levels of governance and aligning with the National Development Plan (NDP 2026-2030) and the Bilan Diagnostic Stratégique (BDS) 2021.
- Establish a permanent, operational regional coordination platform bringing together the 28 mapped public, private, non-governmental, and international organizations to replace the slow and siloed inter-ministerial mechanisms.
- Formalise the role of and allocate funds to the Forum of Religious Confessions and migrant community-of-origin associations, integrating their grassroots capacity into a municipal service delivery and disaster response.
- Create inclusive consultation and participatory budgeting mechanisms that integrate migrant associations into municipal planning, urban risk management, and local service policies.

KNOWLEDGE

- Under the Agence Nationale de la Statistique (AN-STAT) coordinate with local authorities, collect geocoded, disaggregated migration data at the Bouaké district level, tracking nationality, age, gender, and vulnerability profiles.

- Update the BDS 2021 and the NDP 2026 to 2030 to systematically integrate human mobility and climate-induced displacement indicators into territorial demographic projections and investment programmes.
- Build and operationalise a municipal GIS database combining geocoded migrant population maps, flood-risk zoning, and land cover dynamics to support evidence-based urban planning.
- Formalise and integrate the qualitative and empirical knowledge on migration trajectories and returnee profiles held by religious guides and the MYP into official municipal databases.
- Address data siloes by developing interoperable social registries between the Regional Directorate of Social Protection, health departments, and local municipal planners to capture the de facto service-using population.





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GLOBAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTORS



The seven case studies differ significantly in terms of the drivers for displacement, national governance traditions, city size, and the demographic composition of arriving populations. While Bouaké absorbs cross-border economic migrants along a West African transit corridor, Tanay manages the aftermath of displacement of indigenous communities, and Peshawar is at the centre of a regulatory crisis affecting registered and undocumented Afghan populations.

However, common features emerge when the iceberg framework introduced in [Chapter 2](#) is applied. Beneath the visible outcomes that vary considerably by context, similar patterns appear regarding practices, capacities and paradigms. The focus is on four recurrent themes that structure risk across every city in the study: physical planning, inclusion, governance, and knowledge. Each corresponds to a distinct capacity gap and together they form the analytical basis for the recommendations.

4.1 RECURRENT THEMES

4.1.1 PHYSICAL PLANNING: A CONSISTENT ABSENCE

Across all seven cities, mobile populations are concentrated in flood-prone, ecologically fragile, or otherwise hazardous land. This is not a matter of preference but of affordability and exclusion from formal land and housing markets. Arriving populations settle where land is more immediately accessible, very often sacrificing safety. This pattern is docu-

mented along Peshawar's encroached Budhni Nullah Basin, in Cali's Aguablanca district and hillside communes, along Makurdi's River Benue floodplains, in Bouaké's Dar-es-Salaam and N'Gattakro neighbourhoods, as well as across coastal and upland settlements in Buenavista and Tanay.

What distinguishes this theme from the other three is the near absence of responses focused on physical planning. Physical planning responses are largely missing and treated as disconnected issues. In Peshawar and Cali, for example, informal settlements, service gaps and exposure to hazards are visibly overlapped and reinforce one another, indicating a need for physical planning that treats these as a single, shared problem for urban systems rather than seeing displacement as a separate spatial concern.

4.1.2 INCLUSION: PRESENT BUT UNRECOGNISED

In contrast to physical planning, inclusion is already occurring in every case study, often through channels that are not yet recognised or connected to the formal system.

Cooperatives and livelihood initiatives in Makurdi, homeowners' associations that manage governance at Tanay's relocation sites, and documentation and service-access routes through Cali's Centro Intégrate and CRAV all demonstrate that migrants, refugees and IDPs actively contribute to urban economic and social life, and are not just passive recipients of assistance.

The consistent finding is that inclusion is not a capacity gap in the conventional sense. It is a recognition gap: Existing practices that demonstrate the contributions of mobile populations are disconnected from formal funding, governance and planning systems.

4.1.3 GOVERNANCE: FRAGMENTATION AND REGULATION AS RISKS

In every case study, governance responses are dispersed across overlapping agencies with limited vertical or horizontal coordination, though emerging entry points exist. These include a proposed Urban Cohesion Hub in Peshawar and functioning, if fragile, coordination among organisations in Makurdi. Bouaké illustrates the opposite end of this spectrum: no formalised local migration policy exists despite the fact that the city is a recognised ECOWAS mobility hub.

A more consequential finding within this theme is that regulatory shifts can themselves constitute a source of risk. Pakistan's IFRP, which resulted in the de-notification of camps, forced evictions, arbitrary arrests and reports of coerced marriage, demonstrates that governance strategies must address legal and regulatory risk directly, and cannot be limited to service-delivery coordination alone.

4.1.4 KNOWLEDGE: SCATTERED SYSTEMS, UNCOUNTED EXPERTISE

Data and registration systems are consistently fragmented or siloed across the case studies, undermining both service planning and the visibility of mobile populations in municipal budgets. Cali's registries exist but do not communicate with one another; Haripur's "ghost population" of de facto residents remains excluded from infrastructure planning altogether; Bouaké lacks disaggregated migration data at the district level entirely.

At the same time, migrant communities across the case studies hold knowledge that is not yet captured by formal systems. The Dumagat-Remontado communities in Tanay have environmental and adaptive experience accumulated through repeated displacement. This planning asset remains outside official data systems. Local registries require sustained investment in both technical capacity and community trust to remain reliable.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

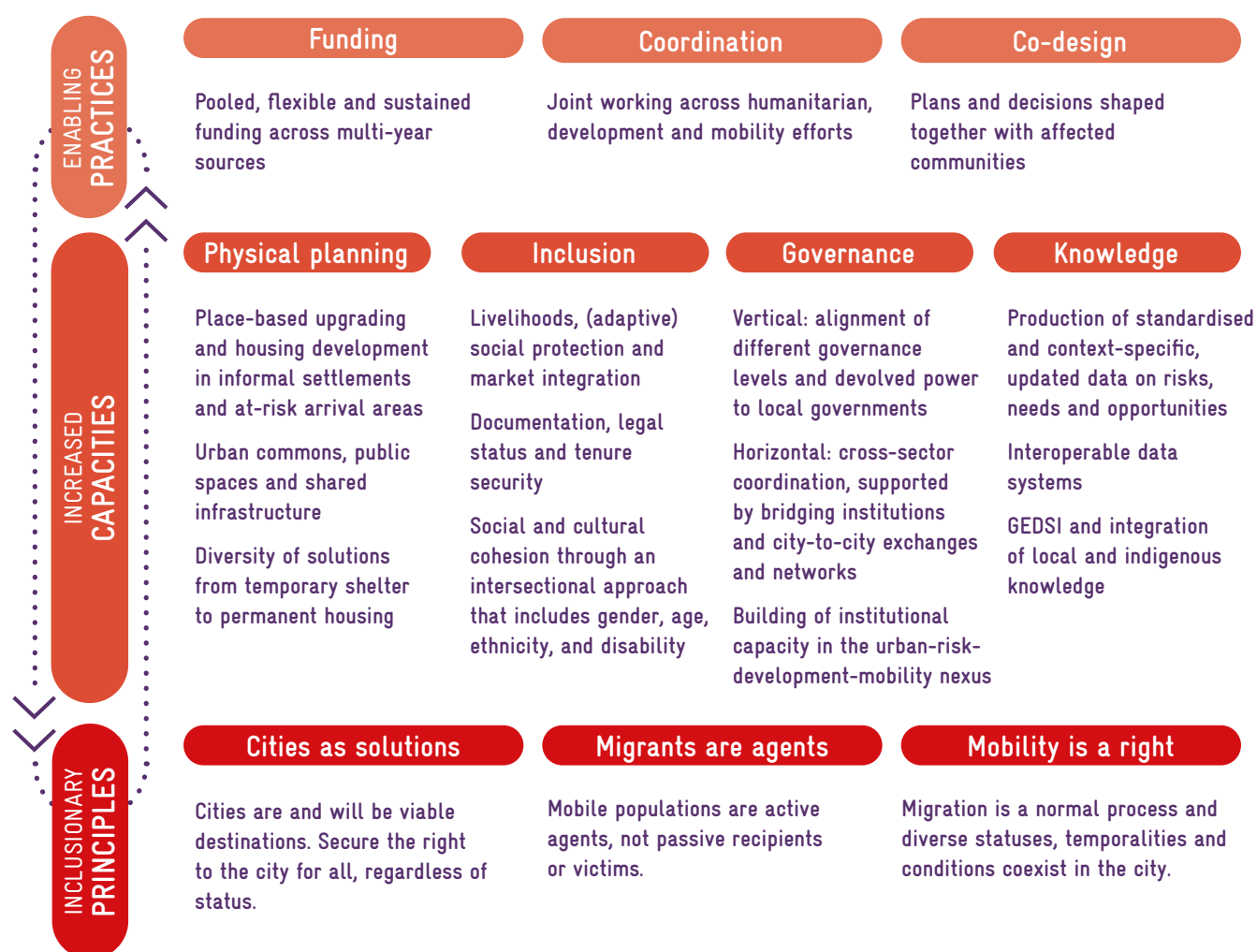
These four themes support the conclusion that urban risk results from underinvested systems that are exposed and put under strain by migration, rather than being a problem created by mobile populations themselves. Arriving populations settle in hazardous, underserved areas because these are the only areas available to them, not because of any characteristic intrinsic to migration itself. Once settled, they encounter drainage, tenure, service and governance deficits that predate their arrival and are shared with host communities. The four themes are dimensions of the same structural underinvestment that is evident wherever mobile populations settle.

This cross-case analysis serves as a basis for recommendations to international development actors. Each of the four themes translates into strategies to increase capacities, because each represents a distinct capacity gap that can be addressed by city-level programmes.

The three-tier recommendations framework is therefore not a separate analytical exercise layered onto the case studies. It is a direct response to the iceberg framework presented in [Chapter 2](#), but read in reverse: Where the case-study analysis moved from visible outcomes down to underlying paradigms, the recommendations move from paradigm-level principles, through capacity-building strategies, to the enabling practices that determine what can actually be implemented.

In this section, we provide overarching recommendations incorporating the findings across the different case studies. We have divided the recommendations according to our framework into three tiers: enabling practices, strategies to increase capacities, and underlying inclusionary principles to address challenges within the urban risk-development-mobility nexus through a comprehensive risk management approach. These recommendations are directed at BMZ and other national and international and development actors.

FIGURE 10: SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



4.2.1 TIER 1 – ENABLING PRACTICES

These include suggestions to adapt BMZ's own instruments, timescales and institutional architecture to enable transformations within the urban risk-development-mobility nexus at the local level. Development actors, in particular BMZ, are encouraged to consider innovative pathways to fund this and mainstream elements of the nexus in programmes.

- **Support efforts to provide sufficient funding to address this growing and under-resourced challenge.** Establish a dedicated funding window for the urban risk-development-mobility nexus, in addition to sectoral budgets. In light of funding realities, consider developing a cross-departmental instrument to bridge humanitarian and development budgets between different federal ministries and other actors to identify synergies and maximise impacts. Build on the current study to fund research and knowledge

exchange on how displaced people actively drive urban economic and spatial development and how to translate findings and best practices into international, national and sub-national policy, finance and development cooperation. Consider how other sources of income beyond those provided directly by BMZ and other development actors can be accessed to extend this vision and its impact.

- **Mainstream the urban risk-development-mobility nexus.** Internal capacity should be built within responsible sectors by developing a nexus subtheme, thereby facilitating joint work across sectors. All urban projects in displacement contexts funded through BMZ, AA or others should address each of the four strategic themes of physical planning, inclusion, governance and knowledge. While specific projects will

naturally have distinct areas of focus and emphasis, a shared and common understanding will lead to a coherent, synergistic approach which maximises the chances of successful implementation. This will make it possible to translate the nexus approach to national and sub-national contexts.

- **Co-design urban interventions with affected communities.** To ensure that a project addresses a recognised need, is well designed and effectively implemented, it is essential to involve affected communities in their designs as a way to integrate host and migrant communities. This should be an essential part of urban risk-development-mobility project budgets and related funding schemes. Such democratisation of best practice and community needs is essential for building and maintaining relationships with and between communities. Positive deviance should be encouraged to identify local knowledge and context-appropriate solutions. The design should involve the meaningful participation of all respective stakeholders to include mobile populations and civil society, in addition to public and private sector actors. Needs and problems should be discussed, refined and determined by all those involved. Through deep and ongoing participation, this will enable transformation beyond the project or election cycle.

4.2.2 TIER 2 – STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CAPACITIES

These strategies are concerned with maximising the capacity of cities to address the urban risk-development-mobility nexus. Through funding, technical cooperation and implementation partnerships, BMZ, AA and other actors can support local systems that govern mobility in secondary cities. The four strategic themes below indicate where this support can be directed. They should be understood as connected areas of intervention, with each responding to a distinct capacity gap as identified in the case studies. The level of success of these strategies will be closely related to the extent to which principles shift and enabling practices drive change. While the strategies target BMZ and comparable organizations, they can only be successful if implemented in close collaboration with urban actors.

- **Physical planning: Place-based upgrading and housing development in informal settlements and other at-risk arrival areas should be supported and funded**

with an integrated approach. Investments by actors like KfW and GIZ, and support for CSOs and local authorities, can strengthen whole neighbourhoods rather than targeting displaced populations in isolation. This includes shared infrastructure and public spaces, as well as housing solutions that range from temporary shelters to more permanent arrangements. In Peshawar and Cali, arrival areas show how informal settlements, service gaps and exposure to hazards often overlap and can be mutually reinforcing, requiring physical planning that addresses shared urban systems rather than displacement as a separate and discrete spatial problem. This is consistent with urban profiling guidance from JIPS, which emphasises an understanding of displacement from the perspective of settlement patterns, service access, and the wider geography of urban risk (JIPS, 2021).

- **Inclusion: Economic, social and legal inclusion should be fundamental for all city residents. This can be supported by making funding conditional on inclusive approaches being adopted. This means supporting access to livelihoods, social protection, documentation, and secure tenure as connected, necessary conditions for reducing risk.** Inclusion should also address social and cultural cohesion through an intersectional approach that accounts for gender, age, ethnicity, and disability. Our case studies showed that in Cali, documentation and service routes through Centro Intégrate and CRAV provide practical access points, while in Makurdi, cooperatives and livelihood support provide opportunities for economic inclusion. This approach reaps rewards for all residents of cities and aligns with the OECD's emphasis on employment, housing, welfare support and local service access as a central prerequisite for the integration of migrants and refugees. Borrowing successful frameworks from contexts like Jordan and Türkiye, development actors should prioritize integrating displaced populations directly into municipal housing and social protection systems. This ensures that investments yield sustainable, macro-city-level outcomes that strengthen the entire urban fabric, rather than temporarily treating displacement as an isolated spatial issue. Besides urban interventions, sub-national and national policy will need to revise or establish related policies and instruments, which should be considered part of urban risk-development-mobility nexus funding by BMZ and others.

- **Governance:** To build institutional capacity in the urban risk-development-mobility nexus, it is essential to strengthen vertical and horizontal governance capacity through dedicated funding and establishing multi-actor platforms, particularly with a focus on smaller cities. Migration and migrants should be considered part of climate adaptation and disaster risk management planning. Vertically, this means aligning different governance levels and ensuring that local governments have the mandates, funds and other resources and links to national or regional frameworks to respond. Horizontally, it means supporting multi-actor platforms that connect local authorities, civil society, humanitarian and development actors, and representatives of mobile populations. At present, these issues are often managed through separate and incoherent systems. Relevant examples include Peshawar's proposed Urban Cohesion Hubs, Cali's migrants' committee, and coordination between SEMA, IOM, NCFRMI and civil society actors in Makurdi. This reflects OECD recommendations on multi-level governance, policy coherence, and cooperation with non-state actors (OECD, 2018). Horizontal governance can be expanded to connect cities with shared economic, social, cultural, and environmental profiles and risks. Governance should be ambitious, while maintaining realistic targets which align with financing realities.
- **Knowledge:** Investments should be made in the production of standardised, but also context-specific, updated data on the risks, needs and opportunities for urban migrant communities. This should include interoperable systems that make mobile populations visible in planning and budgets, while remaining rights-sensitive and locally owned. Knowledge systems should integrate local or indigenous knowledge as communities retain their experience of environmental change, being forced to move and adapt repeatedly, as with the Dumagat-Remontado community in Tanay. In Cali, SISBÉN, RUV and RUMV registries exist but remain siloed, while in Tanay the registry of barangay Inhabitants and migrants provides access to local planning that requires sustained capacity and trust-building. JIPS similarly emphasises that urban profiling should combine administrative, registration, census, and community-level information, while adapting methods to complex urban settings (JIPS, 2021). Data sharing between departments and cities can ensure that decision makers have the appropriate knowledge

to make informed decisions and consider synergies to address the urban risk-development mobility nexus. That requires establishing data protection protocols that include anonymity as a prerequisite to reduce the potential negative impacts of data misuse for migrants. At the same time, emphasis should be put on disseminating knowledge to migrants and other urban communities to build vital capacities and thereby reduce future risks.

Annex 2 lists examples of strategies corresponding to the four themes and referencing existing practices or gaps in each of the case studies.

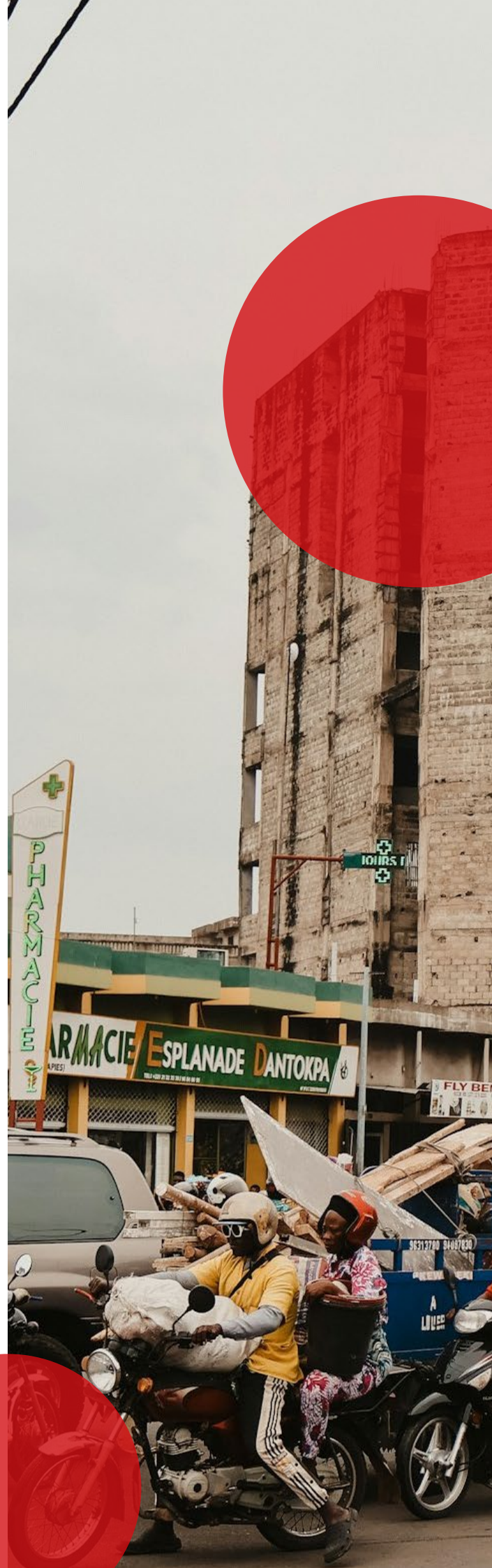
4.2.3 TIER 3 – INCLUSIONARY PRINCIPLES

Recommendations relating to inclusionary principles are concerned with paradigm shifts. Positive change on the ground can only be lasting with a bottom-up effort, supported by top-down leadership. This requires coherent approaches across actors and scales, together with joint learning to ensure that the principles reflect local realities and needs. Comprehensive risk management can help redefine cooperation strategies and challenge existing exclusionary paradigms in the urban risk-development-mobility nexus. BMZ and other key actors at the national and international level can take a leading role in incorporating this normative agenda in international and bilateral spaces. This includes Germany's seat and work in bodies such as the EU, G20, OECD, and the Executive Committee of the UNHCR. The same is true for Germany's involvement in advancing and operationalising international frameworks such as UNFCCC, the Sendai Framework and the related Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, or the World Urban Forum etc.

- **Positioning cities as the primary response to displacement, rather than reproducing the normalisation of encampment. Cities are and will remain rational and preferred destinations for mobile populations. International development cooperation should therefore support the Right to the City for all residents, regardless of their status, rather than treating urban settlement as a failed response to displacement.** This does not mean that camps or temporary reception arrangements will not be needed. Rather, it means that urban and peri-urban areas should be recognised and supported as central spaces for the protection, inclusion and development of migrant populations. This was observed across our cases, where migrants,

refugees, and IDPs are already embedded in the housing markets, service systems, labour markets, and risk landscapes of cities such as Peshawar, Cali, and Makurdi. This strategy aligns with UNHCR's urban refugee policy and approach to pursuing alternatives to camps, which emphasises protection and solutions outside camps where appropriate (UNHCR, 2014).

- **Migrants and IDPs should be redefined as active city dwellers, workers and caregivers. Mobile populations are active agents, not passive recipients or victims. They contribute to urban life through work, care, community organization, local economies, diversity, and everyday coping practices.** Our case studies illustrate this in the community-based warning and support practices in Pakistan, homeowners associations in relocation sites in Tanay, and cooperatives and livelihood initiatives in Makurdi. BMZ can use this evidence to inform the design of rights-based and participatory programmes that frame mobile populations as active agents of change and development, as opposed to being passive and vulnerable.
- **Mainstream human mobility in national dialogues on development and urban planning through comprehensive risk management, considering human mobility as integral to structural urban planning rather than an add-on.** Migrants are already taken into account when cities plan for risk (see [Chapter 2](#) and [Annex 2](#)), but only to a varying extent and diverse needs should be considered. In Pakistan, refugee status, repatriation pressure, camp de-notification and peri-urban growth intersect. In Makurdi, conflict-related displacement, rural-urban migration, and recurrent flooding all shape the same urban space. BMZ can use international and bilateral policy dialogues to promote a broader and more context-specific understanding of mobility, thereby promoting coherent, aligned and inclusive urban and development programmes. At the same time, this approach integrates into the comprehensive risk management approach to the urban risk-development-mobility nexus, advancing BMZ positioning.



4.3 CONCLUSION

This study set out to understand how human mobility, urban risk, and development intersect in secondary cities, and translate that understanding into guidance for BMZ and other development actors. Some findings stand out.

Mobility is the norm, not the exception, in the cities studied. Bouaké, Cali, Haripur, Makurdi, Peshawar, Buenavista, and Tanay each host overlapping populations whose presence long predates any single crisis and will outlast it. Climate change functions consistently as a pressure intensifier rather than a standalone driver: It degrades rural livelihoods and compounds conflict and economic precarity but rarely acts alone. Development cooperation that treats displacement as a temporary anomaly, to be managed until people “return home”, misreads the underlying pattern. Secondary cities are already the primary reception points for mobile populations, and that role will become more pronounced.

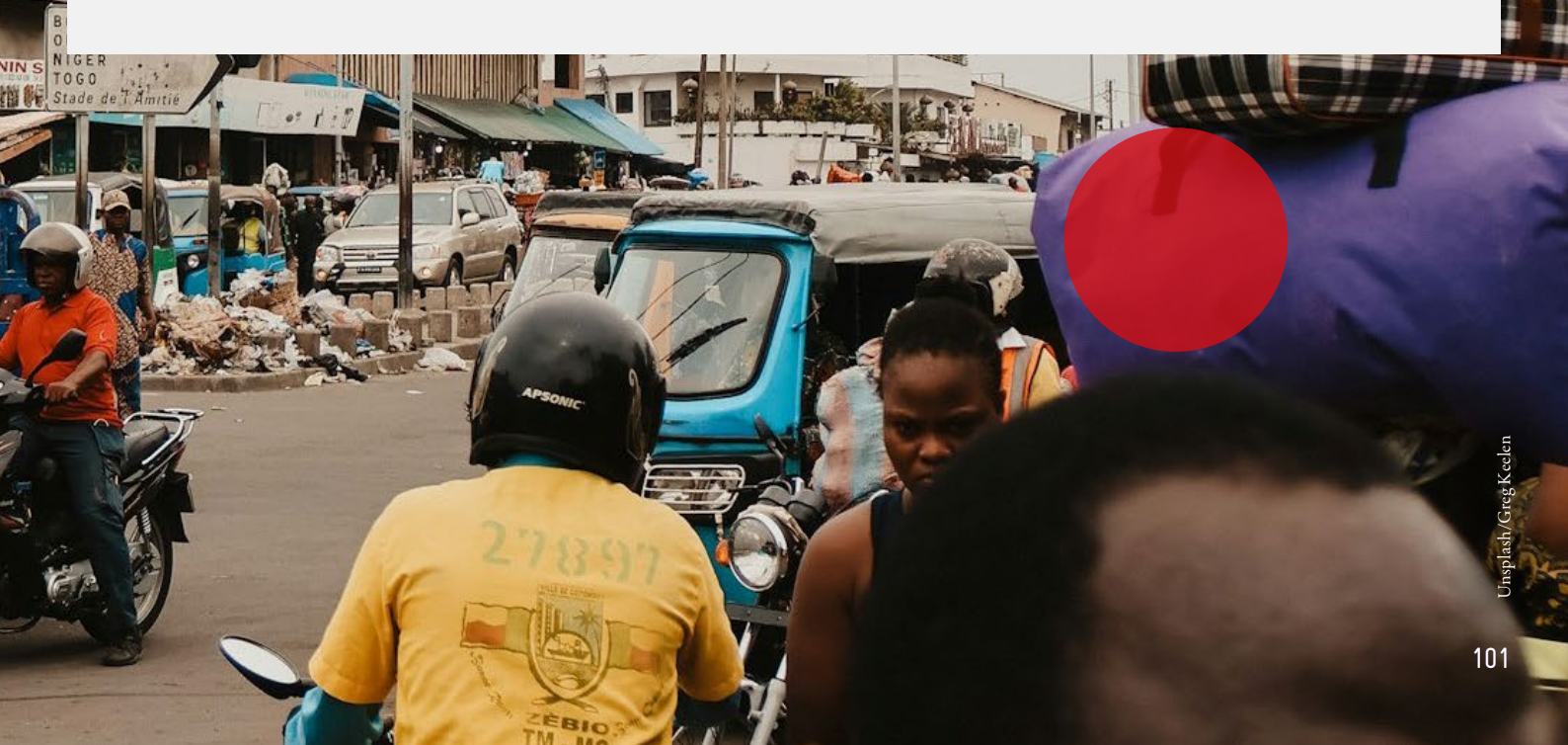
Risk in these cities is the result of a combination of affordability, exclusion, and weak planning, not of migration itself. In all seven cases, arriving populations are concentrated in flood-prone, ecologically fragile, or otherwise hazardous land, such as Peshawar's Budhni Nullah Basin, Cali's Aguablanca district, Makurdi's Benue floodplains, Bouaké's Dar-es-Salaam and N'Gattakro, Haripur's settlements on the shores of Tarbela Lake. They do so because it is the only land they can access, not because they choose to be exposed to risk. Once settled, these communities face compounding deficits in terms of drainage, water, tenure, and services that predate their arrival and are shared with host residents.

Risk is therefore a property of underinvested urban systems that are exposed and put under strain by migration, rather than a problem migrants import.

Mobile populations are already active contributors to urban economies and city-making, and existing capacity in the cities is greater than donor programmes typically assume. Cooperatives in Makurdi, homeowners' associations in relocation sites in Tanay, and informal markets serving both hosts and displaced populations all illustrate this. The gap is not an absence of local practice but a failure to recognise, fund, and connect it to formal planning and governance.

Cities offer far greater potential for integrating migrant communities and harnessing their skills than temporary camps do. This should be supported through municipal and (sub)national mechanisms. Many of these are already in place; exchanging good practices and more coherence between approaches in urban planning, humanitarian action or other sectors would be a good starting point to leverage existing potential.

The iceberg framework used throughout the report clarifies why these patterns persist. Visible outcomes on the surface are an expression of deeper practices, weak capacities, and paradigms that frame migrants as either threats or passive victims rather than residents and economic agents. Interventions aimed only at outcomes will not shift the underlying system. The path forward requires action at three levels.



ANNEX 1

DEFINITIONS OF DIFFERENT MOBILE POPULATIONS

MIGRANTS

There is no legally and internationally accepted definition of the term “migrant”. According to the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM), it refers to someone who “moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons” (IOM, 2021, p. 132). This includes a wide range of individuals from smuggled migrants to international students.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

According to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which are not binding but have become an authoritative reference, the term refers to “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence [...] and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border” (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1998, p.5).

REFUGEES

In contrast, the 1951 Refugee Convention, which remains the benchmark definition in international law, defines a refugee as someone who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2010, p.14).

ANNEX 2

CASE-STUDY EXAMPLES SUPPORTING THE STRATEGIC THEMES

The table below summarises examples that correspond to the strategic themes from the seven cities in the case studies.

Domain	Strategy	Cali	Peshawar
Physical planning	Place-based upgrading and housing development in informal settlements and at-risk arrival areas	Aguablanca and hillside communes exposed to flooding, landslides, heat and service gaps.	Budhni Nullah, Warsak Road, Darmangi and Regi Lalma identified for drainage, WASH, flood and heat-sensitive upgrading.
	Urban commons, public spaces and shared infrastructure	Centro Intégrate, CRAV, mobile brigades and schools as service and resilience anchors.	—
	Diversity of solutions from temporary shelter to permanent housing	Climate-resilient housing, safe densification and relocation options away from high-risk zones.	Mixed-status rental areas and informal tenure in low-rent peripheral settlements.
Inclusion	Livelihoods, adaptive social protection and market integration	Informal livelihoods, employability support and women's inclusion projects linked to cohesion.	Safer inclusion in the informal economy, small-business protection and labour-market pathways.
	Documentation, legal status and tenure security	PPT regularisation, Centro Intégrate documentation routes, CRAV referrals and tenure pathways.	PoR and ACC status categories; legal aid, documentation support and tenancy mediation.
	Social and cultural cohesion through an intersectional approach that includes gender, age, ethnicity and disability	Women caregivers, children, older adults and informal workers identified as vulnerable groups; women's inclusion projects.	Women and girls, children, poorer renters and Khanabadosh communities identified as vulnerable groups.
Governance	Vertical: alignment of different governance levels and devolved power to local governments	—	Coordination between municipal, provincial, refugee and humanitarian actors for place-based planning.
	Horizontal: cross-sector coordination, supported by bridging institutions and city-to-city exchanges and networks	Migrants' Committee, Centro Intégrate, CRAV and cross-sectorariat coordination.	Urban Cohesion Hub / one-stop model linking legal aid, referrals, health, livelihoods and protection.
	Building of institutional capacity in the climate-urban-mobility nexus	Reactive "receive, then plan" governance and uneven cross-sector alignment.	Mobility treated as security/emergency issue rather than long-term urban planning issue.
Knowledge	Production of standardised and context-specific, updated data on risks, needs and opportunities	Geocoded household data and risk overlays proposed for targeted investments.	Mobility-informed local data system linking migration flows, settlement change, service demand and hazard exposure.
	Interoperable data systems	SISBÉN, RUV and RUMV registries exist but remain siloed.	Mapping and monitoring across refugee governance, municipal systems, health, education and disaster management.
	GEDSI and integration of local and Indigenous knowledge	—	—

Domain	Strategy	Haripur	Tanay
Physical planning	Place-based upgrading and housing development in informal settlements and at-risk arrival areas	Panian, Basu Mera and Padhana transition zones; Tarbela shoreline and Hattar peripheral areas.	Plaza Aldea and other relocation sites needing water, roads, telecommunications, sanitation and livelihood facilities.
	Urban commons, public spaces and shared infrastructure	—	Schools, barangay and government offices identified for improved telecommunications and access
	Diversity of solutions from temporary shelter to permanent housing	Camp de-notification shifting vulnerable people into rentals, peripheral settlements and transition zones.	NHA relocation sites and homeowners' associations managing relocation-site issues.
Inclusion	Livelihoods, adaptive social protection and market integration	Industrial and commuter labour around the Hattar corridor; livelihoods affected by camp transition.	Social and economic facilities in relocation sites; care and social-support facilities such as Haven for the Elderly in Sampaloc.
	Documentation, legal status and tenure security	PoR and ACC status categories. Proxy use of host NICs, informal utility access, mediated rentals and insecure tenure.	Land tenure issues in relocation sites; homeowners' associations managing local disputes.
	Social and cultural cohesion through an intersectional approach that includes gender, age, ethnicity and disability	Women, girls, children, elderly people, persons with disabilities, khanabadosh communities identified as vulnerable groups.	Dumagat-Remontado communities, elderly migrants, single parents and relocation-site households.
Governance	Vertical: alignment of different governance levels and devolved power to local governments	Coordination across district authorities, municipal bodies, health and education departments, PDMA, refugee administration and humanitarian actors.	Comprehensive Development Plan and People's Plan as foundation for introducing measures taking mobility into account.
	Horizontal: cross-sector coordination, supported by bridging institutions and city-to-city exchanges and networks	URSU, mixed host-migrant teacher workforces, parent-teacher committees and mother committees.	MMIC and barangay coordination during road inaccessibility.
	Building of institutional capacity in the climate-urban-mobility nexus	Need for local monitoring and coordination of camp transition, services and hazards.	Low integration of municipal and barangay plans; limited manpower for municipal programmes.
Knowledge	Production of standardised and context-specific, updated data on risks, needs and opportunities	Local monitoring system linking camp transition, population change, service demand and hazard exposure.	RBIM implemented across barangays.
	Interoperable data systems	Schools, clinics, local committees and bridge institutions proposed as part of a shared knowledge platform.	RBIM and data quality improvement for municipal planning.
	GEDSI and integration of local and Indigenous knowledge	—	Dumagat-Remontado Indigenous communities and culturally sensitive planning.

Domain	Strategy	Buenavista	Makurdi
Physical planning	Place-based upgrading and housing development in informal settlements and at-risk arrival areas	Badjao settlements in high-risk or protected areas; relocation sites lacking facilities.	Flood-prone informal and peri-urban settlements, including High Level, Wurukum, Wadata and North Bank.
	Urban commons, public spaces and shared infrastructure	—	Safe spaces, psychosocial support (PSS) spaces and community facilities linked to CSO support.
	Diversity of solutions from temporary shelter to permanent housing	Relocation sites lacking proper facilities; informal housing used as an alternative.	Recognition certificates and settlement stabilisation proposed for informal settlements.
Inclusion	Livelihoods, adaptive social protection and market integration	PFDA partnership for fisherfolk; KALAHI-CIDSS cash assistance for Badjao communities.	IDP/refugee farms, village savings and loan association (VSLA), cooperatives, livelihood support, PSS and safe spaces.
	Documentation, legal status and tenure security	—	Land allocation documentation and recognition certificates proposed for informal settlements.
	Social and cultural cohesion through an intersectional approach that includes gender, age, ethnicity and disability	Badjao community heads and kinship-based social cohesion among internal migrants.	Joint programmes for host and displaced groups; GBV referral pathways and PWD representation in planning.
Governance	Vertical: alignment of different governance levels and devolved power to local governments	Sangguniang Bayan adoption of results into municipal development frameworks; provincial funding for MDRRM plans.	NCFRMI protection frameworks and State Durable Solutions Action Plan linked to displacement response.
	Horizontal: cross-sector coordination, supported by bridging institutions and city-to-city exchanges and networks	Badjao community heads; HMCCC II technical working group.	SEMA, IOM, NCFRMI and CSO coordination of protection and displacement support.
	Building of institutional capacity in the climate-urban-mobility nexus	Chronic understaffing and leadership transitions affecting institutional continuity.	Training municipal planners to mainstream climate-resilient expansion into city strategies.
Knowledge	Production of standardised and context-specific, updated data on risks, needs and opportunities	Periodic RBIM updates and Migration Information Centre proposed.	IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix for biometric registration.
	Interoperable data systems	Municipal Migration Information Centre as centralised migration database.	Shared disaggregated social register proposed between SEMA, IOM and NCFRMI.
	GEDSI and integration of local and Indigenous knowledge	Badjao community heads lobbying for rights and participation.	—

Domain	Strategy	Bouaké
Physical planning	Place-based upgrading and housing development in informal settlements and at-risk arrival areas	Dar-es-Salaam, N'Gattakro, and Sokoura sectors exposed to seasonal flooding.
	Urban commons, public spaces and shared infrastructure	—
	Diversity of solutions from temporary shelter to permanent housing	Low-cost climate-resilient social housing in informal settlements.
Inclusion	Livelihoods, adaptive social protection and market integration	Socio-professional integration and vocational training via MIGRET-Enabel and Youth Employment Agency.
	Documentation, legal status and tenure security	Land tenure regularisation for migrant households to prevent arbitrary evictions. Territorial one-stop shop and regional referral mechanism for returnees.
	Social and cultural cohesion through an intersectional approach that includes gender, age, ethnicity and disability	Holistic care models for returnees and Talibé children; psychosocial/legal support for women.
Governance	Vertical: alignment of different governance levels and devolved power to local governments	Formalized local and regional migration policy led by City Hall, Regional Council, and Prefecture.
	Horizontal: cross-sector coordination, supported by bridging institutions and city-to-city exchanges and networks	Regional coordination platform for mapped public, private, and NGO organizations.
	Building of institutional capacity in the climate-urban-mobility nexus	Formalised role for Forum of Religious Confessions and migrant associations in service delivery.
Knowledge	Production of standardised and context-specific, updated data on risks, needs and opportunities	Geocoded, disaggregated district-level migration data tracking nationality, age, gender, and vulnerability.
	Interoperable data systems	Interoperable social registries across Regional Directorate of Social Protection, health, and municipal planning.
	GEDSI and integration of local and Indigenous knowledge	Integration of religious/MYP empirical migration knowledge into official municipal databases.



ARRIVE

