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Steps towards improvement of the living condition of the refugee camp in Gaza strip.

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Camp development

2. Introduction

The partition plan for Palestine, outlined in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 181 of November 1947, called for the creation of both an Arab state and a Jewish state in Palestine (See, Badawy 1997). The borders of the two states were so arranged as to allow for direct access between all parts of each of the two states. The resolution never came into effect as planned. The actual borders of the State of Israel, declared in 1948, exceeded the borders set in the partition plan. Access between the West Bank and Gaza Strip was completely severed; the West Bank was incorporated into Jordan; the Gaza Strip came under Egyptian control. Contact between the two regions was re-established in the aftermath of 1967 war when both areas came under Israeli military occupation. Jewish settlement in Palestine started long before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and continued after the occupation of the transfers and significant loss of Palestinian private and public West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967. This process has been accompanied by population property including land and homes. The Palestinian refugees who were forced to leave their homes in 1948 took shelter mainly in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and to a lesser degree, in other Arab countries. Initial accommodations for these refugees were temporary tent camps which were gradually converted into fixed and semi-fixed shelters. In 1967, Palestinians residing in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip fled the war to Jordan. Most of those who left in 1967 were the refugees of 1948 who had been residing in camps around Jericho in the Jordan valley (see, Badawy, PHd1997). These political developments created adverse conditions which hampered the socio-economic development of the Palestinian people and stemmed the normal growth of the various sectors of their economy. The construction and housing sector has been among the sectors which were adversely affected, for a number of reasons:

First, Israel expropriated and confiscated vast areas of Palestinian Land.

This action deprived the Palestinian construction and housing sector of a substantial resource base essential for development.

Secondly, severe restrictions were imposed on the use of land remaining in Palestinian hands. Planning policies and practices pursued since 1967 have prevented Palestinians

from developing their construction sector in a way that would adequately meet housing and other physical infrastructure requirements of growth and development in all economic and social sectors.

Thirdly, the general neglect of the industrial sector also discouraged an adequate development of necessary industries to support the construction and housing sector. This has resulted in the continued dependence of Palestinians on imports for much of the basic building materials, including cement and steel.

Fourthly, prolonged occupation also dampened efforts to develop national institutions capable of planning, implementing and managing socio-economic development. Consequently, housing facilities and infrastructure in the occupied Palestinian territory are inadequate. High room-occupancy density prevails. In the Gaza Strip lived in housing units with more than three persons per room and in both regions more than 6 per cent lived in units with densities exceeding five persons per room. Furthermore, In the Gaza Strip, 6 per cent had no kitchen, 25 per cent had no running water, 27 per cent had no bathroom and kitchen, and 25 per cent had no running water, 27 per cent had no bathroom and 8 per cent had any electricity. Nevertheless, and despite these limitations, the construction and housing sector has played a dominant role in the Palestinian economy during the past 25 five years (See, Badawy 2000).

Urban development and planning practice and experience in Palestine which stemmed back to mid 19th Century had passed through various changes and developments in terms of characteristics, policies, principles, and management. In addition, the urban planning system in Palestine seems to be unique in its composition and context. This uniqueness is related to the fact that planning practice was controlled and experienced by external forces (or foreigners) and not by native bodies (the Palestinians themselves). This, of course, is due to the long period of mandate and occupation for the Palestinian land by several nations.

The limited available land, the rapidly growing population of Palestine, the misuse of urban development, and the decisions of policy makers and all planning issues associated with the political situation and the long period of occupation with its policies and implications played a major role in the formulation of urban form, in addition to the spread of uncontrolled urban developments in the cities, and to the diffusion of urban

sprawls within the landscapes and around the cities. This study will focus on analyzing the development and changes in urban form of Palestinian cities towns and refugee camps as well as the determination of the major factors and impacts that affected urban morphology and urban form.

1. Urban communities

This category includes all communities with a definite urban role, and which clearly perform administrative, commercial and services functions. These communities are governed by major municipalities and have populations exceeding 10,000. Under the 2013 conditions, this category included the West Bank cities of Jenin, Tulkarm, Nablus, Ramallah, El-Bireh, Bethlehem and Hebron. East Jerusalem also falls under this category, despite the fact that it has no Palestinian local government as a result of its annexation. In Gaza Strip, the communities which fall within this category are Gaza, Khan Yunis, Deir El-Balah and Rafah.

2. Semi-urban communities

This category includes all communities with a population between 5,000 and 10,000, in addition to all communities which are governed by a municipal or village council and perform marginal administrative, commercial or services functions. Examples are Qalqilia, Anabta, Tubas, Al-Ram, Yatta, Dura, Birzeit, Banizeid, Salfit, and Jabalia (See, Badawy, Waltz 1999).

3. Rural communities

This category includes all communities with a population of less than 5,000, and which perform no administrative, commercial or services function, but have an active population in agriculture. It also includes all communities which are not included in the above two categories, excluding the refugee camps (See, Badawy, Waltz 1999).

4. Refugee communities

Refugee communities are defined as those communities residing in refugee camps throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Members of these communities.

The Palestinian refugee camps, as they stand today, are the result of long and ongoing spatial processes. The refugees have been constructing houses and businesses to accommodate their needs. With the fourth generation of refugees born in exile, the spaces of the camps have become fully utilized as a living space. The camps have become overcrowded highly built urbanized spaces. Despite all the constructions, the

camps retain the 1950s grid plan with intersecting ever-narrowing streets and alleys leading to the main plaza with the mosque. From the principle streets, smaller alleys (like corridors) transect the refugee camp, dividing it into smaller blocks. Neighborhoods are named after the villages or towns of origin. In other occasions, the neighborhoods are named A, B, C, and so on. The UNRWA offices and services are set at the edge of the camp. As a result of the camps' expansions, these have become part of the camps, eliminating the boundaries between center and periphery, between the administered and the administrator. As a result of the intensive construction activities, on the same plot of land, little structures of the early camps survived the processes of urbanization (See, Parvathaneni 2003).

3.0 refugee camps:

After the war in 1948, most of the refugee camps started as a provisional small towns of tents, erected in a hurry, to give shelter to around 470,000 Refugees who remained in Palestine beside those, who fled to Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. From them 280,000 refugees settled in the western region, including the east Jerusalem area, about 190,000 people fled to the Gaza region (See: Badawy PhD, 1997, Berlin). After all between 1953 and 1955 eight big, solid living areas for the refugees were built up in the Gaza region and 20 in the West Bank and Jerusalem region. They became stable camps with small houses, two to three rooms, garden, court and small streets. In year 1967 when Israel occupied Golan, Sinai, West bank and Gaza again about 20,000 Palestinians fled, out of the county. If you compare between west bank and Gaza region, you will find that in the Gaza region, even it is ten times smaller, refugees are living around 59% of all refugees in Palestine and 74% of all refugees living in camps. So we have to consider the Gaza region as the most affected by the "Nakba". In Gaza region stakeholders of camps have to solve much more social, economic and spatial problems than in the west bank including Jerusalem, because Gaza strip suffers extremely from high density, lack and scarce of land (all figure see: UNRWA 1988, PC BS 1997). In 50 years the camps have expanded and become more complex in their structures; from simple gridlines occupied by tents, they nowadays contain multiple storey concrete buildings, mixed land uses and street patterns, creating a great diversity of plots and buildings UNRWA supplied educational and health facilities, a micro-business support program, basic sanitation, housing, and more recently also urban infrastructure and land management. Its role as a planning authority has changed from a strict control during

the first period 1948/60, when the Agency provided 80m² plots for each refugee family, to a more “laissez faire” attitude between 1960/80, characterized by building extensions decided upon individually by the families without any special permission (Seren, 2004). Between 1980/2000 UNRWA built major infrastructure projects, mainly water, sanitation, storm water and electricity supply. But in 2005, before the disengagement plan and due to the need to re-house families whose houses were demolished, UNRWA designed and started Implementation of different major urbanization projects. Most of them were in southern of Gaza strip some of them still under implementation, and have been selected as case studies in this paper because of the innovative multi-scale approach applied.



Figure 1. Early refugee camp (mid 1950s). UNRWA Archive, Amman.

3.1 Camp Development

The camps of Gaza were established outside of, and relatively far from their neighboring cities. The camps were inaugurated as human settlements in 1952 whereby the Egyptian administration was in charge of the security of the camps, and UNRWA was in charge of all forms of service delivery (health, environment, education, aid, and food and nutrition centers). The camps were initially established as temporary human settlements, and did not follow the urban planning systems of their neighboring cities.

In 1984, the camps witnessed an upsurge of economic growth which was associated with the economic boom of Israel (as camp construction workers were allowed to work in Israel), and the prosperity of the camps was indicated by the highest per capita income in the area. This coincided with an Israeli policy towards the camps which purposefully created chaos and ignored all aspects of order in the camp, leaving it without a governing structure. The increase in income alleviated the living conditions of the refugees, and was associated with an increased awareness and breaking of the

barrier of fear with the authorities. This led the inhabitants of the camps to demolish their homes and build concrete multi-story ones (normally three stories high) thus expanding at the expense of public land. This was done through the use of empty spaces between the houses, as well as main and side streets, resulting in a state of arbitrary construction and ad hoc acquisition of public land. The lack of organization of public spaces and construction patterns was accompanied by a state of legal disorder and absence of authority and law enforcement. However, the camps were able to maintain social order through the presence of a parallel or shadow authority comprised of community notables, camp leaders, and reform committees. The economic boom, coupled with the lack of respect for the law of an official ruling power, led to the prevalence of wild urbanization in the camp, and the resort to customary law. The researcher defines camps development as the improvement of the Palestine Refugees' livelihoods and living conditions through the upgrading of their physical and social environments. It demands a combination of strategic and practical interventions undertaken by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in partnership with host authorities, the refugee community and other stakeholders, that are sustainable over time, from a social, economic and environmental perspective. Community development does not affect the refugees' status and rights under relevant United Nations resolutions. The study targets camp communities in relation to physical infrastructure and all refugees in relation to housing and social infrastructure. The definition of "*community*", a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common, is problematic: It is too broad, which might hide the power imbalances and differences of vested interests within the community. Communities consist of individuals, groups and sub-groups with different status, affiliations, assets and interests.

In both respects, the challenges are significant:

- **Shelter:** Lack of resources (and uncertainties about UNRWA's budget continuity) and lack of space for improvement and expansion have contributed to an overall deterioration in conditions.
- **Environment:** Lack of resources and the pressure of demographic growth,

Combined with restrictions on camp expansion and poor solid waste management and, in some cases, sanitation problems have led to a deterioration of physical and environmental conditions, posing hazards to the health and welfare of the refugees.

- **Social infrastructure:** Whilst standards of Agency facilities generally compare favorably with host authorities, access to basic services remains restricted for some refugees given UNRWA's longstanding eligibility criteria and financial constraints. For those living in more remote informal refugee gatherings, and for all refugees in times of conflict, physical access to UNRWA facilities is difficult. In addition, social infrastructure facilities suffer from overcrowding, poor maintenance and understaffing.

- **Social development:** Despite improvements in involving refugees and community based organizations (CBOs) as partners in planning processes, key themes such as community empowerment, participation, and local governance have not been fully implemented due to a variety of constraints.

3.2 Assessment of current housing situation

The short time of Palestinian Authority over only parts of the land and enabled with limited capacities and rights made it difficult to turn the situation into really better.

Density, derelict houses, derelict infrastructure, half a million of refugees still living in

Camps, the need to rehabilitate and to extend the existing housing stock and a dramatic

Increase of the demand of new housing and the absence of political, social, and economical

and institutional background and experience aggravated an already complex situation of

problems. Actual policy has become a more haphazard activity of different not

cooperating actors from in - and outside the country. Still the housing situation - in addition to and also as result of the Israeli restraints - can be characterized as such:

(I) Absence of a comprehensive housing policy and regulatory framework

Policy formulating as a main task of the government is missing like: laws and regulations in urban planning, housing and construction policy; rehabilitation and restoration, developing norms for constructing; regulation for monitoring and

controlling; defining target groups and priorities; defining the role of each actors and participation regulations; eventually defining pilot projects for new policy development. The actual Ministry's policy line: 1. building for low income families, 2. land and building for cooperatives, 3. building near Israel's colonies is not sufficient in quantity and concerning other policy needs.

(ii) Absence of strong housing actors

The role of the Ministry of Housing is not clear, it needs a change from being involved in constructing mainly to policy enabling; problems remain.

– The needed bank and financing system for the different beneficiaries from housing financing is not at all developed. Who wants to build can only lend money with about 21% or more interest for a 3 years credit. The in 1998 initiated Westbank and Gaza Housing project financed by the World Bank is beginning to enable the banks for mortgage and soft loans, but in small scale and mainly for middle income groups;

– No housing construction companies of big scale exist which could supply the different demands; some private investors with small capacities are most of all constructing for middle income groups only;

– Cooperatives exist, but small groups, and regular cooperation between the Government and the NGO's like the Palestinian Housing Council is missing.

3. 3 Dignity, privacy and personal space

According to experts and the statistics the main problem in Palestine is unhealthy and inhuman habitat by overcrowding and high living density – this is due to small housing units (HU) and big size families and more generation households (HH); a big portion of households cannot provide parents, boys and girls with their own bedroom.

Density by rooms per household and housing units - less than 3 rooms

Nearly one third of all housing units and households (HU 27%, HU 26%) have *max 1 - 2 rooms*. Specially affected areas are *rural areas* (34 % of all rural HH)

Density by occupancy of rooms and units - more than 3 persons per room

More than two third of all 1-room housing units are occupied with 3 to 7 or more persons; about 50% of the 2-room housing units are occupied with 6 to 7 or more persons; 14% of all 3-room housing units are occupied with more than 8 persons.

Specially affected areas from density are at first the *rural areas* in the north and in the south of the Westbank and in the south of the Gaza region, the old city centers and the Refugee Camps in general. There is no information about sqm, but it is common, that rooms in the disadvantaged segments of housing are small, in camps, old city's and villages less than 10 sqm; 5sqm per person was the space per person in the Camps in 1996. According to the above figures about one fifth of all households live in high density (82.000 or 21% of all HU). The Ministry of Planning and International Communication speaks even about 28% of all families living in overcrowded conditions with over 3 persons per room, 30% of families living in housing units with two families or more. (source: Badawy, Waltz1999a, PCBS 1998,)

Needs: A national housing policy, according to poverty rates must give priorities to rural areas, to the northern region in the Gaza area, to camps and women-headed households.

3.4 UNRWA definition of a Palestine Refugee states that “a Palestine Refugee shall mean any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict”. For various reasons, UNRWA has also registered the descendants of Palestine refugees born after 14 May 1948 as well as deprived non-refugee categories who lost their means of livelihood as a result of the 1947-1948 conflict (‘economic refugees’ or ‘other claimants’) and their descendants. These categories include the Frontier Villagers in the West Bank and members of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.

3.4.1 Refugee Camps definitions

A camp, according to UNRWA's working definition, is a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government for accommodating Palestine refugees and for setting up facilities to cater to their needs, Areas not designated based on the

above definition, are not considered camps. The plots of land on which camps were set up are either state land or, in most cases, land leased by the host government from Local land owners. This means that the refugees in camps do not 'Own' the land on which their shelters were built, but have the right to 'use' the land for a residence (Parvathaneni, 2003).

3.4.2 Basic data on the Palestine Refugees: While the number of refugees registered with UNRWA is well-known, i.e. 4.1 million in December 2003, the overall number of users is more difficult to quantify, since not all the registered refugees reside in the region or use Urawa's services. The number of regular users of medical services may be the closest to that number. According to the Agency's Health Department, that number currently reaches 3.3 million, i.e. 70 percent of the 4.1 registered refugee's region-wide². Camp refugees account for 32 percent of the total number of registered refugees. They are typically believed to be one of the poorest groups in all five fields of operation, yet camp residents account for only half of Urawa's registered special hardship cases, the "poorest of the poor," who qualify for relief assistance on strict financial and sociological eligibility criteria ³. Of the 68 percent of refugees living outside camps, the report will only consider those refugees living in identified, delineated communities outside official refugee camps. For the purpose of the report we will label those communities "informal refugee gatherings."

2. Spatial framework: For all issues related to physical infrastructure, the paper is restricted to the camp communities, as communities living outside camps fall under the municipalities' authority for such matters. For all issues related to social infrastructure (education, health facilities, CBOs) and housing, the report addresses all refugee communities. The following subsections highlight the way each of these problems affects the refugees' livelihoods, and reviews their impacts on refugee communities. When relevant, comparisons are drawn between camp communities and informal refugee gatherings.

3.5 Physical infrastructure and environment in refugee camps

Since their establishment in the late 1940's, camps have symbolized the refugees' right of return and the expression of their humanitarian plight. While some refugees have

been able to create economic prosperity amidst crowded and difficult camp conditions, many others have remained mired in poverty⁴. Camp refugees are suffering from substandard physical infrastructure and poor environmental conditions resulting from the combination of high population growth, restrictions on camp expansion and lack of sufficient resources. Buildings and shelters have often been extended horizontally and vertically, thus narrowing the alleyways and preventing the establishment of playgrounds, green areas and recreational facilities. Moreover, overcrowding and a general lack of maintenance with respect to buildings and shelters have led to poorer housing and unsatisfactory environmental conditions in terms of ventilation, sunlight, humidity, temperature, storage, and privacy. The resulting health hazards are compounded by a solid waste management system widely judged to be insufficient. Water, sewage and electricity are available in nearly all camps, although supplies of electricity and drinking water are unpredictable. In recent years, the combined efforts of UNRWA and host authorities have led to significant upgrades in the camps' physical infrastructure.

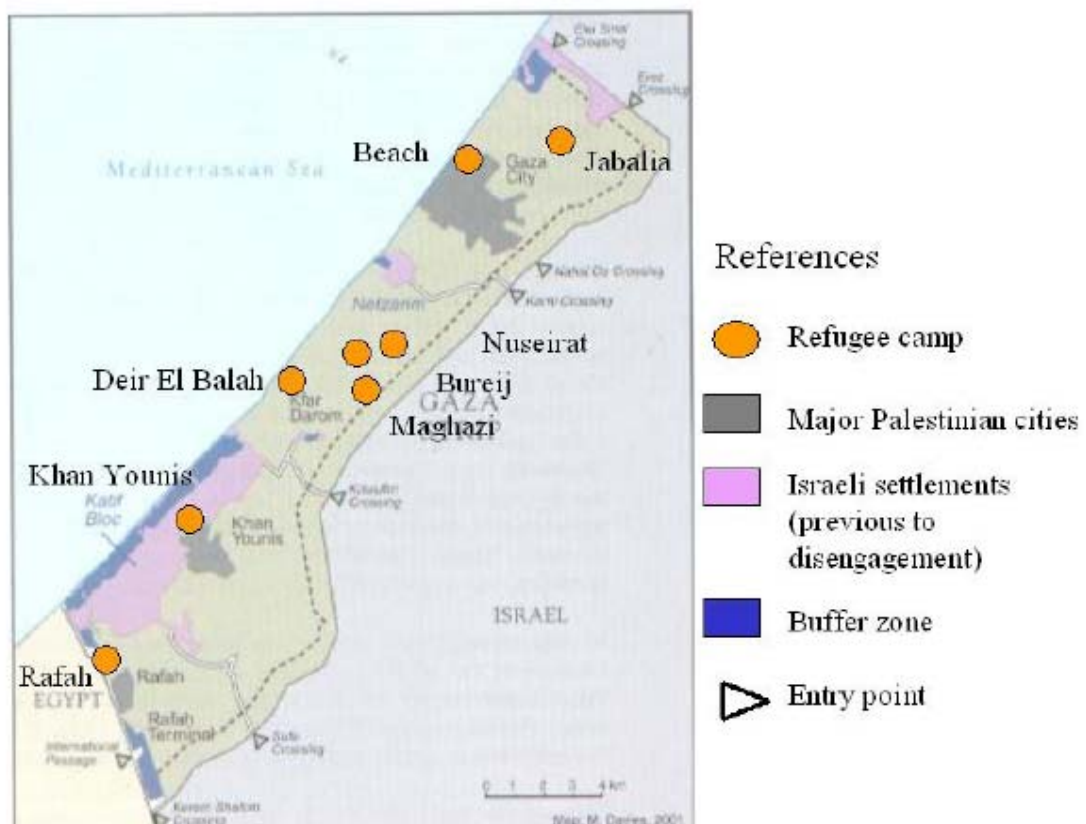


Figure 2. Gaza Strip and its refugee camps, UNRWA, Gaza2012

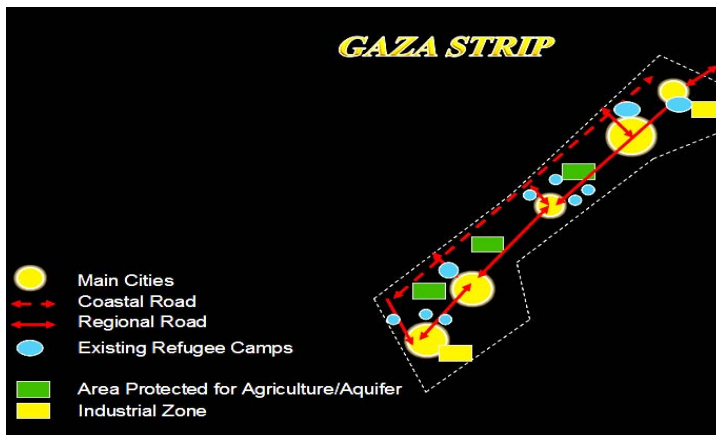


Figure 3. Gaza Strip, UNRWA, Gaza2013

3.5.1 Shelter Conditions

Most shelters have been improved by the refugees themselves, with UNRWA

providing financial and technical support only to certain special hardship cases. Since the early 1990's, technical standards applied to individual shelters within UNRWA's regular rehabilitation programme have been considerably upgraded, from mere concrete temporary" core" blocs devoid of any specific equipment, to shelter units including at least one room, a cooking area and sanitary facilities soundly constructed with good natural lighting and ventilation. The Agency is now promoting an "assisted self-help" approach for selected shelter rehabilitation projects⁷. Since 2001, UNRWA has begun "camp- level approach" housing schemes that seek to improve shelter status and the overall environment of a community. However, recent experience indicates that technical and qualitative improvements handled on an individual basis have contributed little to the overall improvement of conditions and livelihoods in the community for the following reasons:

- Camp refugees and UNRWA field staff agree that shelter and housing improvements are offset by the dismal environmental conditions outlined above.
- Beneficiaries of UNRWA's regular shelter rehabilitation programme are restricted to some special hardship cases, which represent only 6 percent of the overall refugee population.
- Due to lack of space within camp boundaries and funding scarcities, it was not always possible to extend the shelters beyond the initial "core" blocs. Accordingly,

overcrowding in shelters is still prevalent: around 30 percent of households have three or more persons per room, with regional variations of up to 40 percent⁸.

• Funds available for the shelter rehabilitation programme have not enabled UNRWA to cover all the needs. Informal refugee gatherings generally benefit from better housing conditions than the official camp residents, especially with regard to availability of space. However, this is not always the case. Some of the informal gatherings are also affected by overcrowding and substandard, unhealthy environmental conditions, such as in the “Gaza Buildings” (formerly Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) facilities). In other parts of the region, informal gatherings are makeshift locations where most shelters are made of mud and corrugated iron sheets. For special hardship cases, access to UNRWA’s shelter rehabilitation programme is difficult, not least because the Agency’s eligibility regulations state that beneficiaries living outside of camps must possess titles to the dwelling/land they occupy; if not, their shelters may be considered only for repair. Few refugees meet this requirement area-wide; while in Lebanon, ownership of land by refugees is banned by law.

3.5.2 Suggestion of two different approaches for the camps:

I differentiate two basically different approaches, the bottom-up process and the top-down process. Both deal with the development of housing and infrastructure issue with a certain amount of architectural, spatial, cultural and historical value which is essential to camps upgrading programs. The differences can be defined in the field of:

- The way initiative is taken.
- The focus on the kind of progress.
- The way different actors participate.
- The instruments to support and control the development.
- The goals to be achieved during the process.

The bottom-up process is characterized by:

- Initiative is taken by non –professional groups.
- There is a focus on a continuous process.

-Future users are participating from the very first moment, professional actors are primarily facilitating the process, supporting in case of the need of professional construction work.

-In the beginning there are informal networks, no schedule, no master plan, and no vision.

-During further development the goals are defined in small steps, mainly temporary goals of specific target groups of the refugees'. Often they are just reactions to advantageous or disadvantageous conditions from outside. New goals are influenced, inspired and integrated in a dynamical way. New goals are vital elements of the whole process. A "final goal" is not vaguely defined.

The Top-down process is characterized by:

-Initiative by professional person or groups.

-Focus on the final outcome of the process (kept to a minimum).

-Future users are participating not earlier than in the last stage.

- Different methods of calculating, scheduling and monitoring the process are used.

-In the beginning there is an initiator mainly focusing on the presumed financial outcome.

4.0 WHAT IS PLANNING?

Planning for land use and the future growth and development is an important activity for local governments. Planning is a Benefit of the Community One of the fundamental responsibilities of local government is planning and the preparation of plans. Planning is the word we use to describe how a community shapes and guides growth and development. Some people call this process "city planning," "urban planning," or sometimes "land use planning."

The results of planning are contained in documents we call "comprehensive plans" or "growth management plans." Effective planning ensures that future development will occur where, when, and how the community and local government wants. There are

several important benefits to the entire community that result from the planning process:

-Quality of life is maintained and improved. There is a vision, clearly stated and shared by all, that describes the future of the community.

-Private property rights are protected.

-Economic development is encouraged and supported.

There is more certainty about where development will occur, what it will be like, when it will happen, and how the costs of development will be met.

4.1 Planning is both “art and science”

Planning may be considered “science” because of our reliance on technical data, and the use of scientific information in such fields as environmental sciences, demography, and geography. We rely on technical data regarding transportation systems, utility systems, and even human behavior. Forecasts describe expected future conditions based on past trends and conditions. On the other hand, planning may be considered “art” as we focus on the design of cities, neighborhoods, and buildings. Citizens gather to think about and envision the possible futures, apply creativity to the design of their community, and strike a balance to meet the needs of all who live, work, play, and visit their community.

4.2 A Plan belong to the whole Community

Planning is all about balance among competing interests and almost always involves difficult trade offs. An effective plan reflects that trade off decisions. The challenge for the local government is to capture in words, maps, and illustrations the future envisioned by the community’s citizens, as well as to make those difficult trade off decisions along the way. This often overwhelming challenge is made simpler when the local government systematically organizes the process. The importance of the plan rests partially on the process of preparing the plan. A plan belongs to the whole community, and the members of the community should be part of the process to create the plan.

Camp improvement planning...

From the project point of view, two questions must be addressed at the time of project planning:

-To what extent are the project objectives and strategies explicitly oriented towards participatory planning (are they process-oriented or target-oriented)?

-Is the technical dimension of the project defined in terms of predetermined technical messages, or in the form of a range of possible technical menus, to be developed and verified during project implementation?

4.3 Camp improvement planning, should enabling to share community development expertise across existing departments as (bottom-up approach participation) and as a holistic approach by Increasing efficiency in using resources. Giving better impact for the refugee's community themselves regarding fundraising experiences, which will be became more convincing to donor community as it is more sustainable and it has a better impact. Generates interest in other donors to adapt certain projects of the CIP. Ensures community ownership and transfer of skills by empowering the community, which Encourages the community to community. Is indicative of UNRWA's paradigm shift from relief to development. Brings to the table new issues that UNRWA and other service providers to refugees have not yet been aware of. Can be a strong source for UNRWA's internal programme planning (e.g. Field Implementation Plans) for all departments.

4.3.1 Why camp improvement?

The infrastructure and camp improvement programme addresses the deteriorating living conditions of Palestine refugees in camps. The Agency promotes environmentally and socially sustainable neighborhoods. The comprehensive camp improvement plans, should develop mainly the following subjects:

Housing and camp improvement

UNRWA facilities and installations

Environmental infrastructure

The Department of Infrastructure and Camp Improvement (DICI) was created in response to calls at the Geneva Conference on UNRWA (2004) to address the deteriorating living conditions of Palestine refugees in camps where UNRWA operates .Through the department, UNRWA is adopting a community-driven approach focusing

on strategic, participatory urban planning relating to the environmental infrastructure, UNRWA installations, shelter, camp improvement and community development.

UNRWA's role as service provider to Palestine refugees is to facilitate the strategic planning process leading to Camp Improvement Plans, deliver expert guidance and help throughout, utilize its excellent relations with the donor community for advocacy and revise existing service programmes so as to better integrate them with camp improvement plans.

Camp improvement aim to alleviate some of the camps' worst problems, especially those caused by deteriorated living conditions including over-crowding, improve socio-economic conditions and help create more sustainable built environments. This should be done without affecting the status of refugees including the right of return. Our future Camp improvement should be developed in a participatory and integrated process, driven by the local camp community and therefore mark a new chapter in the cooperation between UNRWA and the local camp communities based on a comprehensive, gender sensitive, community-driven need analysis.

4.3.2 Social Networks in the Refugee Camps

The quality of urban life depends heavily on the quality of social relations in neighbourhoods. Not that both are identical: there is a quality of physical environment that may be discussed in its own right. But for the people living in the camps, their evaluation of urban life seems to be affected more by their social relations than by the physical environment. Social relations are not what all people live in and for. A good part of their Activities are concentrated on making a living. Material conditions may be the strongest single incentive controlling their behavior. And physical environment provides some of the material conditions of life: housing, work places, shopping areas, public institutions, recreational facilities, traffic system and the like. Accessibility of places for activities is an important aspect of the urban scenery. Every day the movement between these places forms an activity pattern. Still more important for shaping a life style may be the conditions of labor and of earning a living.

In many studies dealing with the social structure and quality of neighborhoods these have been dealt with in the aggregate. Results speak of social characteristics of neighborhoods as a social and physical unit. And indeed, there are some aspects of an

urban housing quarter which can be characterized by common features-such as density of housing, provision of social amenities, and also general measures of social structure.

It means, additionally, scattering of places of activity over a wider area in the camps. Both are phenomena not entirely independent from housing policy, traffic development, and camps planning. We therefore have to look more closely into what social relations mean to people. My idea of a neighborhoods, and of the physical environments as a shell for its social quality, may change drastically through more concrete descriptions what social relations mean nowadays in an urban setting like in the camps. The main objective of social relations in neighborhoods is to get along with each other, not to interfere too much in the activities important for individuals and households. I suggest to research on new concepts into the investigation of the quality of urban life in the camps that may help us to understand it better. learnt lessons from the Berliner experience for the improvement of the living condition of the refugees camp in Gaza strip On behalf of the whole Camp the following points should be done:-

-Establishing a body or an organization to represent the Camp's interest during the renewal process related to small housing areas and clusters.

-Classification of the whole areas into clusters main quarters and small quarters.

-Concept for the whole wastewater drainage system.

-Concept and standards for free spaces green areas and public places.

-Concept and standards for the needed number and location of kindergarten sport areas and areas for community activities.

-Concept and research about existing small industry and handicraft activities.

-Concept and instruments for participation.

-Establishing offices for information and advisors as well as for the people to exchange interests, experience and problems.

4.4 UNRWA's Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (ICIP)

In line with the above UNRWA initiated a reform process, which led to the establishment of the Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme (2007) at the UNRWA HQ (Amman). The Agency is progressing with a series of internal reforms and restructuring efforts, including the setting up of Camp Improvement Teams in all fields of its operation. The new function will primarily be responsible for the improvement of the “built” and living environment of the camps in an integrated, developmental, participatory and community-driven way. It will focus on the mobilization of the full potential and resources of all relevant actors including Local Committees, camp institutions, host governments as well as the donor community.

4.4.1 The general objectives for the new ICIP are:

-To improve the quality of life of the camp residents (living in sub-standard conditions) by means of integrated social and physical actions, that promotes environmentally and socially sustainable neighborhoods.

-To empower the refugee community to improve the camp environment according to the needs and priorities that they themselves will define.

-To assist the community in achieving these goals.

4.4.2 Specific objectives of the ICIP include:

The identification of refugee needs in relation to their built environment and in particular shelter, housing, markets, access, paths, sidewalks, plays areas, among others. This should include all infrastructure needs and incorporate all required socio-economic elements identified by stakeholders (Local Committee, PLO, UNRWA, PNA and other NGOs).

To facilitate the community development approach adopted by the Agency in all its activities/programs. Physical improvement is an issue of common interest to the community around which camp residents can organize effectively and get involved in the improvement of their living environment. Camp improvement projects will be combined with employment creation, capacity building and empowerment of the beneficiaries and the community. The establishment and implementation of strategic camp development plans for all camps in which the improvements of all elements such as shelter, housing, physical and social infrastructure are planned simultaneously. The

aim is to avoid ad hoc action and a piece-meal approach and generate a maximum of synthesis between different initiatives.

To build up the capacity of the Agency to answer the needs arising from political developments. An example is the disengagement plans in Gaza and the subsequent identification of the need to up-grade the camps in line with the PA master plans and to embark on various coordinated joint housing projects. Linking camps to their urban, suburban or rural surroundings does not mean abolishing the status of the camps and the role of UNRWA. Provision of shelter, housing and re-housing projects according to a mutually agreed criterion. This will include different interventions and implementation strategies to reconstruct and up-grade shelters using self help in terms of savings and labour, community housing initiatives and improved access to credit. The following points could be as start discussion basis for the team:

- Keep the existing housing stock as possible, not destroy the houses, not destroy the houses, which have a chance to be renewed,
- Create interim and extension housing areas near the camp for moving people or for the construction period,
- Provide a basic social service infrastructure,
- Provide access to each house for emergency case,
- Provide access to the existing and the planned social institutions,
- Upgrade paths and ways to a safe communication net,
- Upgrade the hygienic conditions in quarters and houses through light and fresh air,
- Upgrade the public space, oaths, ways, and streets as well as courts and courts and corners to a better shape,
- Regain space for transportation to use for communal activities,
- Make the area green,
- Look for a financing and implementing process, which reduce costs for the people,

-Motivate and enable the people to organize part of the renewal process by themselves.

Camp Improvement Teams would play a leading role during the design of the projects. They would facilitate the process of participation. In others, participatory platforms can assume a central role with necessary support from the Teams. As it is stated above, ideally all the relevant stakeholders should participate to the project design. The primary stakeholders, obviously, are the local camp communities. Therefore, the design of the projects should take into consideration divergence within the communities and allow different groups (girls, boys, youth, women, etc.) directly to take part in those projects addressing their immediate needs.

4.5 participatory planning

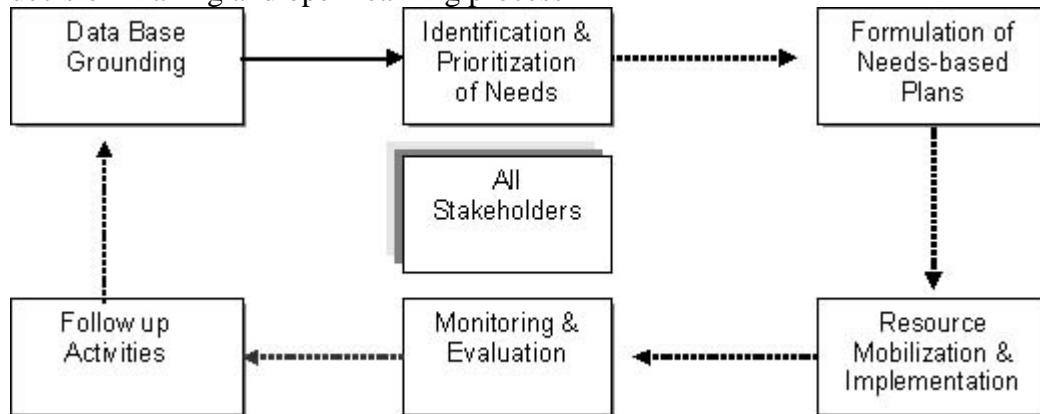
Proposed participatory planning in Refugees camps participatory planning can be defined as joint actions of local people and project staff with the objective of formulating development plans and selecting the best available alternatives for their implementation. It should be a two-way learning process of dialogue, negotiation and decision-making between insiders and outsiders, concerning activities to be undertaken by the insiders and supported by the outsiders. It is thus conceptualized in terms of what can be called a "negotiating dialogue" between local people and project staff, aimed at conforming project support to local needs, constraints and opportunities. Simply stated, participatory planning is an effort of the parties involved to elaborate a common agenda for future development actions. This agenda is not completely open: both parties already have their own agendas, mandates and responsibilities. The challenge is to identify and agree upon those actions that fit in with both. Special methods and tools have been developed that facilitate the identification and elaboration of common agendas.

Participatory approaches convince the donor community to ensure that their contributions and investment will be used in the most effective and strategic way and will reach the largest possible number of beneficiaries. Participatory approaches first emerged out of the recognition of the shortcomings of top-down development approaches. The first assumption, therefore, is that participatory approaches facilitate this process of local empowerment by creating opportunities for specific disadvantaged groups, such as women or the landless, to have access to external resources (training,

credits) or to mobilize their own resources (organization, knowledge, skills). This enhances their capacity to take action to defend their own interests.

Figure1

Participatory is planning and Development Process for promoting participation in decision-making and open learning process



Participatory planning approaches aims strengthening the local capacity for sustainable development in terms of knowledge, skills and organization. One of the important ways to ensure that local capacity is improved is through the recognition of the appropriateness of local knowledge in designing project actions. The second assumption is that the use of participatory approaches will allow the integration of local knowledge systems into local project planning and implementation. The project then complements these knowledge systems with technical support for the development of appropriate technical menus. Therefore, in particular during the planning process, emphasis should put on the mutual assessment and mobilization of local knowledge and management systems. Participation does not just mean getting the basic information out of the community in order to "target" the project interventions effectively. This approach is oriented towards establishing horizontal relationships between external agents (the project) and the local community, as equal partners who are willing to learn from each other. The third assumption is that participatory planning facilitates a two-way learning process between the local community and the project. This two-way learning process should facilitate the timely adjustment of project support services to changing local realities. Similarly, it *should* strengthen local capacity to identify and mobilize local as well as external resources needed to undertake sustained actions.

Development projects operate within an existing institutional framework, and participatory approaches should provide planners and decision-makers with the necessary information for providing more adequate enabling environments and institutional support. The extent to which local communities are given the conditions for, are capable of and are interested in developing more sustainable resource management systems will determine the level of local capacity for claiming higher quality external services. The institutional environment should respond to these bottom-up claims for more decentralized planning. The final assumption is that participatory planning will enhance political commitment and institutional support for local planning by building a common understanding between institutions and local groups.

4.6 The conceptual framework of participatory planning

1. In the short term, the tools of participatory planning should generate a two-way learning process, which will shape project interventions to local needs, opportunities and constraints.
2. In the long term, this learning process should lead to a) local empowerment and b) effective support at the institutional level. These are considered preconditions for strengthening both institutional capacity for decentralized planning and local planning capacity. In the case of natural resource management, the strengthening of these two capacity levels should lead* to more sustainable use and management of resources

4.6.1 Why should participation be promoted?

Participation and involvement is part of any social group and fundamental to developing and strengthening a well-functioning community. The dynamics of a particular participatory structure are determined by the culture(s) of the group, and their beliefs, norms, values and power relationships. Best practice for a Camp Management Agency is to observe and understand existing or developing participatory structures and dynamics in the camp, and to use, support and strengthen them, in order to ensure a well-functioning, living and working environment which respects local culture and maximises local skills and capacities.

The participation of the camp population in decision-making and in the daily life of the camp helps to ensure that programmes are equitable and effective. Participation can

positively impact the health, well-being and safety of the camp residents and camp staff.

-Special attention should be given to ensuring that all groups are able to participate, including those with specific needs and/or those who are marginalised and lacking a voice in decision-making.

-developing participation structures and procedures may require targeted effort and additional resources, it is an essential way of reinforcing a sense of dignity, reducing vulnerability and helping to build local capacity without undermining peoples' own coping strategies in times of crisis.

-Participation should be based on assessments of existing structures which can be used to support participatory methods.

-While participatory approaches should respect local culture there needs to be due regard for culturally-embedded power relationships which may be exploitative or oppressive.

-Participation and community involvement can take many forms, and should be planned and integrated into all stages of the project cycle – assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – and all phases of a camp's life cycle – from design and set-up to closure.

All proposals and measures need a very concrete cooperation with the inhabitants. Everybody must the feeling that he or she really was able to decide about the future development of his or her family and the housing conditions. That means a high level of participation and very strict principles to follow like:

As much participation as possible , as much agreement as needed,

As much self organization as needed for the different aspects of the renewal process,

As much level and opportunities for discussion, exchange of ideas, experience and problem as possible, round tables, workshops, committee meetings and scenario round involving the important actors according to the needs.

4.6.2 When does participation occur?

A framework is offered for understanding the conceptual basis and the strategic implications of community participation, in achieving Health for All goals. Special focus is given to the meaning, settings and levels of participation in official decision-making structures and at the community level. Questions such ‘how is participation facilitated?’, ‘who participates?’ and ‘what are the benefits and obstacles to participation?’ are geared primarily towards the needs of individuals who function at the city (Camps) level and expect practical strategic advice and guidance. Community participation is frequently identified by scholars and practitioners as central to success in delivering physical infrastructure services (e.g., World Bank 2004).

However, much of the community participation literature does not carefully explain the impacts of different forms of participation on project effectiveness. It is often assumed that participation in all aspects of service delivery (e.g., project selection, design, construction, and maintenance) contributes to more successful project outcomes. Moreover, findings from the community participation literature are sometimes applied across a broad spectrum of service sectors (e.g., water, sanitation, education, and health care) and settlement types (e.g., rural, camps, urban, suburban, and peri-urban). **Creative working** Planning and Design workshops allowing small groups of professionals and non-professionals to work creatively together developing planning and design ideas from the first step. They will normally be held as part of a planning day or other action planning event. Participants use tracing paper over a plan, mini Post-it notes and felt-tip pens to explore options for an inner city neighborhood. Most have no previous design experience. Project design needs to come out of and articulate to the prior stages of camp improvement process, so that the earlier products such as CIPs and action plans are actually producing on the ground implementation projects. Participation should be aimed to start at a very early stage and with a higher level of engagement. In this way, project design can empower the local camp community and allows them to act as agents of change. At the same time, community ownership of projects during their implementation will be ensured. There are numerous participation tools that can be useful during the design process. Some of the Camp Improvement

Teams have already applied successfully (see below notes from the teams) those tools and even innovated new design tools suitable for their respective Camp context. A key to success is the local appropriation of methodologies so that they can be communicative, understandable and communities can see the utility in them. Hence, keeping in mind that tools help to ensure project design is participatory, they should not over rule the process of participation.

4.6.3 Stakeholder Interaction in Camp Improvement

Acknowledge mistrust and mistakes UNRWA might have made in the past, which may have added to general mistrust: Acknowledgement of mistakes is a sign of strength, rather than weakness if it is expressed confidently, and with the intention to rebuild the relationship in the future. It is easy, yet crucially important to admit that the Agency is going through a “learning process” and is sincere about the wish to implement internal reform in order to improve its services to the refugees.

Acknowledge achievements and successes of community-initiated projects: Trust can be gained by acknowledging the community as a partner, which will bring essential experiences and skills into the partnership. This includes the acknowledgement that refugees are generally the best experts on the camps – a vital asset which they can offer to the partnership. Refugees can offer intimate knowledge of the camp, its needs and its potentials – derived from daily experience. Equally important is the respect of past achievements and a reassurance of the community that the agency wants to learn from such successes. Community leaders and activists are often highly experienced in project development and understand extremely well the terminology of planning, project management and implementation – a “more simple language” sometimes used by UNWRA staff when speaking to refugees is often inappropriate and can be perceived as a lack of respect. Developing a direct and transparent language of communication: Trust can only be built by creating a transparent working process. This includes the Agency’s own implementation plan for camp improvement and the fears and reservations of staff. Of course, these issues must be discussed sensitively, without exposing particular staff members and by focusing on issues with particular relevance. The main issue at stake is to construct an atmosphere in which conflicts are openly

addressed. The Agency should not pretend to have “all the answers”. Solutions can only be developed in partnership with the community.

Camp improvement must be based on a voluntary partnership between the community, the Agency and other stakeholders: During the pilot, it was useful to frequently explain to the community that camp improvement cannot and will not be imposed. At the heart of the programme lies a voluntary commitment of all partners to improve cooperation in the interest of the refugees. Especially during initial meetings it should be made clear that the development of a camp improvement plan is an “offer” which communities are free to reject. Provide written information on camp improvement with explanations of the main steps in the strategic planning process as well as the expected products: A lack of written information can easily be misinterpreted as a deliberate attempt by the Agency to hold back. Written documentation should ideally also include statements of other stakeholders and trusted institutions, which will reassure the camp community that they are entering a “safe” and “accepted” process. An exchange of written information can also be formalized into a “Memorandum of Understanding”.

Clarification of roles of all stakeholders: It is important to explain to the community that camp improvement relies on the cooperation between all stakeholders. This also includes implementation and funding. UNRWA can only take on projects, which will receive funding from external donors and are in line with its mandate of operations. It is important to communicate that UNRWA cannot “do it all” in order to avoid disappointment and explain that the camp community has to be equally active.

Express commitment to “open-ended” process with no predefined agendas, priorities or solutions: The facilitating team should explain that strategic goals and project priorities of the camp improvement plan will be the result of the joint strategic planning process. There are no predefined agendas or priorities. The camp improvement plan will not include any measures that are not supported by the community. Expectation management: It should be made clear from the start that UNRWA does not have money “in the bank” to implement projects. All projects under camp improvement will require extensive lobbying and advocacy work with external stakeholders. Status and “ownership” of the Camp Improvement Plan: It is important to communicate that UNRWA will not “own” the camp improvement plan. Much like the processes leading to it, it is not owned by any particular stakeholder but “shared” and represents a not

legally binding (i.e. voluntary) vision and coordinating instrument to deliver change and improve the living conditions in the camp. The following actors should be participated:

- Inhabitants of the camp
- Municipalities
- Governorates
- Ministries
- Non Governorates Organizations
- UNWRA
- Self communities and their advisors.

4.6.4 importunacy of quarter management Camp-Level)

Community participation in drafting the Camp Improvement Plan should not only be reduced to the Working Group. When debating solutions on specific issues, additional representatives of affected community groups could be invited to Working Group sessions or addressed in additional Focus Group sessions. It is also recommend developing a public events campaign in the camp – with a possible focus on children, youth, and women – to increase awareness and the possibilities of additional community contributions. This could include:

Public presentations of draft versions of the Camp Improvement Plan.

Workshops and hearings involving the larger community.

“**Quick win**” projects and events such as neighborhood improvement (cleaning, tree planting, the organisation of games, theatre or dance performances, storey telling sessions, etc.).

Organize public showroom or exhibition. Drawing and design workshops with schools and Kindergartens. Working Group members should, as much as possible, act as facilitators of these events. If the Camp Improvement Plan is presented by a community member (rather than UNRWA staff), the community is likely to be more receptive and prepared to develop a sense of “ownership” over the planning process.

4.6.5 Dimensions of an integrated set of participatory planning Goals

1. Dignity and human rights for all, setting their own strategic objectives.
2. Promote equality and justice
3. Achieving more transparent, responsive, accountable and effective governance, at both the local and national level, through active citizen participation.”
4. Empowering citizens to participate in processes of public decision-making that affect their lives.
5. Strengthen democratic and participatory governance
6. Foster fair and resilient financial system
7. Promoting cultural and communal activities to strengthen local identity
8. Enhancing local effectiveness and developmental aspects of existing UNRWA programmes and services (for example, the Job Creation Programme, Micro- Finance Schemes, MCSP, Special Hardship Cases programme, etc.).
- 9- participation refers to a continuum of activities, ranging from information sharing to consultation, partnership to full community control. Hence, depending on the individual project, the appropriate level of participation should be decided.
- 10- Breakdown problems and give the needed solutions and alternatives

5.0 How to draw Camp Improvement Plans?

Camp Improvement Plan documents should be accompanied by a set of key drawings, which include a main plan – the Camp Improvement Plan – and an undefined number of other plans annexed to it which may foreground particular issues.

These may include:

- Public Space Concept
- Movement and Circulation Concept
- House Improvement Concept
- Technical Infrastructure Concept

Wherever possible, projects should be planned and implemented in a participatory way. Although Camp Improvement has an overall objective of enhancing participation of communities, at the project implementation phase the level of involvement would much depend on the type of projects and the capacity of communities.

5.1 Recommendations and Aims

-Enhancing the overall living situation for the resident community there by communication with the different parts of country and to avoid any aspects (considered previously as problems) in the original location.

-Maintaining studies for ensuring availabilities of the job opportunities in the new location, the possibility to develop the area and make it fruitful area, provide support to the gross national economy.

-Preparing the required social and human studies for the re-located community in the new location to make sure that the new arrangement, which residents living in, harmony and accommodated very well in the new environment with the all needed facilities such as (green areas, schools, health centers, Infrastructures systems, electrical network, Insurance systems...etc.) all to be subjected to the horizon plan criteria.

-Evaluation of the existing building's situation and finding categories. To solve this problem a round table with experts should be formed. They will propose standards, minimal and maximal demands as adapted framework for the Camps as long as they exist. They should do that with the idea, that these regulations may be good also for other poor and low cost housing areas with high density. Renewal strategy for each building must be done in accordance with these regulations.

-The renewal process of the buildings must reach a general qualification of the living and housing conditions of each family. That means we have think of:

-Enlarging the living space for a three generation family and as minimum three nuclear families.

-Keep courts alive if possible or find alternatives for open space in the house.

-Creating opportunities for extension to have space for newly built families up to four or five nuclear families per house.

-Providing each nuclear family with the needed three bedrooms.

-Providing the more generation family with one saloon and one big kitchen.

-Qualifying kitchen and bathrooms and integrating them inside the house, if possible giving each nuclear family an own bathroom and small kitchen.

-Creating different variation of ground plan to give choices and models for standardization.

-Preparing the technical and financial studies for the new development by many parties (Architect Planners, Civil Engineers, Mechanical Engineers, Electrical Engineers, financial administrators...etc.)

-Renovation strategy for each building. Each house needs its own renovation plan. Besides that standard, typical situations will be found and classifications should be proposed in order to found out variations and alternatives. To do so the experience made by UNRWA during their emergency case programs should be used, and led to a self-help programs. UNRWA should help to establish this program and help with construction material to develop these model strategies, a round table should be established with experts and representatives.

-Developing the camps and improving their living conditions, including health and education as well as generating job opportunities will reinforce and enhance the living and housing conditions in the refugee camps of Gaza Strip.

- To organize the needed measures it needs concepts, rules, law and discussion before any design can be made. all actors should be involved in different stages and with different influence. The following items may be added and completed.

-Laws and regulations for minimal sizes of paths, ways and streets, hierarchy of streets and special standards for the Refugee Camps as high-density areas.

-Laws and regulation concerning density of living areas and houses, space between building, open space and urban shape and special standards for the Refugee Camps as high dense areas.

-Controlling measures concerning new building in the Camp and the added areas, the Municipalities or Governorates take over the responsibility.

-Proposal of a concept for the enlarging of path and ways, alternatives including the research about housing conditions and proposals for demolishing and alternative housing needs.

-Proposal of a participation concept.

-Proposal of a self-help concept for building the transport system and the included infrastructure.

-Proposal of a concept for a job and qualification opportunities.

-Proposal of a financing concept.

-Proposal of a concept for the organization of the process between the actors

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