Exile Within Borders: Understanding the Limits of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Iraq

Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed ¹
e ⁴ Al-Mesalla Organization for Human Development Iraq Erbil, Iraq fatma.hashim4@gmail.com
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ABSTRACT

Research in ICT about forced displacement focuses mainly on refugees. Internally displaced people (IDPs), however, are rarely discussed in ICT and related disciplines. This paper aims to fill in the gap and provide an insight into the everyday lives of IDPs and their ICTs usage based on our original fieldwork at several IDP and refugee camps in northern Iraq. Our work includes extended field observations, surveys with 86 IDPs and 46 refugees, and examination of recent reports about IDPs from international NGOs that have been active in that region. Our findings illustrate that IDPs live under similar resource-constrained environment as refugees and, in some cases, suffer from even harsher restrictions. We highlight how these confines limit their ICTs usage and discuss opportunities for future ICT research to improve the quality of life of the displaced residing within their own borders.

CCS CONCEPTS

• Human-centered computing \rightarrow Collaborative and social computing \rightarrow Collaborative and social computing theory, concepts and paradigms \rightarrow Social recommendation • Social and professional topics \rightarrow User characteristics \rightarrow Cultural characteristics

KEYWORDS

Forced displacement, IDPs, refugees, access, ICT, Iraq.

1 INTRODUCTION

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are individuals who leave their homes seeking safety against natural or manmade disasters and who do not cross the country's borders [70]. Because IDPs stay within their own country, they remain under their state sovereignty. Refugees, on the other hand, cross a border to find protection.

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Hence, they fall under the protection of international laws [40]. In some cases, IDPs, especially ones who are displaced due to natural disasters, are aided by their own governments and can rebuild their lives after a period of time [61]. However, IDPs who flee due to conflicts tend to be more vulnerable because they are usually marginalized by their own government and have limited access to adequate services [86]. In fact, the number of displaced people globally is always on the rise due to conflict-induced IDPs who have been without durable solutions for an extended period of time [65, 90]. The magnitude and complexity of forced displacement today are directly linked to the prevalence, scale, and longevity of the current conflicts where some countries are still struggling despite 20 years of international, regional, and national policy efforts and investments [47, 68].

IDPs produced by conflicts are widely discussed in political science, international law literature, and economy [8, 45, 59, 80]. However, research about them in the field of technology is minimal. When discussing displaced population, ICT related research usually focuses on refugees even though, in many cases, IDPs and refugees flee from similar root causes [78]. We believe that one of the main reasons IDPs are understudied is because there is a lack of readily available detailed data about them [11]. While the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) [48] does publish data about IDPs in terms of numbers of the displaced by country and the economic implications associated with such movement, more specific data such as people demographics and services available for them is hard to find. This can be due to difficulties in accessing IDPs because they fall under their local government jurisdiction which, in many cases, does not allow external interference [17]. Moreover, certain types of data - such as news articles and tweets that rely on Internet coverage may not be available in countries experiencing large-scale displacement [62].

We argue that there is a need to conduct more research about IDPs to better understand the circumstances they are under and to propose possible aiding tools that can be appropriate for their needs and context. Hence, the goal of this paper is to provide detailed data about IDPs who reside in camps and advise on strategies for improving their quality of life. To achieve this, we visited 2 IDP and 2 refugee camps in Northern Iraq and conducted surveys with 86 IDPs and 46 refugees in these and other nearby camps. Building on the work of Sabie et al. [74] that discusses the difference in shelter design between IDPs and refugees in Iraq, we use a set of ethnographically informed methods, including observations and

surveys, to illustrate the situation of the internally displaced, report on IDPs usage of ICTs, compare IDPs with refugees from nearby Iraqi camps (using our own data) and neighboring countries (using other scholars work), analyze the findings, and discuss design and policy implications.

2 BACKGROUND

The number of IDPs surpasses the number of refugees by a fold and a half [32]. According to the latest data, in 2017 only, there were more than 18 million newly internally displaced people due to natural disasters while over 11 million fled conflicts but stayed within their countries borders [47]. Currently, over 40 million IDPs exist. The majority of these displacements take place in struggling countries. Most conflict-produced IDPs are in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East while disaster displacement is prevalent in East Asia, South Asia and Latin American [47]. The number of IDPs is not going down. While some IDPs return to their homes when the crisis they ran from ends, most IDPs who fled due to political conflicts suffer from protracted displacement and are yet to find durable solutions [42].

IDPs do not receive adequate attention from the international community [88]. In practice, the international regime for the protection of IDPs is arguably quite weak. Although they flee their homes for mostly the same reasons as refugees, IDPs are not protected by the same international treaties and institutions as refugees because they do not cross any internationally recognized borders. In fact, until the late 1990s, IDPs were not protected by any international institutional or legal framework [14]. In 1998, the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPs) was created to detail the rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of IDPs from forced displacement to their protection and assistance during displacement up to the achievement of durable solutions [70]. However, the GPs in and of themselves are not binding. Their wording is purposely very general and vague. Moreover, because the regime is based on "soft law," it lacks robust international enforcement and monitoring mechanisms [14]. Compliance with the IDP regime has been patchy at best. As evident by multiple studies and reports [7, 31, 86, 88], there has been a notable gap between commitment and implementation of the IDP norm-based laws and policies.

In general, IDPs produced by political conflicts are usually at a higher risk than refugees. Assistance to IDPs, as compared with refugees, is more sporadic and their livelihood is more fragile because IDPs are living in countries subject to civil strife or, in some cases, the local government prevents the interventions of outsiders as it would be considered an intrusion over the state's sovereignty [14]. Moreover, populations in conflict zones may be repeatedly displaced and are highly vulnerable [30]. Lastly, refugees have the option of being resettled, i.e. be relocated in a new country where they can start a new life. However, IDPs are generally not eligible for a third-country resettlement [89]. Very few states have special humanitarian migration programs for persons at risk within their own country such the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program that processed Iraqi asylum seekers requests while they were in Iraq between 2007 and 2013 [52].

The humanitarian and displacement situation in Iraq is one of the most severe in the world. The country has been in political conflicts since the early 1980s [39] but the last 15 years - driven by a combination of internal armed conflict, external intervention, and political, ethnic or religious affiliation persecution – have produced over 10 million refugees and IDPs (about 25% of the current

country's population) [51]. Figure 1 illustrates the IDP trends in Iraq. While the last year has witnessed the return of millions of IDPs to their home, the number of people who remain internally displaced is still significant. Moreover, not all these returns can be considered voluntary as it is unclear what percentage of those returnees have been able to reach durable solutions in their place of origin or elsewhere, partly as a result of damaged housing, severely disrupted services, and security concerns [75, 82].





3 RELATED WORK

3.1 Mobility, Classification, and Discrimination

Everything around us is on the move. People, materials, and idea are mobile, Research on 'mobilities' studies the effect of such movement on power and inequality in society. This is because not everyone is able to take advantage of the advances in infrastructure and technology that benefit mobility. People's ethnicity, location, gender, education and relative wealth can - among other factors profoundly affect their levels of mobility [21]. A person's mobility may be framed by the social and financial situation and peer-group structures in their lives. Social and spatial mobility affect people's ability to travel, to gain educational qualifications, or to find work and settle in a new place. Also, the logistics, costs, technology, and infrastructure of travel matter significantly for mobilities [28]. In our context, as Urry [91] argues, the displaced often make long, dangerous journeys until they find safety. In the process, many lose their financial resources and social support, and find themselves detained, unable to work or to afford travel. This initial physical mobility drastically limits their mobility once they find safety. Displacement is inherently spatial. However, space does not merely refer to a physical location. Space, as Massey [63] explains, is any locality with social relations, a network in which connection creates culture. Our experience with space is determined by serval factors such as gender, ethnicity, capitalism, and service access. There are people who can move and communicate freely by compressing time and space using digital tools. However, with displaced people, even though they experience physical movement, they are confined due to the politics and values of the hosting site. This disparity in mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak [64].

While people that are subject to forced mobilities are already in an abject condition, a classification between refugees and IDPs further exacerbates the scenario. Refugees are eligible for many international aids and protected by many international laws that cannot help the IDPs. This discrimination asserts the problems with enforcing a rule-based classification upon people. Bowker and Star [13] have opined that a person is often classified and judged based

on their gender, race, education, financial status, and their original parent's class – upon which they often have little control. People marginalization is the product of how society classify them. This results in inadequate access to information about them. Because the displaced population tends to be marginalized, they are underrepresented by community and government support [56]. Although IDPs and refugees are forcibly displaced mostly for the same reasons, just because of the geographical location, which is again a result of classification in lands and nations, IDPs have to suffer greater limitations and be deprived of international regard and aid that their refugee peers receive.

Hence, IDPs present a compelling case of intersectionality where they are subject to marginalization both by forced mobilities and biased classifications. While research and study on intersectionality have been common in different branches of social and political sciences, ICT and related fields have only recently started to focus on developing methods for such intersectional research [77, 92, 93]. However, due to the uniqueness of the case of IDPs, existing methodological tools are often difficult to apply. As a result, little is known about the struggles of IDPs and their connections with computing technologies. Our study focuses on this understudied and yet crucial intersection to understand the limits of computing and to design for overcoming them.

3.2 Long-Term Displacement and ICT

A growing body of ICT research has been active in refugee camps and refugee' informal settlements to identify the challenges these displaced people suffer from and recommend design practices. For example, in Lebanon, Talhouk et al. [85] identify contextual and cultural factors that can inform the design of digital technologies to support refugee Access to Antenatal Care (ANC). Accordingly, the authors implement a radio show run by refugees to deliver healthcare information to the displaced community [84]. In Jalazone Palestinian refugee camp in the West Bank, Aal et al. [1-3] discuss the impact of implementing intercultural computer clubs (come IN) on youth displaced population. In Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, Fisher et al. [36] held a series of participatory design workshops with youth refugees to create paper prototypes of visionary devices for helping their community. The authors then went on to explore the social, spatial, temporal, and infrastructural challenges that need to be considered when designing the camp cookbook [34]. In terms of ICT presence, Xu and Maitland [94, 95] report that Za'atari camp refugees depend heavily on mobile phones and social media for communication and there is potential that refugees can carry out Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). Similarly, Yafi et al. [96] describe how youth in this camp carry out digital information and service work on behalf of family and community members given the limitations in Internet access modes. These studies help provide context for the refugee community's daily lives challenges including information problems and limited access to survives. They also emphasize the importance of dialogue between technology designers and the populace affected by humanitarian crises to increase "relevance and sustainability of innovations." However, these and similar studies are often lacking when it comes to IDPs who suffer from similar challenges as refugees but in a different context.

In general, IDPs tend to be discussed abstractly in technology research. For example, Martin and Singh [62] identify big data sources, methodologies, and challenges that need to be addressed in order to develop more reliable evidence-based systems for detecting and forecasting forced migration in the context of humanitarian crises. Similarly, Sokolowski and Banks [79] establish a multidisciplinary methodology for researching and modeling population displacement to minimize threats to populations in jeopardy and anticipate when forced migration might occur. Kemper and Heinzel [57] illustrate how Earth observation data can be used for mapping and monitoring of refugee and IDP camps. For example, satellite 2D images are used by Wendt et al. [48] to screen growth patterns in IDP and refugee camps and estimate their population. However, very few studies have focused on understanding the challenges of IDPs and designing appropriate technology and policy accordingly.

In ICTD, HCI, CSCW, and related disciplines, IDPs are rarely discussed without a few exceptions. Ahmed et al. [6] demonstrate how communities that are forcefully displaced due to the development projects in Dhaka, Bangladesh experience a residual treatment in their use of ICT, and survive by engaging creatively with the available infrastructures and constructing new modes of access and support. Sabie et al. [74] illustrate the various shelter types that exist in IDP and refugee camps in northern Iraq and highlight opportunities for ICTs to improve the quality of life for these displaced residents through shelter design. This body of work, though limited, warrants two important insights to move forward: (a) an understanding of how IDPs perceive, fight, and negotiate challenges associated with displacement, and how these challenges contribute to their overall struggle in the assimilating process, and (b) how such challenges are connected to the inherited local politics. Our study joins this conversation by addressing these two pressing issues and contributes to the scholarship of LIMITS and ICTD by presenting new insights into IDPs everyday lives and ICTs usage within the Iraqi context.

4 METHODS

Two of the authors were born in Iraq and later migrated to North America. One of the authors was born, raised, and still resides in Iraq and she has been working with the IDPs and refugees for the past 5 years. All of these authors are fluent in Arabic. We collected the data in two phases. The first phase was an ethnography conducted by one of these authors. She visited two IDP camps in north Iraq (Baharka and Debaga) and two Syrian refugee camps (Darashakran and Kawergosk) in October 2016 (Figure 2). These camps are located outside Erbil; the capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq. The selection of the camps was influenced by access availability and the absence of data on such camps in the literature. During this period, staff members from a local NGO (anonymized for security reasons) took the author with them on their full-day camp rotations. In all the visited camps, NGOs hire local IDPs and refugees, called volunteers, to do most of the work since they live in the camp and know its layout and inhabitants the best. These volunteers are paid for their work. One or two volunteers accompanied the author on walks through the entire camp to ensure her and occupants' safety, respect, and sensitivity. During each visit, the volunteers asked camp residents if they would like to speak to the author and whether it was acceptable for her to photograph the different elements of the camps. At the end of each visit, the author documented (in written notes) her experience and observations and correlated them with the pictures she took. All the pictures shown in this paper are from our fieldwork. We opted against showing the faces of the camps' residents for security and privacy reasons.

Volunteers are obliged by the NGOs to not be authoritative towards IDPs and refugees in order to maintain the occupants' trust. As such, there was no pressure on camp residents to speak to the author. Nevertheless, most camp dwellers were cooperative, and many of



Figure 2: [left to right] Baharka IDP camp, Debaga IDP camp, Darashakran refugee camp, and Kawergosk refugee camp

them would approach the author and start friendly conversations. IDPs and refugees were very comfortable in these interactions and offered many insights about their situation. This could be attributed to the author's demographic characteristics. All these interactions were done in Arabic, and in the cases where some only spoke Kurdish, a Kurdish-Arabic speaking volunteer would interpret. In total, we talked with over 20 IDPs and over 20 refugees. Some of these displaced individuals worked as volunteers for active on-camp NGOs or had their own business such as grocery stores and sweet shops, while the rest were unemployed. Their age ranged from teens to 50s, and the majority of them were females. In addition, the author also had conversations with 10 staff members from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the Emirates Red Crescent (ERC). These NGOs handled most of the infrastructure projects in camps.

By the end of this visit, we had accumulated initial data about the built environment and the used technology in the camps through observations, photos, and informal discussions with staff and camp occupants. We analyzed the preliminary data and accordingly designed a survey to be completed by the displaced population about the built environment they live in and the availability and usage pattern of different ICT devices by them. The survey consists of 36 multiple choice questions and 3 short answer questions (see Appendix 1).

In the second phase, which ran in August 2017, we recruited 86 IDPs and 47 refugees to participate in the survey. Our camp contact, who is an official at a local NGO and has been visiting the camps daily for years, approved the survey and checked the numbers. She also handled the hiring, payments, and data sharing using Viber (her most preferred communication method). She was also the one who handled distributing a paper version of the survey in Arabic in the 4 visited camps plus another two IDP camps: Hasan Al-Sham and Khazer. All of these camps are distanced 10-55 km from the major Kurdish city of Erbil. The IDP camps were established in 2013 and 2014 while the refugee camps started in 2013. The population of the camps ranges between 1,500-3,000 people [23, 55, 99–102].

All of our IDP participants came to the camps between 2014-2017 with the vast majority coming in the second half of 2016. Our refugee participants came to the camps between 2013-2017 with the vast majority coming in 2016. Participants were recruited by asking IDPs and refugees who visit their local NGO office (anonymized for security reasons) to patriciate in the survey (Figure 3). Because the majority of camp residents visit these offices frequently for assistant and taking part in workshops, we believed that this method offered access to vast population and made sure the recruitment process was done in a formal and safe environment. We stopped at a theoretical saturation, i.e. when no new additional data were found that developed our findings [38]. The participants' demographics are illustrated in Table 1. All participants signed written consent forms and each participant was compensated with IQD 5,000¹ in

cash for their time (which took around 15 minutes). The collected surveys were scanned and sent to us via Google Drive. They were translated into English when we entered the data electronically. We received approval for all study procedures from our university's Research Ethics Board (REB).

86 IDPs				
Gender	Male: 49	Female: 37		
Age	Min: 15	Max: 63	Average: 33	
	SD: 12.6			
Family size	Min: 2	Max: 19	Average: 7	
	SD: 3.3			
Children:	Yes: 63	No: 23		
Education	None: 6			
	Primary school	1: 39		
	Middle School	: 21		
	High school: 1	2		
	Diploma: 3	Bachelor: 3	Master: 1	
	Not indicated: 1			
Employed	Yes: 8	No: 78		
47 Refugees				
Gender	Male: 24	Female: 23		
Age	Min: 19	Max: 60	Average: 37	
	SD: 10.8			
Family size	Min: 2	Max: 12	Average: 6	
	SD: 2.1			
Children:	Yes: 35	No: 12		
Education	None: 3			
	Primary school: 10			
	Middle School: 8			
	High school: 13			
	Diploma: 3	Bachelor: 7	Master: 1	
	Not indicated:	2		
Employed	Yes: 19	No: 28		

Table 1. Summary of participants' demographic characteristics

5 GENERAL STRUGGLES

All of the studied camps are under the supervision of the Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF) [10], a local NGO. The BCF works with the government, other local NGOs, and international bodies – such as NRC, DRC, and ERC - to deliver local and international aids and services to the displaced population in need, that being IDPs or refugees. Most of our camp occupants fled due to ISIS turmoil since 2014 in their areas. In this section, we depend mainly on our field observations to report on camps living conditions.

We noticed that camps dwellers are permitted to leave the camps (though not all of them would be able to visit large cities due to

¹ 1 USD = IQD 1,200 (at the time of writing)



Figure 3: Puddle of water at Baharka

these areas being surrounded by security checkpoints that require special IDs to enter). Unlike refugee camps in neighboring countries [87], refugees in Iraq are free to leave and enter the camps and have residency visas that permit them to work. Our survey supports this observation because almost all of our participants in both groups leave the camps either once a week or once a month to, mainly, see a doctor or purchase goods which are not available in the camps. IDPs and refugees show a good level of resilience and a great desire to improve their situation by welcoming camps guests, supporting their neighbors, customizing their homes, starting local businesses, and sending their kids to school when possible.

5.1 Architecture

At the time of our camp visit in October, the weather was springlike. Camps had ongoing house construction work, and water and electricity were available to some extent (i.e., generators existed, but cut-off happened which is very common in the country). Most of the construction and wiring was carried out by international NGOs. The refugee camps we visited, especially Darashakran camp, looked more like a small town rather than a camp. There were rainwater gutters, elevated concrete shelters, organized electricity wires, and fenced houses. In all the camps, there was a construction movement to replace the tents with concrete cores where international NGOs, in collaboration with the government, would build one 7X4.4 m room for families in extreme need. The rest was to be built as more resources become available. However, the two IDP camps had less sophisticated cores and most of the structures were still tents because construction started much more recently compared to the refugee camps. This can be due to refugee camps being a year older than the IDP ones. The NGOs construction had proper foundations (with metal) so the houses can support a second floor. Structures that were built by the displaced did not have this feature. Some people lived in caravans that were donated by neighboring countries. However, some IDP residents experienced erosion of the wood floors in their caravans which insects crept in from. This was due to water gathering under and around caravans. Loose water could rust the caravans, and we saw that children tended to play barefoot with this - usually polluted - water (Figure 3). To fix this problem, the resident had to report it to someone in the on-site NGO office to fix it. However, repairs did not always happen as resources were limited for construction. All of the built structures were marked with a "selling and buying this residence is considered an illegal action" sign.

5.2 Economy

The pervasive problem among both groups was poverty and hunger. However, camp dwellers offered beverages and sometimes even food for us when we visited. This was due to their culture of



Figure 4: Local shops at [top] Baharka, Debaga, [bottom] Darashakran, and Kawergosk

hospitality towards guests despite the hard condition. While in both groups a large number of women acted as the primary breadwinners for their families, IDPs seemed to have more percentages of such women because more were windows, had imprisoned husband, or lost all the male member of their families in the conflicts. Moreover, IDPs tended to have less education than refugees in the camps we visited. We observed that IDPs were more impoverished, or at least acted poorer, than refugees. This was evident by the number of children and women who approached and talked with us in the hope we would offer money or food or deliver their concerns to the camps' officials. They were not begging (at least not by the typical sense). Moreover, we noticed that IDPs had more family issues than refugees especially in terms of the number of dependents and disability, and more social problems such as harassment and theft.

The IDPs poor state can be linked to the fact that Iraq has been suffering from conflicts and sanctions over the past 39 years [39]. The poorer status of IDPs compare to refugees can be attributed to the difference in movement dynamics between the two groups. When a crisis happens in an area where the only solution to survive is to flee, an escaping individual must determine the surviving probability associated with remaining inside their own country or crossing a border [12]. There are several factors that inform such a decision. The most relevant to our context are safety, transport, and financial resources. In terms of safety, if violence level is higher in neighboring countries than in the origin country, becoming internally displaced makes more sense [66]. When it comes to transport, the displaced population flee to a safe place that is reachable. Inaccessible places due to terrain or active conflicts are not preferred [4]. Lastly, people with enough financial resources can issue travel documents, enter legally into another country and reside there. In some cases, financial resources exist but traveling to another country is not possible due to lack of proper documents. If a safe place is present within borders and is reachable, then relocating to local cities is an appropriate option. A population that lacks sufficient funds or have some but cannot reach a safe place within their country would end up in camps [5, 82]. In our context, our IDPs lived close to Syrian borders but cross-border areas were under the control of the same terrorist group they fled from so seeking refuge inside their home country was the ideal solution. People who had some financial assets were able to move to other cities and the ones who did not are placed in camps. Some of our refugees may have had some financial resources and safe areas in Syria existed but because these areas were not reachable, crossing the borders to Iraq was a safer decision.

5.3 Employment

Working opportunities for our displaced population was limited in



Figure 5: Workshop room at a local NGO office in Baharka

general. Stable employment usually came in the form of running a local business (Figure 4) or working at the local NGOs office. There was a cultural difference in terms of men work practices between our IDPs and refugees. Most of our male IDPs worked at off-camp locations while male refugees ran their businesses inside the camps. We cannot confirm factors behind such variance, but we speculate that it is due to the difference in the culture of self-employment vs. being employed by someone else between the residents of the two countries. Hence, IDPs expressed their concern about their inability to access large cities (due to transportation cost or security checkpoints) which caused them to lose their jobs. Refugees hardly complained about this because they needed to leave the camps less. Both parties expressed their appreciation for in-camp employment and business opportunities.

Most of the working women we met in all the camps had genderbased occupations such as a hairdresser, a cook, a cloth maker, or a teacher. They would work inside and, in some cases, outside the camps. To support them, NGOs active in the camps hired only displaced women for certain jobs at their local facilities. Moreover, they ran a lot more female-targeted workshops such as makeup, hairdressing, knitting, and sewing compared to male-specific ones (Figure 5). In some cases, families led by women were at a better financial state because the women had more opportunities to work in the form of domestic physical labor such as cooking, knitting, and cleaning.

5.4 Healthcare

All camps were required to have a clinic on site; some were run by the Iraqi Ministry of Health while others by international organizations. However, healthcare services were limited in all the camps in general but are very scarce in the IDP camps. For example, the ERC ran a local basic clinic twice a week at the Baharka IDP camp and spent the rest of the working week at the Debaga IDP camp which was receiving a new influx of IDPs at the time. This meant that health aides were not always available when needed. In all camps, clinics were very crowded due to the shortage of staff. Moreover, healthcare assistant beyond the basic general physician visit was limited. There was a severe shortage of medications. Moreover, for advance health care, the displaced needed to wait their turn, which can take many months, to visit public hospitals in large cities and get proper examination and treatment. If the displaced had some financial resources, they could visit an offcamp private doctor. However, because of poverty, most of them waited their turn for public treatment.

5.5 Education

In terms of access to education, all the camps had schools up to grade 9. We did not go inside the schools; however, we were told

that the ratio of teacher to students was very low, the number of students in a given class was high, and there was a lack in school supplies such as textbooks. While education was not up to par in all the camps, it was particularly disastrous in the IDP camps. At the time of our visit, in the Debaga IDP camps, classes in the camp school were ceased for more than four months at the time due to the massive influx of new camp arrivals. Women and children were housed in the school while the men stayed in the mosque. Some had lived in the school for over 4 months awaiting tents. In the same camp, UNICEF had a kindergarten. It had four large tents, with a Mobareda (a very basic swamp cooler) in each one. Children voices were very loud and enthusiastic as they participated in the activities running simultaneously in each tent. In one, they sat down to watch a cartoon. In a second tent, children sat in a large circle and repeated the alphabet after the staff (also camp residents). In a third, they played games. In the last tent, they colored and did arts and crafts. The number of children was higher than usual, and some kids were 7-8 years old because those who stopped going to school due to conflict and displacement were now coming back.

5.6 Beyond the Camp

Our survey shows that about a quarter of our refugees want to go back to their home country while the majority of the rest want to immigrate. About a quarter of the IDPs wants to go back to their homes while a quarter prefers to stay in the camp because they 'feel safer' or they have no place to go back to because their homes were destroyed. The rest expressed their interest in immigrating or settling in nearby countries. Since our survey, these percentages have been going up. A recent report by REACH which surveyed thousands of IDP household in Iraq finds that over half of them do not plan on returning to their area of origin and the ultimate majority of the current IDPs who plan on not returning wants to stay and integrate at the current area of displacement. [103]. Within the Erbil Governorate, where all of our camps are located, only 2% of IDP households report intentions to return to their original homes [98]. While many in the survey indicate that going home may offer them opportunities to work in the public sector that they cannot do in the camps, the main reasons cited for not wanting to go back were safety (fear of hazard materials areas and lack of policing,), lack of serves, poor infrastructure, and destroyed or severely damaged homes that they cannot afford to fix.

Unfortunately, current regulations and field reports tell a different story. According to the UN guiding principles, durable solutions are achieved for IDPs when they "no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement [70]." Over the past year, the number of people returning to the areas from which they had fled surpass the number of those displaced by the conflict for the first time in years in Iraq [97]. This is due to many terrorist captive cities that IDPs fled from being freed [104]. Behind these figures, however, lies a complex narrative that speaks about the struggles families face as they seek out sustainable solutions to their displacement. According to reports by multiple international NGOs [65, 75, 82, 104] that have been actively working with IDPs in Iraq, most of these returns are premature, i.e. they do not meet international standards of safety and dignity, and many are not voluntary. Poor conditions in camps, limited aids, and restrictions on freedom of movement prompt some displaced families to leave camps prematurely despite the risks.





Figure 6: ICT and electronic Device usage pattern

Others are not allowed to choose; they have been evicted or coerced to return against their well. Some have been blocked from returning (due to complex security reasons) or evicted and displaced once more when they finally return to their areas of origin. While we do acknowledge the hardship imposed on refugees, they are not subject to these compulsory actions because they are protected under international laws.

6 USE OF COMPUTING SERVICES

In this section, we use our survey to describe IDPs' and refugees' ICTs access and usage patterns.

6.1 ICT Access

When it comes to ICTs access among the two groups, IDPs are not better than refugees. In the cases where one group is better than the other one, IDPs are almost always at a disadvantage.

6.1.1 Digital Devices

74% of the IDPs and 64% of the refugee took no digital device with them when they ran away from their homes. The rest indicate that their phones were the only ICT device they held onto when escaped. Mobile phones are ultimately the most utilized ICT device. At the time of the survey, and among our sample, smart mobile phone, notsmart mobile phone, and SIM card penetration rates are 70%, 27%, and 69% respectively among IDPs, and 87%, 47%, and 79% respectively among refugees as shown in Figure 6. 22% of our female IDPs do not own a phone compared to only 4% of our female refugees. SIM card penetration among women IDPs is at 54% while 87% of our women refugees have a SIM card. SIM card penetration rates in our camps rate are below its national level (96%) [50] because a fair number of our sample had to obtain new phones and SIM cards after they fled. 33% of our IDPs and 40% of our refugees share their phones with other people, mostly with their spouses and other family members but over 80% of our sample from both groups do not share their SIM cards.

The use of other ICT devices is limited by both groups generally, but it is very scarce with IDPs as shown in Figure 6. Tablets, laptops, and desktops are used by 3%, 8%, and 1% respectively of our IDP participants, while they are utilized by 15%, 34%, and 9% respectively by our refugee sample. Most of our participants indicate that the quality of these devices is either good or acceptable except around fifth participants in both groups said that the quality of non-smart devices is bad.

6.1.2 Internet

We find that mobile phones on cellular networks are the most

common Internet access mode. 44% of our IDPs and 51% of our refugees report that they connect to the Internet via their phone data plan while 12% of our IDP participants and 47% of our refugee participants can connect to the Internet via Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi access is limited in the camps in general because its underlying infrastructure is only available at the local NGO administration offices. To go online using this mode, the Wi-Fi connection is made open once or twice a week at a local NGO center where camps residents would go around the office to catch a signal. Our female IDPs access to the Internet is lower as only 35% of them access the Internet via a data connection while only 5% have access to Wi-Fi. Our female refugees have better percentages where 56% access the Internet via their mobile network, and a similar percentage have Wi-Fi access. In a matter of fact, over half of our female IDPs (compared to 34% of the total IDP participants) have no mode of Internet connection while only 9% of female refugees (compared to 19% of our total refugee participants) lack Internet access. In summary, the vast majority in both groups get their access via their cellphone data plan. These internet connection modes are similar to what has been reported at Za'atari refugee camps in Jordan [94, 96]. This implies that the diversity of Internet access modes is reduced, with mobile becoming critical, as people are displaced internally or externally.

6.1.3 Cost

93% of our participants in both groups indicate that the main reasons that prevent them from owning or using ICT devices are the cost of the digital device and the cost of using and maintaining the device such as the recharging cards and repair expenses. 22% of our IDPs and 34% of our refugees state that the existence of unreliable infrastructure, especially network coverage and electricity, limit their ICT usage. Because mobile phones are the most common ICT device in our camps, our IDPs sample spend between IQD 0 - IQD 120,000 with an average of IQD 23,000 on their devices per month while our refugees spend a bit more between IQD 500 - IQD 130,000 with an average of QD 42,000.

With limited financial resources, the population from both groups have inadequate access to ICT infrastructure. Instead, as our data illustrates in Figure 6, our participants focus on obtaining electrical devices needed for their everyday lives, namely: TV, satellite dish, cooking range, and fridge. In general, the quality of these devices is described as either good or acceptable by our participants. Interestingly, owning a TV and a satellite dish is considered a necessity for them. This can be attributed to the fact that many of them consider this duo as their window to the outside world [73]. In the Middle East region in general, people stream channels through the satellite dish and not cables. Hundreds of popular local and middle eastern channels are available through this low budget tool [76]. Among both groups, our refugees top electrical devices usage by almost the double percentage compared to our IDP sample. This can be attributed to refugees being in camps a bit longer, and our IDPs being poorer with less education.

6.2 ICT Usage

6.2.1 Skills

Over 62% of both of our IDPs and refugees report that they have medium processionary in using digital devices. Only 4% of IDPs and 16% of refugees say that they were professional users when it comes to such devices. The processionary level is self-proclaimed. From our field notes, we assume that a professional user is an individual who is comfortable in downloading, managing and using different types of applications on mobile devices and/or other ICTs. Medium processionary refers to the ability to operate mobile devices according to their needs, that is calling, taking pictures and videos, and using Social Media (SM). Beginners are ones who can only navigate their devices to make calls.

6.2.2 Communication Services

Separated from families and friends and with more spare time in the camp, communication, information seeking and building or reinforcing social networks are prominent. In order to understand communication behaviors when contacting friends and relatives, we asked which kinds of communication services they use and what for. Our data shows that 88% of our IDPs make local calls, 87% use text messaging, while only 11% make international ones. When it comes to our refugees, 98% of them make local calls, 93% use text messaging while, as expected, 58% make international calls. The vast majority in both groups believe that ICT devices are useful for connecting with other people, especially family and friends. Only very few participants from our entire sample, and from our field notes, use ICTs to gain information, such as to read the news or utilize educational programs. Most of our participants in both groups use their phones to record videos and take photos and share them with family and friends through SM platforms. Almost half of our IDPs use Facebook, while Viber, Instagram, and WhatsApp usage rates come next. 38% of our refugees, on the other hand, prefer to use WhatsApp while Facebook, Viber, and Instagram are used by fewer people in this group. This high penetration of SM usage for social purposes is similar to the finding of other studies conducted in refugees camps and with resettled refugees in the west [18, 25, 35, 54, 94]. Interestingly, when the Internet is not available, our participants turn to cheaper modes of local digital sharing. Over half of our participants from both groups use Bluetooth to share their videos and pictures, around 20% show the others directly on their phone, while a shy of 10% use memory cards to exchange content. The cost of ICT devices, limitation in the underlying infrastructure, lack of techno-skills, and inadequate access to the Internet can explain why mobile devices in our context are not utilized to their full potentials which go beyond social engagement.

7 DISCUSSION

The observations from the fieldwork and survey data presented in this paper offer an inside look into the living conditions of IDPs in camps and provide a basis for exploring the role ICT may play in giving displaced people more power through addressing their needs. Our findings are based on our context. It is possible that IDPs at different locations may have different experiences. The results we report, nevertheless, can be representative of the issues the conflictdriven, internally displaced people in scarce environment suffer from, and point us to important design implications and future work that can advance research in this field.

Although camps tend to be occupied for years because most displacement crises persist protractedly with little or no prospect of achieving a durable solution such as safe returns or resettlement elsewhere, they are still seen as temporary settlements [20]. This explains why education, employment, and healthcare infrastructure are scarce across them. While some buildings become permanent, as our data has revealed and as evident by other studies [33, 43, 74], their occupants are still considered transients especially since IDPs can be evicted from the camps and forced into premature returns and/or second displacement. These challenges could not be solved easily by reference to conventional ICT usage. Since computing schemes - such as electricity supply, network, or maintenance - are neither readily available nor constantly reliable in many camp situations like ours, we are cognizant of the limits that IDPs face. Despite the hardship, however, our IDPs show resilience in terms of wanting to support themselves financially and send their children to school. Therefore, we suggest that it is crucial to consider designing new technologies responsive to both local limits and local demands. We believe that ICTs can mitigate this tension between camp regulations and the needs of the displaced by providing the virtual services that can be accessed on or off the camps such as eemployment, telemedicine, and online education. However, as we have shown, access to ICT devices and services, except mobile phones, for a long period of time is difficult. Moreover, our IDPs' skills in using digital devices are limited mainly to SM platforms. As a result, research associated with service delivery in a limitedresource environment needs to address these challenges.

7.1 Design Implications

Given the scale and diversity of the problem, a "one-size-fits-all" approach to design is unlikely to work because, depending on where IDPs reside, each context presents its own unique challenges. This is also true given the situational differences between refugees and IDPs. We believe that computing-related solutions could augment conventional solutions from the political, economy, and social science fields and offer new ways to approach some of the problems IDPs struggle with. We present our suggestions for providing better employment opportunities, healthcare, and education.

Because the majority of our IDPs do not have access to large cities, working opportunities become limited. Crowdworking can open the door to new employment opportunities. In this system, work is outsourced through an open call to a certain group of people and job allocation is based on availability and/or geographical location to perform local, service-oriented tasks such as driving, running errands or cleaning houses [44]. There are many applications that support this system [9, 24, 81]. However, due to the limited technoskills of our IDPs and inadequate Internet access, these applications cannot be utilized by our population. We propose utilizing platforms our IDPs are familiar with, such as SM, to connect service acquirers from nearby areas with potential workers from our camps. Internet access would only be needed when collecting orders or updating order status. Moreover, if we are to deploy such a system, we need to focus on supporting domestic tasks commonly practices in our camps such as cooking local cuisines and creating customized clothes. We can also support communal working opportunities. For example, an IDP finishes an order and another person from the camp take multiple orders from multiple IDPs and transport them to the clients. This addresses the movement restrictions and helps IDPs who have been displaced more than once to continue creating orders without worrying about delivery.

We are cognizant of several design initiatives that promote positive health outcomes to refugees, such as mHealth applications [27]. However, given the fact that both connectivity coverage and device ownership is dramatically low in our camps in the current situation, and because external involvement is restricted, we privilege community-oriented solutions over individual-oriented ones. We believe that Digital Storytelling (DST) can be a powerful health communication tool to the displaced communities, in term of disseminating information about health care, diagnoses, and intervention in the absence of healthcare provider. DST is a form of expression where users produce a digital memoir by combining their narratives with technology. As a tool for health communication, it honors community knowledge and experience [22], and can strengthen personal capacity by allowing new forms of social networking [60], support shared values and self-advocacy [16], and develop literacy and language skills [29]. We can draw on existing work on the participatory design, DST, and digital health research. For example, in their study with Somali and Latino immigrants and refugees in the United States, Njeru et al. [69] find participants share tactics and strategies with the community through making videos to improve type II diabetes management. Similarly, Lenette and Boddy [58] point to how the DST process supports the mental health and coping skills of refugee women through eliciting narratives of resilience. Likewise, DiFulvio et al. [26] demonstrate positive health behavior change as a result of DST workshops in their studies on the sexual health needs of Puerto Rican Latina young women living in the US. Similar DST workshops could be organized with IDPs in our camps, at the local NGO office where Wi-Fi is available for example, to enable co-learning process and reinforce health outcomes.

To make education easy and effective in our context, we need to address the issues of shortage in teachers and school supplies. We suggest we learn from the strength of remote learning offered by several ICT researchers. For example, Takagi et al. [83] develop a remote education system with live visualization and streaming between the teachers and learners for the senior citizens in Japan. Through a case study in Greenland, Øgaard [71] shows how it is possible to use distance teaching and advanced digital technology to establish traditional classroom teaching in underserved communities. Since our findings show that some educational institutes in camps have screen and Internet connection, the students can watch educational videos through video sharing platforms and an off-camp teacher can stream-in live when available to respond to students' questions. In case a student cannot attend the school due to overcrowded classrooms, we can draw from the concept of homeschooling [37], and offline-only and hybrid system architectures in ICTD [15] to utilize mobile phone and make the entire school curriculum available online and downloadable. However, it is hard to design a remote education system for IDPs for two reasons: (1) such a system requires a native teacher because IDP camps are under local state jurisdiction - who is familiar with the local culture and who understands the potential trauma some students may be struggling with, and (2) it is crucial to develop an IDP-oriented curriculum that not only aligns with their values but is also useful for them to acquire jobs available in their environment. Current remote-learning technologies do not address these problems. Hence, similar to [19, 53] work about improving classroom learning, we propose holding participatory design workshops with IDPs and the stakeholders who would provide the educational platform (usually the local state) to better understand the needs and the expectations of our end-users.

Finally, we believe that creating grassroots level collaboration between the refugees and the IDPs may be beneficial. Currently, the two parties are seen as separate entities but, in reality, they are closely related. Hence, such an alliance can support solidity through exchanging strategies to develop resilience to the stressful living conditions [46, 67]. Similar to citizen coordination of aids for postdisaster victims [72] and community organizations effort to develop an international network of support [41], ICT can develop such a relationship between IDPs and refugees through SM.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

Because of the continuing political unrest in the world and the rise of natural disasters, an increasing number of IDPs are being exiled within their own national boundaries. Since international laws often cannot directly act to protect the human rights of these IDPs, national laws should pay more attention to them. However, because of the lack of a proper people-facing functioning government, IDPs in the Global South often find themselves imprisoned and marginalized. Moreover, global experience shows that short term humanitarian assistance for the displaced cannot fully mitigate the risk of vulnerability and marginalization associated with displacement. Too often a humanitarian response for the displaced contributes to their dependency and lack of self-reliance. IDPs eventual need for safety nets and further support can drain governments for years [86]. Hence, countries require a holistic approach to protect them, which can only be ensured if there is a mass-awareness among the local people, and an international diplomatic pressure is created on the government to implement a protective policy for the IDPs.

We argue that computing technologies can play an important role to introduce, maintain, and implement laws for helping the IDPs. SM can play an important role to create mass-awareness in a country and persuade the government to necessary steps. Through citizen journalism, a regular citizen can report if those laws are practiced in society. Moreover, we can connect local people to many international organizations so that there can be an international force to persuade the government to make necessary policies for the IDPs. Furthermore, technology can facilitate dialogues for integrating the displaced into national and local development frameworks. IDPs are, to some extent, locals. This means that they can be allowed to have the freedom to work or own businesses and property without extraordinary discrimination such as being forced to be evicted. In a matter of fact, with some support, they could achieve economic integration and the ability to invest in the future which can be beneficial for the local communities near the camps. ICT can play an important role in finding discrepancies in the labor market and help design corrective policies.

8 CONCLUSION

IDPs are rarely discussed in ICT research. In this paper, we report our findings in terms of the displaced people living conditions and their ICTs usage from our field notes of visiting several IDP and refugee camps in northern Iraq, and surveys conducted with both displaced population groups. Our work shows that financial resources, healthcare, and education are scarce among the displaced. Mobile phones, internet through data plan, TVs, and satellite dish are the most common, and almost the only available, ICTs. We discuss how our IDPs conditions are similar to or, in some cases, worse than our refugees. We focus on key issues with a vision of making ICTs initiatives more inclusive for IDPs. Future work should address the lack of IDPs presence in research and must aim to include them in technology policies and design.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to sincerely thank all of our study participants. Our research protocol was reviewed and approved by the University of Toronto Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board.

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Appendix 1: Technology in Camp Survey

GENERAL INFORMATION

1.	Age							
2.	Gender: Male Female							
3.	Status: Refugee IDP Neither							
4.	Household Size							
5.	Number of childrenNumber of children enrolled in schoolNumber of literate children							
6.	Current Occupation							
7.	Previous Occupation (for example, prior to coming to camps) :							
8.	Highest education achieved (circle one):							
	None Primary School Middle School Secondary School Diploma or Vocational Certificate							
	Bachelor's Degree (including medicine)Master's DegreePhD or higher							
9.	. When did you move to this camp? Year Month							
10.	How often do you leave the camp (for shopping, work, doctor visits, etc)?							
11.	11. What type of shelter do you currently live in?							
Αl	A UNHCR tent Iraqi government tent A tent with concrete bathroom and kitchen							
Car	cavan Concrete house Other:							
12.	When did you move to your current shelter? Year Month							
13. What other types of houses have you lived in during the past five years (in or outside the camp? For								
	example an apartment, concrete house, mud house, tent							
14.	Did you design or modify your tent/caravan/house in the camp?							
15.	If you live in a concrete block house, did you build it yourself with help from friends and neighbors?							
16.	Did you design the house that you lived in before coming to the camp?							
17.	17. Did you build the house that you lived in before coming to the camp?							
18.	18. What ICT devices did you take with you while escaping war?							

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

19. Which of the following technologies do you have access to (can own, borrow, access in camp training center)? How often (daily, few times a week, once a week, less than once a week)? And how good is that access (reliable, ok, bad)?

	I have never heard of this device	How Often?		How good is that access?				
		Daily	Few times	Once a week	Less than	Reliable	OK	Bad
1. Smart phone								
2. Feature phone								
3. SIM card								
4. Tablet								
5. Laptop								
6. Desktop								
7. Camera								
8. Memory card								
9. Internet (through data card) on a phone or tablet								
10. Internet (through wifi) on a phone or tablet								
11. Internet (through data card) on a computer								
12. Internet (through wifi) on a computer								
13. Home phone								
14. TV								
15. Satellite dish								
16. Printer								
17. 3D printer								
18. Radio								
19. Cooking range/gas top								
20. Conductive cooling device								
21. Water cooler								
22. Fridge								
23. Gas heater								
24. Electric heater								
25. Other:								

20. What prevents you from owning electric or ICT devices?

Device cost	Maintenance cost	Charging cards cost	They are not allowed in the camp
Fear of theft	Fear of misuse	Security reasons	Have no place to buy them
Unreliable infra	structure Other_		

ICT DEVICES IN CAMPS

- 21. How proficient are you in using digital devices?
- 22. How much do you spend on digital devices?
- 23. Do you share your mobile phone with others?
- 24. Do you share a minutes card with others?
- 25. Do you share a sim card?
- 26. Do you make local phone calls? _____ international phone calls?
- 27. Do you record audio with your mobile phone?
- 28. Do you record video with your phone?
- 29. Do you take pictures with your phone?
- 30. Do you send or receive text messages on your phone?
- 31. Do you send or receive photos messages on your phone?
- 32. Do you send or receive videos on your phone?
- 33. Circle all the social media apps that you use:
 - FacebookInstagramTwitterViber WhatsAppOther (list):
- 34. Circle all the social media apps that you use to share pictures and videos:

 Facebook
 Instagram

 Twitter
 Viber WhatsApp

 Other (list):

- 35. With whom do you share pictures and videos:Immediate familyfriendsNeighborsFamily outside the campOther(list):
- 36. If you did not have internet connection, what do you use to share pictures and videos:

 I show them directly on the mobile device
 Bluetooth

 Memory Card
 Other: _____
- 37. What benefits do you and your family gain by using digital technology (or the potential benefits if you do not use such technology)?
- 38. What benefits do you and your family gain by using digital technology (or the potential benefits if you do not use such technology)?
- 39. If you had the choice, would you go back to where you lived before war, stay in the camp, move to an Arab country, or immigrate to Europe or the US? And why?