

### Protecting the future: HIV prevention, care and support among displaced and war-affected populations

Author: Wendy Holmes, International Rescue Committee

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In common with war and other emergencies, the spread and impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has the potential to destroy the security fabric of communities, countries and entire regions. For the professionals involved in them, humanitarian interventions offer challenges but also endless opportunities to address this pandemic. In particular, the post-emergency phases of such interventions provide an important transition between humanitarian response and development where HIV/AIDS activities can be integrated into targeted planning and actions.

*Protecting the future* should be essential reading for all stakeholders in humanitarian interventions since it addresses the dual tragedy of HIV/AIDS and crises in a realistic manner — as well as offering excellent guidance on how to integrate HIV/AIDS activities into programmes. Clear directives are provided for protecting the future of people whose lives have been made vulnerable by war, displacement and the threat of HIV/AIDS. It addresses this vulnerability in detail and provides directives to respond to it that are relevant for anyone directly involved in dealing with this problem at the community level.

Nevertheless, it does omit a few topics whose inclusion would have made it even better; for example, food security and the use of food as a commodity in exchange for sex in situations of humanitarian crisis. Also not covered are the specific food needs of people living with HIV/AIDS as well as the burden placed by HIV/AIDS on the heads of households who are responsible for cultivating food — both

of which are exacerbated by war and population displacement as well as by the prevalence of HIV.

These omissions apart, the book provides a range of different options that could be used in a wide range of scenarios. It has been very carefully thought out and put together — providing humanitarian agencies and aid workers with a very useful field tool that is extremely flexible and easily adapted to a variety of different contexts. Both strategically and technically, it is very practical and, given the difficulties of the issues involved, surprisingly user friendly. Complex topics are addressed straightforwardly and concisely, but always in a thorough, rigorous and comprehensive way. The information provided is current and the presentation clear and step-by-step. Useful and practical checklists and annexes are included and the references are up to date. And crucially, it achieves its central objective — to help integration of HIV/AIDS activities into responses to both short- and long-term humanitarian challenges.

*Protecting our future* is a recommended read. It deserves to be widely distributed so that as many people as possible will benefit from its insights and recommendations. The book will undoubtedly prove to be an extremely useful instrument for anyone dealing with HIV/AIDS among displaced and war-affected populations. ■

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### Empowering squatter citizen: local government, civil society, and urban poverty reduction

Editors: Diana Mitlin & David Satterthwaite

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This book sets itself apart from the myriad of recent books that make “global” declarations for poverty reduction and those that microanalyse anti-poverty programmes. Instead, it presents sound, critical reviews of stra-

tegic, methodological and operational approaches to reducing urban poverty and facilitates understanding the complex issues associated with such poverty.

Although poverty and impoverishment are ultimately caused by global inequality gaps, the authors argue that locally experienced deprivations need to be dealt with at the local level. This proposal is based both on the limitations of local urban organizations to change global economic circumstances and on their abilities to find and implement solutions that may improve daily living conditions at the local level.

The book's authors challenge many of the current definitions, measurements and intervention models associated with urban poverty. They argue that all of urban poverty's visible manifestations as well as the basic deprivations associated with it (income; material and non-material assets base; housing; public infrastructure; basic (social/urban) services; safety nets; protection of the poor's rights; and voicelessness and powerlessness of the poor) occur simultaneously but to different degrees and are caused and reinforced by mechanisms that are specific to each setting. Poverty's institutional, ideological and political dimensions — those that “empowerment” and “citizenship” ultimately refer to — are incorporated by the authors into a conceptual and operational definition as well as into the design and implementation of strategies to overcome or reduce poverty.

The largest part of the book is devoted to analyses of the experiences of four government-oriented (in Mexico, Nicaragua, Philippines and Thailand) and four community-driven interventions (in Brazil, India, Pakistan, and South Africa) and to proposed concrete strategic and operational guidelines for use by the main stakeholders involved in tackling urban poverty. The need for long-term, flexible, interactive initiatives is stressed. It is recommended that such initiatives interconnect stakeholders' interventions at the local level; build-up associative — rather than confrontational — strategies; set up institutional arrangements, with the active protagonists being

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