2. Out of sight: hidden people, hidden problems, hidden places

Principled humanitarian action should seek to alleviate humanitarian suffering without discrimination.[1] However, people must first be *visible* to be identified as in need of humanitarian assistance and to qualify as eligible. People are seen and deemed eligible because, among other things, their births are registered, they have proof of identity, they are acknowledged and accepted by key institutions, their geographic location is known and understood, and the extent and severity of the problems they face in crisis situations are recognized. Without these things, places, people and the problems they face are effectively 'out of sight' for humanitarian response.

There are hidden people and groups in every community. In some cases, people are inadvertently out of sight, because of where or how they live and their access or otherwise to information. Others live in the margins of society, for example some irregular migrants who fear detection and the possibility of forced return or other sanctions. There are also many examples of people and areas that are deliberately and strategically neglected or marginalized for political or economic reasons, or because they are stigmatized in society.

Ensuring the most vulnerable people to the impact of crises are in sight and appropriately supported is linked to who is doing the seeing and recording. Local people and local organizations rooted in the communities they serve are often best placed to know who is hidden, what problems they face and how they can be overcome. The staffing of the institutions and organizations operating in humanitarian contexts – local, national and international – and the extent to which they themselves are genuinely inclusive and free from discrimination, can also have a direct impact on the visibility of vulnerable groups and the likelihood of them receiving assistance.

Baseline data and analysis derived from humanitarian needs assessments should highlight who is most in need, where they are and the priority areas of intervention. However, many millions of people are missing from the baseline data used to inform decision-making. And humanitarian needs assessments – at least the rapid and top-level assessments

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1.   Non-discrimination, on the basis of nationality, race, religious, political beliefs or any other difference is a core part of the Geneva Conventions and is expressed in various legislation on human rights (see ICRC, 1979).

designed to provide a quick situational overview – are blunt instruments in terms of highlighting less visible groups in need of assistance.

Despite the increased availability of data on people affected by crises, greater emphasis on the role of local actors in humanitarian action, as well as efforts to build more inclusive humanitarian organizations, many people in emergency situations are still overlooked and/or considered ineligible for support. This chapter looks at:

— **Hidden people** – focusing on people without the necessary documents to qualify as eligible for assistance, for example basic proof of identification, school certificates or proof of tenure.

— **Hidden problems** – considering under-reported issues in disaster settings, such as sexual and gender-based violence. This section considers how a lack of awareness of the extent of such abuses and how they impact on groups that are particularly out of sight hinders adequate and effective responses.

— **Hidden places** – with an emphasis on crisis-prone areas that are unmapped, or places developing so quickly that the data and maps used by humanitarian responders fail to adequately reflect the reality of the communities living there.

If people, the contexts in which they live and the problems that they face continue to be out of sight, there is a danger these people will be left behind. This chapter looks at some of the reasons behind this, the impacts on people's lives, and the efforts underway to bring greater visibility and overcome the obstacles that prevent these many unseen people from accessing assistance.

## 2.1 How can people, places and problems be out of sight?

People affected by crises, and their surrounding environments, are potentially more visible than ever before – and the problems they face can be better identified, analysed and monitored. We are in the midst of a data revolution. A veritable explosion in the volume, variety, veracity, source and speed of available data creates ever-increasing opportunities to understand the world and respond more effectively to development challenges (Data Revolution Group, 2014). But there are major data gaps, including in civil registration and vital statistics systems (CRVS), poverty data and humanitarian assessments, and whole populations can be rendered invisible as a result. According to one estimate, as many as 350 million people are likely to be absent from the data used to measure development progress (Carr-Hill, 2013), many of whom are in countries affected by humanitarian crises (Development Initiatives, 2017b).

2.1.1 Civil registration and vital statistics systems

The population data derived from CRVS systems – recording key moments in peoples' lives, including births, deaths and marriages (Development Initiatives, 2016) – is essential for monitoring progress towards development and crisis resilience (University of Melbourne, 2016). However, as of 2013, the births of nearly 230 million children under the age of five are thought to be unrecorded – around a third of the global population of these children. Undoubtedly, the births of certain children are less likely to be registered than others. Poorer children, for example, are less often registered, as are children from rural compared with urban areas, and from particular ethnic and religious groups (UNICEF, 2013).

Perhaps not surprisingly, there are the disparities in the rates of birth registration, as well as other civil registration services, for countries that are crisis-prone compared with those that are not. As Figure 2.1 shows, in countries classified as either environmentally vulnerable and/or politically fragile, only around 50% of births are registered, compared with nearly 70% for all other countries.

Fig. 2.1 Birth registration rates in countries classified as environmentally vulnerable and/or politically fragile compared with all other countries

Birth registration rate (under 5s)
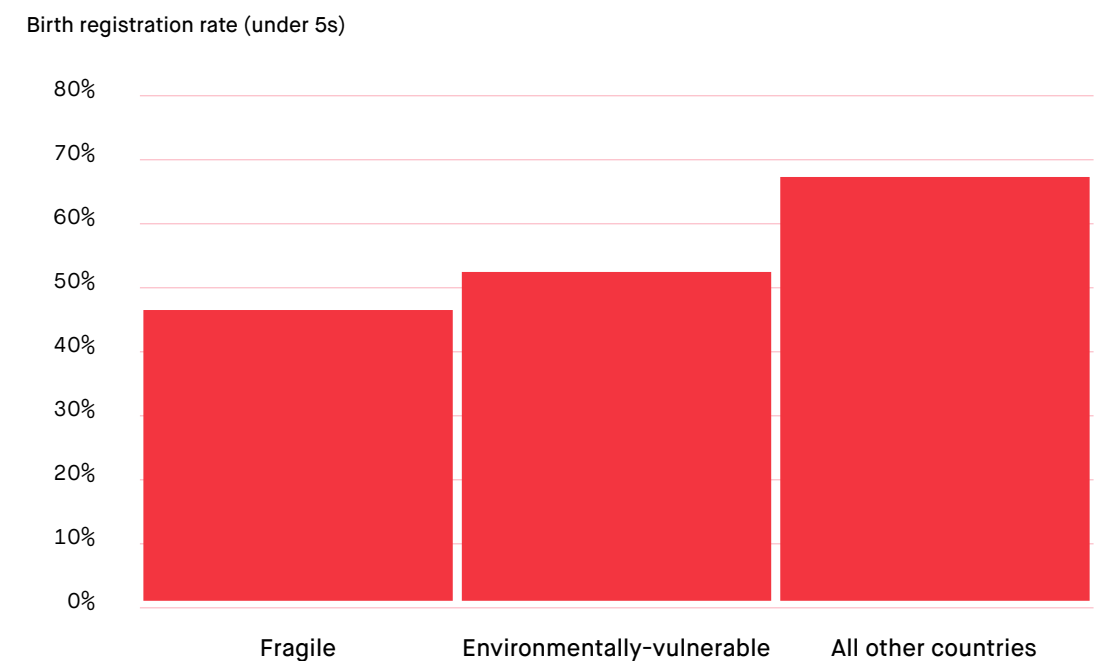
Notes: Fragile and environmentally vulnerable countries are respectively defined using OECD's *States of Fragility 2016* and the INFORM index for Risk Management 2018 data set. See Data notes for further details.

Sources: Based on selected Demographic Data and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), OECD *States of Fragility 2016* and INFORM index 2018

2.1.2   Poverty data

Inclusive and reliable data on poverty can inform longer-term responses to the needs of vulnerable populations. However, many of the people missing from poverty data, whether gathered through household surveys or other means, are likely to be living in crisis contexts (Chattopadhyay, 2016). Data on poverty is weakest – most out of date and sometimes completely lacking – in crisis-affected and crisis-prone places. Of the 63 countries classified as the most environmentally vulnerable and/or most politically fragile, only 49% (30 countries) have collected poverty survey data in the last five years (since 2013), and 13% (8 countries) are missing poverty data from the last decade.

Even where recent poverty surveys have been completed, disaggregation of data at subnational level is often patchy, making it hard to compare needs between communities or generalize about progress of the country as a whole (Data Revolution Group, 2014). In Somalia, for example, the most recent national poverty survey was conducted in 2016 (World Bank, 2017b). But as Figure 2.2 shows, large parts of the country were missed, notably inaccessible conflict-affected areas, and whole population groups were excluded, including nomadic communities.

Fig. 2.2   Coverage of national poverty survey data in Somalia, 2016
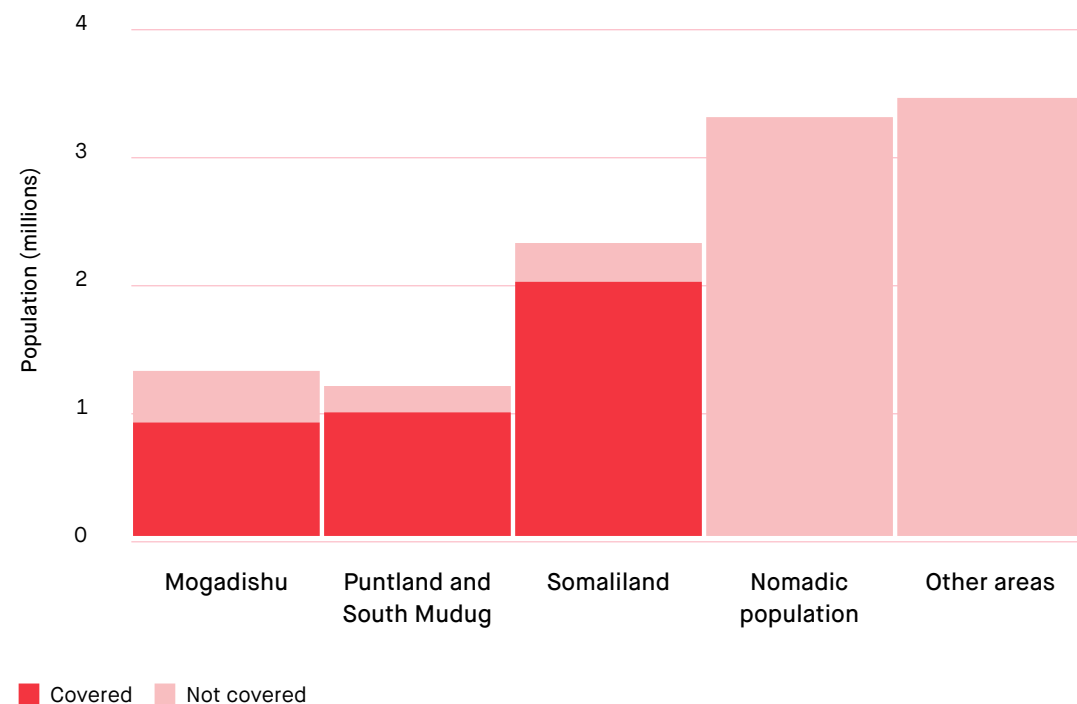
Source: Based on World Bank (2017b) Somalia Poverty Profile 2016

Information gathered through household surveys, censuses and other means is only likely to be accurate for populations that are settled, accessible and regularly using services. People who fall outside of these categories – arguably the most vulnerable people to begin with – are invisible and at risk of being left behind.

2.1.3   Humanitarian needs assessments

A lack of comprehensive baseline data makes it more difficult for humanitarian responders to understand what the vulnerabilities of the population were before a crisis hit and identify who is worst affected thereafter. Moreover, crises themselves can lead to a loss of important data and institutional memory. The Haiti earthquake in 2010, for example, destroyed most of Haiti's government offices, damaging vital records and killing around 17% of the government workforce (Schuller, 2010).

Humanitarian needs assessments are necessary to understand the urgent and changing needs of crisis-affected populations. However, particularly in the case of sudden-onset emergencies, they are usually carried out under extreme pressure to inform immediate strategic and programmatic decisions. Tight timeframes can lead to a tendency to 'mine' information as quickly as possible from easily accessible representatives of the affected community, rather than allowing affected communities to genuinely participate in a process that identifies the people most in need, including typically neglected population groups and/or regions (CDAC Network, 2017). The different mandates and priorities of humanitarian organizations, as well as political interests, can also influence assessment and analysis processes and render different population groups more or less visible (ACAPS, 2016b). In other words, assessments can be supply-driven: coloured by what agencies are able to provide, and what is considered politically acceptable to governments, rather than presenting what people really need (Darcy et al, 2013; Konyndyk, 2018).

As a result, decisions are based on information and analysis that is just "good enough", with more attention paid to areas, population groups and sectors where the most information already exists, or where there are easy wins or particular gains to be made (Darcy et al, 2013). Moreover, decisions to act and allocate resources are rarely based on humanitarian need alone. Who, what and where is seen, and decisions to prioritize certain groups, areas and sectors over others, are driven by factors beyond humanitarian need alone (see inter alia Darcy et al, 2013; de Geoffroy, et al, 2015; Campbell and Knox Clarke, 2018; Currion, 2013).

2.2   Hidden people: the documentation problem

Many people are at risk of remaining hidden or invisible to those attempting to assist in the event of crises. As outlined in section 2.1, these people are less accessible to enumerators conducting censuses, surveys and assessments. Among other groups, they might include stateless persons, homeless people, out-of-school children, unregistered slum dwellers, indigenous populations, nomadic and pastoral communities (see inter alia Carr-Hill, 2013; UNESCO, 2018 Data Revolution Group, 2014), persons with disabilities and irregular migrants. This report does not aim to say which of these population groups is *most* out sight and consequently left behind – that depends on the context, the criteria used for out of sight, and 'who is doing the seeing'. Rather, the chapter looks in-depth at one aspect of why people are out of sight for the humanitarian sector: a lack of documentation.

2.2.1   Basic identity documentation

Even if people are represented in baseline data and identified as vulnerable by humanitarian assessments, they could be excluded from assistance and the means to facilitate their own recovery if they lack basic identity documents (IDs). A lack of identity papers creates challenges for people seeking to obtain even the most basic humanitarian assistance. Governments, private sector organizations and national and international humanitarian organizations often require proof of identification as a prerequisite for registration and eligibility to receive assistance. This is necessary in many cases to verify and authenticate the recipients of humanitarian assistance and prevent duplication or fraud. At the same time, however, it can exclude large numbers of vulnerable people from accessing much needed assistance, constrain their freedom of movement and expose them to additional protection risks.

2.2.2   How prevalent is the problem?

There are various forms of documentation that enable citizens to effectively engage in today's world. They include basic identity papers, educational certificates and proof of land ownership or tenure. Without them, people are at risk of being left behind – excluded and denied basic opportunities, rights, access to services and humanitarian aid, and the ability to share in progress (World Bank Group and CGD, 2017).

Identity papers are the most basic form of documentation and are vital in allowing someone to prove who they are and access a whole range of services. Yet an estimated 1 billion people globally lack basic identification (World Bank, 2018). This limits their ability to participate in social, economic and political life – in many cases preventing them from receiving social benefits, legally working, attending school, accessing health services, securing housing, opening a bank account or even purchasing a SIM card to access mobile services (see inter alia Korkmaz, 2018; Desai, 2018; UNHCR, 2018; ITU, 2017; World Bank Group and CGD, 2017; Development Initiatives, 2016; GSMA, 2018b). For people who are already marginalized, it can also heighten their vulnerability and exposure to protection risks such as harassment, detention and human trafficking (NRC, 2017b; ITU, 2017).

Legal identity is clearly an important aspect of inclusive development. Indeed, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a target to "provide legal identity for all including birth registration" (SDG target 16.9). Not only are the poorest people more likely to be without proof of identity, as Figure 2.3 shows, but the proportion of people without identification living in contexts classified as environmentally vulnerable, and particularly as politically fragile, is generally higher than elsewhere. In some countries the proportion of people lacking recognized proof of identity is strikingly high. In Somalia, for example, 77% of the population are estimated to lack documents proving who they are, and in Nigeria the proportion is 72%.

Fig. 2.3   Unregistered people and extreme poverty in environmentally vulnerable and/or politically fragile countries

All other countries   Fragile or environmentally vulnerable
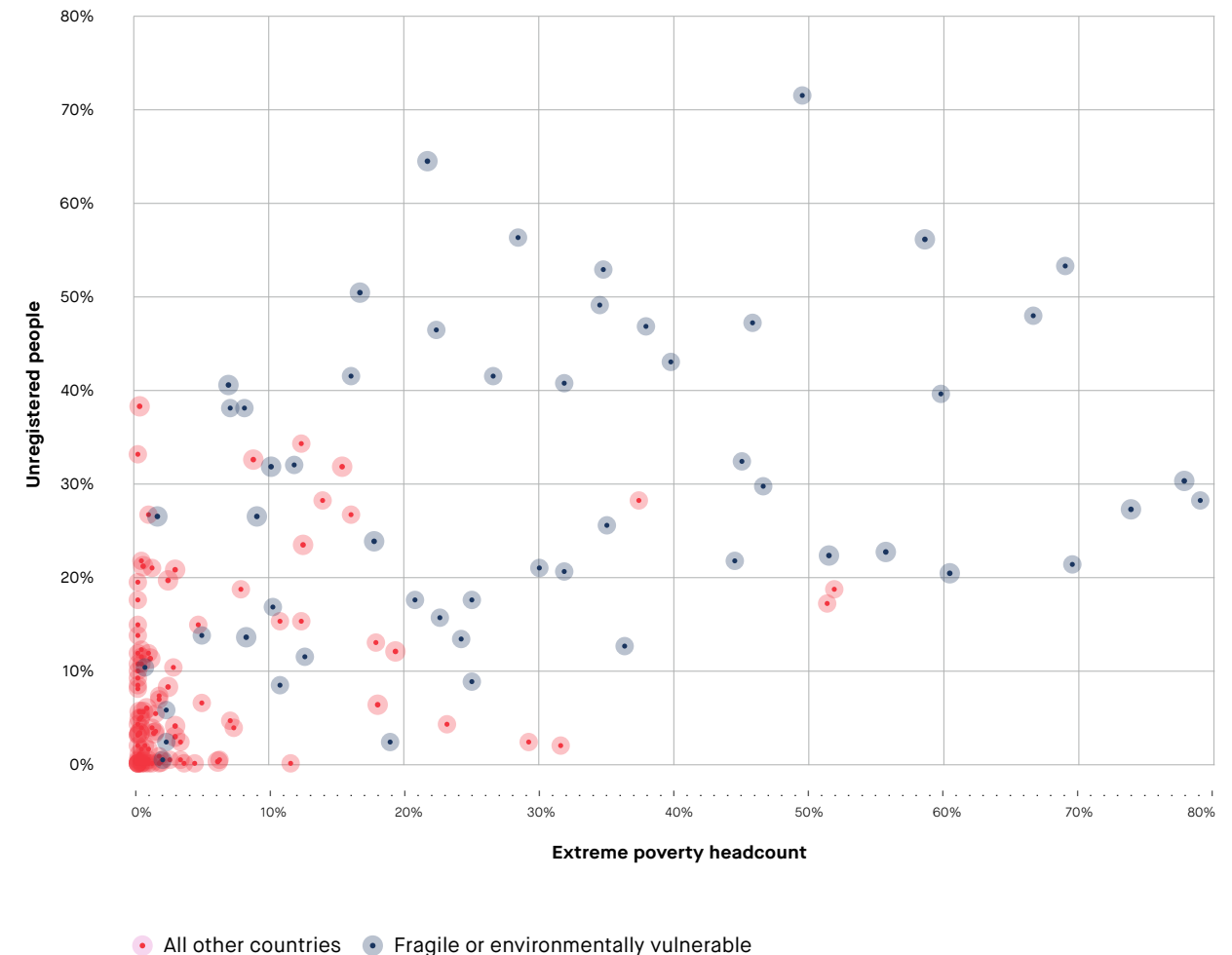
Sources: Based on World Bank ID4D, World Bank PovcalNet, OECD States of Fragility 2016 and INFORM index 2018. Extreme poverty data relates to 2013. See Data notes for further details.

There is a clear gender gap in ID ownership (GSMA, 2018a). Women and girls are often discriminated against in registration procedures for the issuance of new, renewed or modified IDs. For example, a female head of household may find it difficult to renew IDs for her children without also showing the father's IDs – creating a sometimes-insurmountable barrier if the woman is divorced, widowed or otherwise separated from her husband (Hassin and Al-Juboori, 2016). Other groups who often have disproportionate difficulties obtaining and renewing IDs include indigenous people and ethnic, linguistic or sexual minorities (ITU, 2017).

Significant numbers of people in displaced communities lack critical IDs and the impact of their displacement is undoubtedly aggravated as a result. Rapid-onset emergencies,

whether caused by natural hazards or man-made, often cause people to flee without essential belongings, including proof of identity and other documentation. Data from internally displaced populations in north-west Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) in early 2017 indicates that almost three-quarters of the displaced population surveyed (74%) said that people in their community lacked civil status documents, such as IDs, passports or family booklets (Syria Protection Cluster (Turkey), 2017). Most of these people left their documentation behind when fleeing. Others either lost documentation during their displacement, had never had IDs, or their documents were stolen, confiscated or already expired. Similarly, in Iraq in 2015, a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), indicated that at least one family member of around half of all displaced families lacked basic identity documentation (UNSG, 2016b).

Missing documentation creates immediate problems for crisis-affected populations but it can also have longer-term ramifications, marginalizing people from longer-term recovery processes even after the crisis has subsided and/or displacement has ended. Missing IDs or lack/non-recognition of certification is a common barrier to access to education for young refugees and IDPs, making it difficult for them to continue their education and receive proof of their learning during their displacement (see inter alia Kirk, 2009; INEE, 2010; Mendenhall et al, 2017; NRC, 2018a; Steele, 2016). This marginalization often continues during protracted displacement and even after return if these young people are unable to produce a recognized learning certificate that allows them to reintegrate into school or enter the local labour market (Kirk, 2009).

Box 2.1   Alternative identification: Increasing access to
           mobile services for displaced persons

As of June 2017, over 5 billion people – more than two-thirds of the global population – were connected to a mobile service (GSMA, 2017a). For people affected by the impact of crises, access to mobile phones and mobile services can be a vital lifeline – enabling people to stay connected, locate family members, access information on available assistance and receive financial transfers, including remittances (GSMA, 2017b). There are also advantages for host governments and humanitarian organizations, including the enhanced ability to communicate with and assist the population affected by the emergency.

Although widespread, access to mobile services is still far from universal. Barriers such as affordability and low levels of digital literacy continue to prevent access for many people. Certain groups are often disproportionately affected by these barriers, further limiting their access – for example, women are around 10% less likely to own a mobile phone than men in low- and middle-income countries (GSMA, 2018a).

For forcibly displaced populations, one of the most prevalent barriers preventing people from purchasing a SIM card in their own name is a lack of formal identification. Research by GSMA, a global association representing the interests of over 800 mobile operators worldwide, found that:

"mobile users in at least 147 countries are required to prove their identity in order to register and/or activate their prepaid SIM cards. Furthermore, in order to open a mobile money account, people need to meet 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) requirements, which typically require the presentation of a formal proof of-identity"

(GSMA, 2018b, pg.15).

GSMA has proposed a series of recommendations for host-country governments and regulators to address the barrier of IDs and improve access to mobile services for forcibly displaced populations. They include actions to adopt more flexible proof-of-identity and know-your-customer requirements in emergency contexts, allow refugees to use their UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-issued identification to open mobile money accounts, and explore new digital identity technologies (GSMA, 2018b). GSMA and UNHCR are also embarking on joint research to better understand the barriers to accessing mobile services in refugee contexts and formulate practical policy recommendations to overcome them.

What are the potential solutions?

There are various approaches to overcoming the problem of lack of identification. Many governments, together with humanitarian organizations and private sector partners, are taking steps to increase access to humanitarian assistance, including for people without identification, while simultaneously enhancing transparency and accountability. UNHCR's new Population Registration and Identity Management EcoSystem (PRIMES), for example, uses biometrics to provide digital identities for displaced people and aims to be interoperable with systems used by governments and other partners. As well as solving the proof of identity problem, it may also act as an enabler for broader digital inclusion in the context of forced displacement and statelessness (UNHCR, 2018).

Other efforts include national programmes to increase identification coverage, improve civil registries and enhance integrated population databases (World Bank and CGD, 2017). New technologies provide opportunities for digital identification that go beyond paper-based systems, such as cloud computing, biometrics and smartcards (ibid; UNHCR, 2018). As with all efforts to improve identification and greater digital inclusion, however, there are risks as well as opportunities. This is particularly so where rigorous data protection regulations and practices are lacking – putting vulnerable groups at even greater risk of harm – and where efforts to improve identification systems deliberately or inadvertently exclude already-marginalized groups (World Bank and CGD, 2017; the Engine Room and Oxfam, 2018).

Blockchain technology – the use of a secured distributed ledger – has been piloted by humanitarian organizations in several settings to increase the effectiveness of cash transfer programming. It has the potential to link with digital means of identification to facilitate direct access to assistance for people affected by crises, including those who lack basic IDs, while simultaneously maintaining programmatic transparency and accountability (Korkmaz, 2018).

Using blockchain technology to increase access to cash assistance

Successive below-average rains and poor back-to-back harvests led the Government of Kenya to declare the drought a national emergency in February 2017 (ACAPS, 2018a). Throughout Kenya, an estimated 2.6 million people faced food insecurity, and 3 million people lacked access to clean water (OCHA, 2017b).

In response, the Kenya Red Cross Society launched an unconditional and unrestricted cash transfer programme using M-Pesa, covering 13 counties affected by drought. The programme's caseload without government IDs was estimated at around 25%. Since proof of identity is a requirement for access to the M-Pesa system, as it is for other national banking services, people without government-recognized identification are unable to receive assistance directly and have to do so instead through a designated third-party, proxy recipient.

The IFRC and the Kenya Red Cross Society are finding innovative ways to address this challenge. In May 2018, a pilot project was conducted in Isiolo County using tools developed by the private-sector partner RedRose. This included a beneficiary data management system linked to blockchain to record cash distribution transactions. The pilot, while focused initially on government ID holders, explored the use of digital IDs to further expand of the project to people without official IDs.

The learning from these initiatives will contribute to longer-term application of blockchain technology. The aim is to maintain high levels of transparency and protection against fraud, while broadening the reach of cash programming, including for people previously excluded or unable to access assistance directly because of a lack of IDs.

2.2.3 Housing, land and property-related documentation

Land and housing, likely to be among people's most valuable assets, may be destroyed, or damaged, reassigned or misappropriated during disaster and conflict. Proof of home or land ownership may also be lost, taken or destroyed. In some cases, where customary rights are frequently more dominant than statutory rights, formal proof of ownership or occupation might be rare to begin with (see inter alia NRC and IFRC, 2014; NRC and IFRC, 2016; IFRC and NRC, 2018; IFRC, 2015d). UN-HABITAT estimates that only 30% of global land is registered through statutory systems (UN-HABITAT, no date).

As well as the evident loss of shelter and associated immediate and longer-term ramifications, the lack of legal documentation can create serious difficulties for people – including during periods of displacement and when seeking to rebuild and restart their livelihoods after the crisis has subsided. Many shelter recovery programmes require people to demonstrate security of tenure through legal proof of ownership, for example. Such a restrictive approach to eligibility for assistance excludes large numbers of people, particularly the people who are most vulnerable and arguably the most in need, including renters and people living in informal settlements (IFRC and NRC, 2018).

Who is most affected?

There is a strong gender dimension to tenure insecurity. Women are less likely than men to inherit land or property; they less frequently hold documentation in their own names; and in cases where their rights are denied, their options for redress are more limited (see inter alia NRC, 2014). They are also often disproportionately excluded from receiving land and property-related assistance in the event of an emergency. For example, when assistance is allocated predominantly to male heads of household, or proof of ownership is a prerequisite for eligibility, women miss out on shelter-oriented initiatives and gender inequities are perpetuated.

Mapping of housing, land and property laws in Asia and the Pacific

The Australian Red Cross and the IFRC together with Allens, a private law firm, are conducting a country-level mapping of housing, land and property law in 12 countries across Asia and the Pacific. The work aims to provide a better understanding of the tenure landscape in these countries before and in the event of emergencies, focusing on informing stronger, more equitable shelter responses and assistance in post-disaster situations. Country-specific factsheets give details of key laws and actors, common types of tenure, issues around security of tenure for vulnerable groups, and risks of eviction, expropriation and relocation in the event of an emergency.

The initial mapping was almost completed in mid-2018 and the next phase involves operationalizing and continuing to update the findings. National Societies in the countries covered by the project are working with government authorities and shelter cluster partners to share lessons learned from the project to pre-identify particularly vulnerable groups who may be at risk of exclusion from assistance due to lack of tenure or a lack of understanding of their rights. The work has also been put to the test in the case of actual disaster response situations. In Tonga, for example, following Tropical Cyclone Gita in February 2018, the factsheets were used as part of the vulnerability analysis guidance shared by the local Shelter Cluster to help partners prioritize the most vulnerable groups in affected communities and identify the people potentially at risk of being left behind in shelter responses.

What are the potential solutions?

Even in relatively stable contexts, local and national tenure-related environments can be difficult to understand and navigate; this is more so in cases of conflict and/or disaster, where those complexities are often exacerbated (IFRC and NRC, 2018). To intervene in a way that gives visibility to and benefits the most vulnerable people, including those without proof of ownership or tenure, humanitarian responders need to first understand the basic cultural, legal and regulatory context in which they are operating. This can be extremely challenging, particularly in the midst of an emergency, demonstrating the need for better preparedness and improved information sharing between fellow responders.

A lack of understanding of local contexts, and a failure to adequately consult with local actors, risks not only failing to resolve problems but actually exacerbating conflicts,

disputes and exclusion. For people living in informal settlements, the solutions to problems relating to housing, land and property are often similarly informal. As well as understanding the formal legal and regulatory landscape, it is equally important to appreciate customary knowledge, systems and norms. Community leaders, for example, may have valuable information on who has rights over a particular property or plot in an informal sense. Understanding how disputes are resolved, including through customary mechanisms, is just as important too, requiring a mix of both legal expertise and detailed local knowledge (NRC, 2014).

There are no easy answers to making people more visible and overcoming the eligibility barriers they may face. Innovative solutions are underway – be it through the use of new technology such as blockchain platforms; partnerships, including with mobile phone operators and national telecom regulators; or efforts to better understand and operate in complex local environments, such as housing, land and property mapping. More fundamentally, a constant questioning by humanitarian organizations of their own willingness and ability to identify the most vulnerable people is needed, including those who are not immediately visible, and overcome the barriers preventing them from accessing assistance.

Box 2.4   Recognizing land rights after the Ecuador earthquake

In April 2016, a large earthquake struck the coastal zone of Ecuador, leaving around 385,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance and destroying around 70,000 homes. Reconstruction programmes were quickly initiated by the government, but targeted only at formally recognized landowners.

Informal land holdings are common in Ecuador – around 70% of the population lack the necessary documentation to prove they own the land they live on. Land is often inherited but not properly registered with authorities, and in cases where records were in place at the time of the earthquake, many were lost or destroyed by the disaster.

After the earthquake, the Shelter and Protection clusters, with support from the Ecuadorian Red Cross, set up a collaborative housing, land and property group. Together they successfully advocated with national authorities to protect group rights in the response and reconstruction process, and to grant a three-month grace period for bona fide landowners to prove their rights to the land. They also worked with communities to help them understand their rights and fulfil the administrative procedures required to attain formal land titles within the timeframe. As a result, many previously ineligible people, and in some cases entire communities, were able to access assistance from government and civil society. The 242 most vulnerable families in the community of Coaque, Manabi province, received their property papers thanks to funding from the Ecuadorian Red Cross in collaboration with government actors.

Jordan, 2017

Ahmad Theeb Abu Shefeh and his daughter Amani, age 5, outside their rented accommodation in Amman, Jordan. Ahmad holds his Syrian ID card, the only possession he has from Syria. Proof of identity is an essential requirement to be able to claim assistance in many contexts around the world.

©Andrew McConnell/ British Red Cross

2.3   Hidden problems: sexual and gender-based violence

People face certain problems in crisis situations that remain largely out of sight for humanitarian responders. The questions asked by those responding to the emergency, and the way those questions are asked, can lead to particular issues being overlooked or underestimated in emergency contexts. This particularly relates to sensitive topics, such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and the various forms of abuse that fall under this, including (but not limited to) sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced or early marriage, forced prostitution, and sexual exploitation and abuse (ICRC and IFRC, 2015). This includes sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers and other actors charged with protecting and assisting people affected by crisis. While this area has come under scrutiny recently following scandals in the sector and the #MeToo campaign, much more needs to be done to protect vulnerable populations and prevent further abuses of authority (see inter alia IASC, 2018).

At the level of international discourse, particularly around human rights and in the international humanitarian sector, SGBV cannot be entirely characterized as a hidden problem. Various international instruments and conventions that enshrine universal human rights clearly describe the ways in which SGBV violates those rights (IASC, 2015). Global commitments to combat SGBV have continued to gain momentum, as evidenced by the plethora of joint and organization-specific initiatives, policies, frameworks, protocols and toolkits for preventing and responding to incidents of SGBV (UNSG, 2014).[2]

Yet at the operational country level, attention to SGBV is less consistent and the extent to which governments and humanitarian agencies invest in preventing and combatting SGBV varies. Especially in the contexts of disasters caused by natural hazards, considerably less attention is given to the risk and reality of SGBV than in conflict and situations of conflict-induced displacement.

WHO estimates that over a third (35%) of women worldwide have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime (WHO, 2013). However, data is known to be unreliable. Injuries resulting from incidents of SGBV, whether physical or psychological, may be less visible than those caused by other forms of violence (ICRC and IFRC, 2015). Where SGBV is reported, the quality of data is not consistent, not all groups affected by SGBV are consulted or represented, and the findings are rarely comparable (Data Revolution Group, 2014). Under-reporting, however, is perhaps the main reason for gaps in the data on SGBV. Research indicates that less than 40% of all women who experience violence seek any kind of help (UN Statistics Division, 2015).

Box 2.5   Unaccompanied migrant girls in 'brothels' in Niger's Agadez region

Migrants from West Africa cross Niger's desolate Agadez region on their journey to other locations in Africa or Europe. Among these migrants are countless unaccompanied and separated children who often choose to be undetected and stay out of sight. A serious risk for unaccompanied girls is being trafficked, coerced, or being made so desperate as to be put into local 'brothels' by smugglers. This includes girls as young as 13 years being trafficked to Europe where "the market is requesting younger and younger girls".

The Niger Red Cross estimates there are 96 'brothels' in Agadez's Arlit Department and 53 'brothels' in its Bilma Department, together housing some 300 women and girls. The 'brothels' are not accessible and are hidden from most government and humanitarian agencies, therefore the needs of women and girls in these conditions are highly under-reported. Conditions in the 'brothels' are particularly unhealthy and precarious. There is a lack of hygiene, there are risks related to health, and more particularly to sexually transmitted infections due to lack of protection and lack of awareness, and there is the need for psychological support for girls who find themselves in these conditions and who are sometimes targets of SGBV from their 'clients'.

Because of their hidden and secretive nature, as they are illegal, and because smugglers do not want attention on the 'brothels' the Niger Red Cross is the only humanitarian agency able to access them and provide humanitarian services to the women and girls.

Services include providing basic health care on-site, distributing condoms and hygiene kits, giving psychosocial support, restoring family links, and raising awareness on safe migration practices. Humanitarian responders can face many barriers to reaching places where sex is exchanged for money. However, these are places where needs can be high and urgent. They need to be included in humanitarian assessments and surveillance to ensure vulnerable people do not stay out of sight.

2.3.1   Overcoming taboos

The stigma and shame of SGBV crimes, as well as fears of retribution, often prevent survivors from coming forward (ICRC and IFRC, 2015). This innate invisibility of SGBV can make it difficult for those charged with preventing further crimes and supporting survivors.

Box 2.6   Reaching women affected by SGBV in South Sudan

Numerous reports indicate an alarming prevalence of SGBV in South Sudan. Research in 2017 indicated that as many as 65% of women and girls in these zones have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and many women and girls experience multiple incidents of SGBV in their lifetimes (WhatWorks to Prevent Violence, 2015).

The South Sudan Red Cross is working with the Netherlands Red Cross, relevant ministries of the Government of South Sudan and other partners to reduce the risk of SGBV and improve the wellbeing of SGBV survivors in Terekeka and Juba. Initially the project was designed to focus on incidences of sexual violence against women. However, the taboo of talking about rape and sexual violence in South Sudan means that many survivors do not report crimes or seek help afterwards. The South Sudan Red Cross has therefore adjusted the outward focus of its work to domestic violence and broader economic empowerment for women.

The initiatives on domestic violence and women's livelihoods are valid in and of themselves. Domestic violence by intimate partners is accepted as a part of daily life in South Sudan, and a lack of economic alternatives in a heavily male-dominated society means that women and girls often have no choice but to remain in abusive relationships (WhatWorks to Prevent Violence, 2015). The services provided by the South Sudan Red Cross, therefore, provide vital opportunities for women and girls to seek immediate help and build their own resilience to economic shocks, potentially reducing their exposure to different forms of violence. The relationships established and sustained throughout the project also allow issues of sexual violence to be covered in a less overt, more culturally sensitive manner – creating an environment in which all stakeholders, including men, are able to talk about and engage in the fight to end SGBV.

The first step in overcoming the taboos surrounding SGBV is working with South Sudan Red Cross staff and volunteers. The project therefore includes comprehensive awareness-raising and training for staff and volunteers of the South Sudan Red Cross on discriminatory cultural norms and practices that can lead to incidents of SGBV and inhibit survivors from coming forward.

Underestimating sexual and gender-based violence prevalence in disaster settings

While the risk and impact of SGBV is increasingly understood in conflict settings, its pervasiveness in disasters caused by natural hazards is less well appreciated. Yet the same factors that contribute to an underestimation of the number of incidents also apply – including under-reporting due to stigma and shame, displacement, a collapse of social networks, and disruption of reporting and law enforcement systems. However, a study by the IFRC on SGBV in disasters concluded that, "Those responding to disasters are not aware that GBV may increase in disasters, and are neither looking nor preparing for it" (IFRC, 2015e, p.8). This lack of awareness means that basic measures to prevent further incidents of SGBV, and efforts to provide protection, assistance and services to survivors, are not adequately prioritized and implemented in disaster settings.

More evidence of how SGBV affects people in disaster settings and the adequacy or otherwise of humanitarian response can begin to highlight the need for a recalibrated response. Recent research in Asia, focusing on Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines, for example, has emphasized the need for safe evacuation centres for people affected by disasters, including separate spaces for women and men (IFRC, 2018e). Studies have also reiterated the importance of well-designed livelihoods programmes in disaster contexts to reduce the risk of SGBV and build longer-term community resilience (IFRC, 2015b; ODI, 2010). Additional research on effective law and policy for addressing gender inequality and SGBV in disasters points to the need for more harmonized regulations on

SGBV and disaster risk management (see Chapter 7, section 7.3.3, 'Getting the rules right: developments in disaster law').

2.3.2　Multiple stigma

Studies indicate that certain groups may be more out of sight for people affected by SGBV – both in conflict and disaster settings. Persons with disabilities, for example, may be more at risk of SGBV than persons without disabilities (Women's Refugee Commission, 2015), and have more difficulty accessing protection and assistance in the event of an attack. Men and boys are also at risk of SGBV, and the norms that discourage women and girls from reporting sexual assaults can be even more of a deterrent to coming forward in their case (IASC, 2015). Moreover, many countries do not recognize sexual violence against men as a crime and in some cases the survivors of such attacks are even criminalized (ibid.).

People belonging to a sexual and gender minority are frequently discriminated against around the world and their vulnerability to abuse is often exacerbated during times of crisis (International Alert, 2017). In countries where same sex activity is illegal – around 77 countries (UN OHCHR, 2018) – homophobia and transphobia not only contribute to violence but also inhibit lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex survivors of SGBV from filing complaints or seeking help (IASC, 2015; International Alert, 2017). And their visibility to humanitarian responders, or at least their prioritization as a particularly at risk group for SGBV, is difficult to judge given the lack of documentation on the topic, though there are isolated examples of good practice.

Box 2.7　**Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people after the Nepal earthquakes**

In 2015, the Nepal earthquakes destroyed over 600,000 homes, damaged around 280,000 more and displaced around 188,900 people (OCHA, 2015), many of whom sheltered in temporary camps. However, those sites catered to family groups and people identifying with a third gender were largely excluded. Even accessing toilets was difficult for the same reason (Froberg, 2015). Ultimately, this lack of dedicated space made it difficult for transgender people to access adequate assistance and left them vulnerable to increased risk of SGBV.

The Blue Diamond Society improves the sexual health, human rights and well-being of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. In the aftermath of the earthquake, it established an emergency shelter for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to seek refuge in a relatively safe and secure environment. The Nepal Red Cross Society also contributed by providing tarpaulins, blankets and oral rehydration solutions to be used at the shelter and distributed to other Blue Diamond members. The organizations worked together to ensure the services promoted dignity, access, participation and safety for all. They have continued to collaborate since the earthquake response with training and awareness-raising about the needs of minority groups for Nepal Red Cross staff and volunteers in 75 districts across the country.

2.3.3   Learning and insights

Understanding who is most at risk of SGBV, and taking the necessary steps to address both the risks and consequences of violence and abuse in situations of crisis, requires a willingness and ability to question and confront social taboos. To do that, those working to support people affected by crisis, and the organizations they work with, must understand and adhere to the humanitarian principle of impartiality – as a value, and operationally in considering how assistance is provided and to whom (British Red Cross, 2012). Where this is not the case, training may be needed (for example, on issues such as marital rape in South Sudan), or at least exposure and awareness-raising about the experiences of minority groups (on the experience of transgender people in Nepal, for example). The very composition of humanitarian institutions – their staff and volunteers – is also crucial. Their commitment to the principle of unity and being 'open to all' can have a direct impact on their ability to identify and support the most neglected and marginalized people (IFRC, 2010a; Nayee, 2017).

Caution and pragmatism are necessary in any call for more and better data on SGBV. Better data on its risk and prevalence could certainly highlight the scale of the problem and underscore the need for more support and funding for SGBV prevention and assistance, particularly in disaster settings (IFRC, 2015b). However, few prevalence surveys are conducted due to security concerns for survivors and researchers, and a lack of available response services (IASC, 2015). Moreover, there is already enough anecdotal and qualitative evidence to warrant a more extensive, robust and targeted response by humanitarian organizations, including in disaster settings.

2.4   Hidden places: the significance of mapping

While people and their problems can be hidden from humanitarian responders, so too can the places where they live. Just as there are blind spots in poverty-related data (see section 2.1, poverty data), there are also gaps in maps. Places with poor birth registration rates or a lack of poverty data are also often relatively 'unmapped' (The Economist, 2014).

For example, there is a paucity of data about slum settlements in major urban areas, and the people living in them (Data Revolution Group, 2014). These areas, which are changing and expanding at a rapid rate, are often largely absent from official maps, and/or maps are failing to keep pace with the speed of their development or degradation. This can exclude people living there from influencing governing structures and restrict their access to resources and support (UN-HABITAT, 2003). At the same time, these are often the areas most affected in a disaster (such as an earthquake or landslide) due to lack of adherence to building codes.
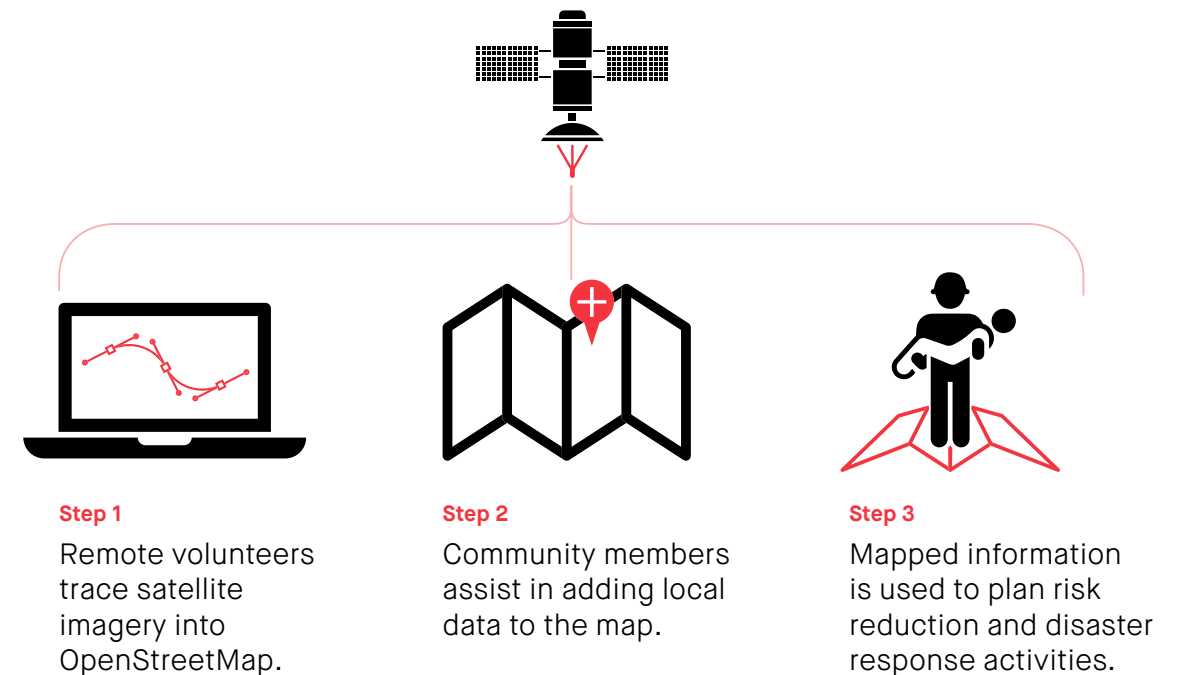
Where there are maps, they frequently lack the key information and reference points needed to inform decision-making. Essential, community-level and time-sensitive details

to inform detailed planning may be missing, such as the position of water points, the location of damaged or collapsed buildings, or the exact whereabouts of washed out roads and bridges. These details can help get the right aid to people faster and more effectively. More importantly, such information can empower people to locate services themselves and evaluate their own risks, for example, in assessing their own proximity to hazards (Sumadiwiria, 2015).

2.4.1   Innovative mapping

Initiatives are underway to address the problem of missing, out-of-date or incomplete maps. One example is the Missing Maps projects, established in 2014 by the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), the American Red Cross and the British Red Cross. Several more organizations have joined since, including the IFRC. The project intends to put vulnerable people on the map by combining the efforts of remote volunteers, community volunteers and humanitarian organizations (see Figure 2.4). Missing Maps aims to cover the places where 200 million people live by 2021 and focuses on those contexts less likely to attract significant media or donor attention. At the time of writing, the collaboration has added over 301 million houses to OpenStreetMap in crisis-prone parts of the world and 825,000km of roads

Fig. 2.4   The Missing Maps process

Step 1
Remote volunteers trace satellite imagery into OpenStreetMap.

Step 2
Community members assist in adding local data to the map.

Step 3
Mapped information is used to plan risk reduction and disaster response activities.

Source: Missing Maps

Technology is an important aspect of the mapping work. But of perhaps even-greater value are the local–international partnerships generated by mapping initiatives, and the opportunity they create for local communities to put themselves on the map. Promoting the participation of people affected by crisis is key to making communities more resilient and aid more accountable (see inter alia UNSG, 2016b; Grand Bargain signatories, 2017; ALNAP, 2003), provided the use of the data clearly focuses on informing tangible, local-level outcomes. Moreover, participatory mapping exercises show the importance of seeking out and documenting alternative sources of data creation – linking official and unofficial data sources – and engaging local residents in mapping their own neighbourhoods in useful and empowering ways.

Beyond Dar Ramani Huria (see Box 2.8), there are several other examples of community-level mapping in crisis-prone contexts. In Bangladesh, an initiative led by MSF under the auspices of the Missing Maps project began by mapping the environmental health of Dhaka's slum areas in 2015. After the project was completed, the initial group of local mappers continued and expanded, growing from 20 to 200 people. Since then they have conducted other mapping exercises, including in the Cox's Bazaar area, providing detailed maps of camp and non-camp areas to inform the response to the urgent needs of Rohingya refugees.

    Community mapping in Dar es Salaam

Dar Ramani Huria (Swahili for 'Dar Open Map') is a community-based mapping project based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – a highly flood-prone city that is rapidly expanding, particularly in terms of unplanned and informal settlements.[3] Urban planners are struggling to keep up with the explosive growth and changing nature of the city. Its flood management infrastructure is largely ineffective, traditional maps fail to reflect the realities of the changing city, institutional responsibilities are unclear, and urban plans are often outdated. All of these combine to put people at greater risk of the impact of floods and other natural hazards.

The project brings together teams of university students and community representatives and trains them to use OpenStreetMap. Volunteers use free software on locally available android phones to map points of interest in the most flood-prone areas of the city. These include minor streets, buildings, floodplains, build-ups of waste and drains, including blocked drains in need of maintenance. In so doing they create a real-time reflection of the city and its inhabitants. In collaboration with Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team, 500 students (on summer internships), local community members, and Red Cross volunteers are visiting all wards of the city to create asset and threat maps that feed into updated urban planning documents and interventions.

Dar Ramani Huria goes beyond simply creating maps and emphasizes the importance of getting people to actually use them to bring about positive change. Users of the maps include the National Bureau of Statistics, town planners and others within

[3].   Project coordinated by Humanitarian OpenStreetMap and supported by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)

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subnational government offices, as well as civil society organizations and community members themselves. The maps inform decisions around which areas of the city to prioritize for maintenance and upgrading of drainage infrastructure, better flood protection, and organization of community-level clean-up initiatives. The maps are also used as for broader urban planning, including upgrading public transport, and improving coverage and understanding of catchment areas of health facilities and hospitals within the city.

    Before and after shots of Mbuyuni sub-ward, Kigogo ward, Dar es Salaam

Source: Dar Ramani Huria

2.4.2   Sensitive data

The increased availability of data and the rapid use of new technologies raise new questions and concerns about the gathering and use of sensitive data, the rights of people who are the subjects of data, and the responsibilities of data producers and users. The digital humanitarian sector is aware of the boundaries and the risks, though more discussion is undoubtedly needed on issues of consent and the ethics of making previously hidden people and places visible (Sumadiwiria, 2015). Initiatives such as the Signal Code (Signal Program on Human Security and Technology, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, 2018) and the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Digital Cooperation (UN, 2018a) could provide such platforms.

There are obvious dangers of mapping certain facilities such as hospitals and medical centres, as well as communities, as both can be targeted and deliberately harmed (see inter

alia ICRC, 2011a, UNSG, 2016).[4] Maps and other data sets are not devoid of politics; they are powerful storytelling devices that can be used against people as much as they are a potential force for good. Indeed, residents do occasionally voice concerns about making themselves visible to town planners and other government officials, for reasons including fear of relocation or demolition of homes. These concerns are usually overcome once the purpose of the exercise is clearly explained. However, the dangers must not be underestimated and protecting vulnerable people and the neighbourhoods in which they live must continue to be paramount in any effort to put vulnerable communities on the map.

While the data collected now is essential, the work will never be completed; it is a never-ending and ever-evolving task. Cities expand, the world's climate is changing, conflicts continue, and people move and adapt as a result. In response, the dynamics of data production, visualization and use are also rapidly evolving. Humanitarian actors are starting to see themselves not only as data consumers but data producers. Moreover, the availability and accessibility of affordable hardware and software means affected by crises can be directly involved. For the first time, they are able to make themselves and their own neighbourhoods visible, thereby gaining some measure of control over their own level of risk in the event of an emergency.

2.5 Into view: conclusions and recommendations

Understanding there are people, places and problems that are not seen is a fundamental part of the sense-making process in crisis situations. Whether invisibility is inadvertent or by design, being counted in national and global statistics and being on the map is important. Ensuring that populations, the places where they live and the problems they face are seen is critical to ensuring people's needs are understood and they are able to access assistance.

The visibility of populations is partially determined by who is doing the seeing. Independent and impartial needs assessments and analysis – conducted, or at least validated, by non-operational stakeholders without a vested interest in the outcome – can provide the basis for a more neutral and principled response (Konyndyk, 2018; ACAPS, 2016b).

Some of the most inspiring and creative examples of ongoing work to make people who are not seen or acknowledged more visible are thanks to local communities, local organizations and their expert contextual knowledge. Community mapping exercises are shedding light on new and rapidly developing crisis-prone environments. Resident experts are advising on the customary and statutory complexities of missing documentation in post-crisis situations and how these can be overcome. Local staff and volunteers of humanitarian and development organizations are working with governments and communities to

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4.   This does not contradict the standard practice of informing warring parties where hospitals are so they are not targeted.

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overcome cultural taboos and biases that normalize SGBV abuses and prevent survivors from coming forward to seek help.

Citizen-generated data is beginning to help fill some of the gaps left by official data sources in development contexts, for example in monitoring progress against the SDGs (Rogers, 2015). In the humanitarian sector however, community-mapping exercises and community-feedback mechanisms aside, the general tendency is still to 'extract' data from people affected by crises and externally analyse information to make sense of priority needs (CDAC Network, 2017; IFRC and Ground Truth Solutions, 2018).

Advances in technology can also help to fill some of the data gaps and overcome eligibility challenges for people affected by crises. More can and is being done remotely by organizations, machines (such as drones) and 'digital humanitarians' to increase the visibility of people in humanitarian contexts. And digital technologies and systems such as blockchain are opening up new opportunities to overcome the challenges that prevent people from accessing assistance because of a lack of identity documentation.

But data is not enough. Humanitarian organizations need to be genuinely inclusive in their approach to ensuring equitable access to services, and advocate for peer organizations to do likewise. The extent to which they succeed largely depends on their own composition and the extent to which they reflect the diversity of the populations they serve (Interviews; IFRC, 2010).

This chapter has covered an array of topics and challenges relating to hidden people, problems and places, focusing on people without the necessary documentation to qualify as eligible for assistance; people affected by the consequences of under-reported issues in disaster settings, such as SGBV; and people living in crisis areas that are unmapped. The following actions are recommended:

2.5.1 Locally grounded response: leadership, participation and inclusiveness

— **Local actors – governments, private sector, non/governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities – should be supported to design and lead more inclusive and effective crisis responses.** Their local presence and local knowledge is key to addressing the challenges caused by lack of information about hidden people, problems and places. They can not only make people more visible, but also develop creative programming solutions despite the lack of documentation and other issues.

— **Organizations involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance need to ensure their own policies and practices are sufficiently inclusive.** Access to hidden and marginalized communities is greatly facilitated when these groups are represented by staff and volunteers. This may require a willingness to tackle the different cultural barriers, discriminations and taboos that keep some people, and the problems they face, out of sight in humanitarian action. In the case of SGBV for example, understanding who is most at risk, and taking the necessary steps to address both the risks and consequences of violence and abuse in situations of crisis, requires a willingness and ability to question and confront social taboos. This is an essential component of

impartiality –as a value, but also operationally in considering how assistance is provided and to whom (British Red Cross, 2012).

2.5.2 Enhanced information: ethics, guidelines and sensitivities

— **Humanitarian organizations should review and consider the tools, practices and data used to assess and analyse needs with a view to generating more and better insights.** This chapter has highlighted the challenges and consequences associated with missing baseline data and the assessment and analysis of needs in often chaotic and sometimes insecure environments. New technologies enable and demand new ways of working, seeing and evidencing that can be used to the advantage of people inadvertently or deliberately left behind. The chapter has also shown how participatory, ground-truthed and inclusive approaches to knowing and understanding where there may be needs can help ensure that people are not inadvertently or deliberately left unseen. This could be carried out with a view to collaboratively correcting a lack of 'seeing' by governments, parties to a conflict or communities who may deliberately marginalize or ignore certain population groups.

— **Ethical considerations of consent, privacy and security should be prioritized and put at the forefront** if technology initiatives are to enable people to access impartial, needs-based assistance without discrimination and at scale. While various humanitarian agencies have policies and guidelines relating to data protection, better provision should be made for the rights to information, protection from harm, data agency, redress and rectification as well as technical standards (HHI, 2018). Initiatives such as the Signal Code (Signal Program on Human Security and Technology, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative) and the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation aim to advance discourse, insight and action on such (shared) ethical obligations and standards.

— Those financing and managing programmes and organizations should be open to investing in, using and assessing a wider range of data, analysis and evidence – qualitative as well as quantitative, citizen-generated and anecdotal as well as official – sharing and co-developing where possible and appropriate.

2.5.3 Effective response, regardless of availability of quantitative data

— **Humanitarian organizations need to find ways to provide services to marginalized groups, even when they do not appear in the data and on the maps.** This means being aware of the groups of people that may be both literally and on paper hidden from view and deliberately seeking them out. It also means investing resources in preventing and responding to under-reported problems, such as SGBV in disasters, recognizing that reporting is not always a feasible solution and valuing anecdotal information.

2.5.4 Responsible innovation: alternative documentation and means to access services

— **Organizations should continue to try to overcome service barriers for people lacking official documentation and identification** – the ramifications of which often go way beyond crisis periods. Current efforts include national programmes to increase identification coverage, improve civil registries and enhance integrated population databases (World Bank and CGD, 2017); and digital identification such as cloud computing, biometrics and smartcards (World Bank and CGD, 2017; UNHCR, 2018c). The use of new technology needs to be coupled with stringent attention to data protection and to ensure vulnerable groups are not at even greater risk of harm.

Croatia, 2018

The end of winter is seeing 'rare but not unprecedented' weather conditions, with the extended cold spell in much of Europe alongside unusually high temperatures in the Arctic. Red Cross teams reach isolated elderly cut off by snow.

©IFRC

Uganda, 2017

A child in Uganda's Rhino Refugee camp collects water trucked in from a Red Cross treatment plant. The camp is located in the remote north west of the country. Refugees often have to walk long distances to reach key facilities, in particular for health care.

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