

# The Global Refugee Crisis: Pathway for a More Humanitarian Solution

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## Abstract

The global refugee crisis reveals refugees and other forcibly displaced persons (FDP) are uniquely vulnerable consumers on a dynamic pathway precipitated by trigger events that have disrupted or fractured marketing systems requisite for safety and well-being, resulting in dangerous journeys to temporary or permanent settlements. The Syrian Conflict is introduced to contextualize the challenges along the pathway and to show that a more Humanitarian Marketing System, spanning time, space and other systems, brings opportunities for governments, NGOs and businesses to cooperate and to provide FDP with resources, which enhance connectedness, reduce vulnerabilities and suffering, illuminate good practices and enable FDP to flourish when resettled. The authors discuss research-opportunities to facilitate further understanding, to develop and repair marketing systems, and to enhance the well-being of FDP and other stakeholders of the crisis.

## Keywords

Refugees, macromarketing, humanitarian marketing systems, forced displacement, migration, consumer well-being, displaced persons

## Introduction

More than 70 *million* forcibly displaced persons (FDP) are scattered around the globe, largely due to violence, conflict/war, persecution or human-rights violations (UNHCR 2019). Among them, 13 million people were newly displaced in 2018; equivalent to more than 35,000 people *per day* (UNHCR 2019). Approximately one of every 113 people on the planet has been forcibly displaced (Edmond 2017). Many of them are children and adolescents, traumatized, unaccompanied or separated from their families, spending their formative years displaced (UNHCR 2018a; World Bank 2017a). To compound these appalling statistics, the number of “climate change refugees” – growing at more than 20 million people per year since 2008 (McConnell 2018; UNHCR 2016a) – could reach 140-200 million people by the year 2050 (Barnes 2013; Rigaud et al. 2018).

This expanding humanitarian crisis potentially affects and distresses virtually everyone and every system, putting tremendous pressure on myriad institutions. Governments, NGOs and civic groups typically lead relief efforts during refugee crises. While indispensable, those institutions do not have sufficient resources or capacities to deliver all requisite goods, services and experiences for FDP. Responsible politicians have encouraged the private sector to offer new, measurable and significant commitments that will have a durable, benevolent impact on refugees’ well-being (e.g., Obama 2016; Merkel (in Mehta

2017); Santos 2017). The business community, in some instances, has responded with financial, technical, managerial and material contributions, which may portend a broader realization that business and related marketing activities are vital to crisis-resolution (Martinez 2018; cf. Kluge 2016).

Skillful, systemic administration of and cooperation among three catalysts – governments, NGOs and businesses – working with FDP and other stakeholders over time and space are paramount to a more humanitarian system (e.g., Shultz et al. 2012). However, current approaches to resolve this crisis often lack coordination and participation, rendering relief efforts less efficient and effective than they could be, which hinders the well-

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being of FDP, causing further hardships and systemic distress. The crisis requires fresh thinking and systemic solutions.

The purpose of this article is to raise consciousness and to develop new approaches to study, and ultimately to influence policies and practices to redress or at least to mitigate the global refugee crisis. Ideas, interpretations and shared suggestions are based on a synthesis of relevant literature and key findings from FDP-studies. These are being administered by members of our research team working in/on six continents, as the crisis spills across boundaries, terrains, politics, cultures, and systems. Accordingly, we propose a more Humanitarian Marketing System as integral to solutions, including reconsideration of the conceptualization of refugees and other FDP, and the evolving challenges that emerge during their journeys.

Our proposal is grounded in four fundamental tenets. First, FDP have needs not only to survive, but to thrive and to contribute; their needs vary from the most basic (e.g., food, shelter) to higher order needs (e.g., self-actualization, societal contribution) (e.g., Kenrick et al. 2010; cf. Maslow 1943). Second, business enterprises and marketing endeavors in a more predictable and better-provisioning marketing system are instrumental to delivering goods, services and experiences for FDP (e.g., Fisk 1981). Third, several interdependent systems – especially marketing systems in places traveled, in refugee camps, in communities surrounding them and in donor countries, which facilitate production, allocation, assortment and consumption opportunities over time and distance – are integral to crisis management, FDP well-being, personal/emotional/skills development, and return or resettlement (cf. Layton 2015). Fourth, crisis mitigation does not necessarily require new/more theory or perseverations pertaining to it; mitigation *does* require constructive engagement, *now*, leveraging ideas and tools familiar to macromarketing scholars, but apparently unfamiliar or not compelling to key actors in catalytic institutions well-positioned to apply them (e.g., Shultz 2016). This more constructive, adaptive and humanitarian approach provides a systemic schema to understand refugee needs and possible solutions along their pathway.

This article is organized as follows. An overview of crisis dynamics is provided, followed by literature-supported descriptions about the pathway that refugees face and struggle to endure. Our research team has highlighted contemporary marketing-systems literature vis-à-vis the rationale for a more appropriate, integrative humanitarian system to ameliorate the crisis. A brief articulation of this working schema is included; as is the richer discussion in the context of the Syrian War. This war highlights the importance of connectedness or connectivity to the well-being of FDP – and the systemically coordinated, technological efforts to ensure it. We conclude with more general discussion and opportunities for further research.

## Global Crisis: Obligations and Opportunities

The global refugee/FDP crisis is complex and confounding, revealing disrupted systems, citizen/consumer disenfranchisement and a daunting challenge that calls for cooperation,

resources, interdisciplinary approaches and creative problem-solving (e.g., Amnesty International 2017). Different scholarly perspectives and practical interventions have aimed to explain relevant phenomena and to offer actionable solutions (El-Saffar 2017; Malkki 1992; Maxwell and Watkins 2003; World Bank 2017b). Marketing, particularly services marketing, has emerged in this discourse (e.g., Farmaki and Christou 2019).

The *Journal of Macromarketing* has not been a favored outlet for research on FDP. However, some recent contributions offer exceptions (e.g., Krisjanous and Kadirov 2018; Sredl, Shultz, and Brečić 2017), which may presage greater interest and more articles. Still absent however is a context-specific schema to analyze the dynamic and evolving needs of FDP as both opportunity and obligation for constructive engagement via business and marketing. Such a schema is a compelling and logical extension of the genesis and evolution of the developmental and systems schools of Macromarketing (e.g., Domegan et al. 2019; Layton 2009, 2019; Meade and Nason 1991; Mittelstaedt et al. 2014; Peterson 2013; Shultz 2007; Shultz et al. 2012; Slater 1968; Wooliscroft and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft 2018). Layton and Duffy (2018), for example, have noted the significance of “jolting” a system, which can require a fresh start to the extant system or perhaps entirely new systems (p. 401). War – its systemic, human destruction – is such a jolt, requiring constructive engagement to replace, repair and integrate systems, some of which may not have been required or even desired prior to the devastation (Shultz 2016). This in turn leads to a path dependency (Layton and Duffy 2018) – truly, a life-support system – unfamiliar to FDP, in the form of a Refugee Pathway and ideally a more Humanitarian Marketing System, which we articulate, below, including some initiatives and resources of catalytic institutions that ensure safe passage and resettlement.

Humanitarian initiatives that include social business or managerial perspectives are not new to Macromarketing (cf. Zif 1980). We believe however they are underappreciated, especially when one considers the extent to which imaginative business applications can contribute to solutions required for complex, intractable problems. Recent examples include explorations and interpretations of alternative markets (e.g., Campana, Chatzidakis, and Laamanen 2017; Haase, Becker, and Pick 2018); considerations for improving the lives and dignity of marginalized groups (e.g., Jagadale, Kadirov, and Chakraborty 2018); understanding the human-trafficking marketing system (e.g., Pennington et al. 2009), and multi-factor, systemic models and methods to assess distressed communities, and to offer coordinated and actionable paths toward individual, community and societal well-being (e.g., Shultz, Rahtz, and Sirgy 2017).

The scale and scope of challenges and threats faced by FDP are enormous. They are exposed to unpredictable and disastrous environments during forced migrations and (re)settlements; coupled with the involution, conflict and intersectionality of geography, politics, economics and culture. This is a cry-out for researchers to study the systemic complexity and humanity of this crisis, and to offer humane solutions (e.g., Baker 2009; see

also Barrios et al. 2016; Bennett et al. 2016; Shultz et al. 2005). Those solutions will require goods, services and experiences; traditional and alternative markets and marketing skills; the creation of makeshift and sustainable communities; opportunities for physically, intellectually and emotionally enriching consumer experiences.

Particularly compelling in this endeavor is an opportunity to meld the conceptual with the practical; the critical with the developmental (Mittelstaedt et al. 2014). That is, while we draw attention to failings that devastate societies and people in them, we also offer systemic marketing solutions intended to provide immediate succor and hope, while also laying the foundation for peaceful, prosperous and sustainable societies, with distinct capabilities and catalytic institutions to save and to protect FDP (Shultz et al. 2012; see also Kadirov 2018). Moreover, businesses and marketing endeavors that constructively engage by humanely evincing “Queenship” – ethical, sustainable, historically sensitive and systemic activities to enhance life-quality for their stakeholders, including the poor and most vulnerable – are imperative to the *process* and *outcomes* of sustainable peace and prosperity for consumers, communities and nation-states (Peterson 2013, p. 20; see also Arndt 1981; Sredl, Shultz, and Brečić 2017).

The FDP crisis involves rudimentary parameters, within which a more Humanitarian Marketing System will take-shape, function, and adapt; including a clear conceptualization of FDP, the pathway they travel, and the vulnerabilities and participants along their journey and elusive quest for permanent, safe settlement.

## FDP: Conceptualizations, Laws, Nuances

Forcibly displaced persons or FDP constitute a broad and comprehensive category, which includes refugees (FDP that cross an internationally recognized, international political-boundary), internally displaced persons (IDP, i.e., people forcibly displaced, but who do not cross an internationally recognized political-boundary) and asylum seekers (UNHCR 2017a).

The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, frequently referred to as the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1951 Geneva Convention, established the widely accepted definition of refugee status (United Nations General Assembly 1951). Originally limited to refugees of European origin, the 1967 Protocol pertaining to the Status of Refugees amended the definition to apply to refugees of all nationalities; a refugee thus is defined as:

“any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it”

(United Nations General Assembly 1967, p. 152).

Ratified by 145 state parties, the resultant treaty also indicated which classes of immigrants did not qualify as refugees (United Nations General Assembly 1951). Though similar in their ultimate goal of relocation, refugees should not be mistaken for immigrants, who voluntarily select to resettle in a different country.

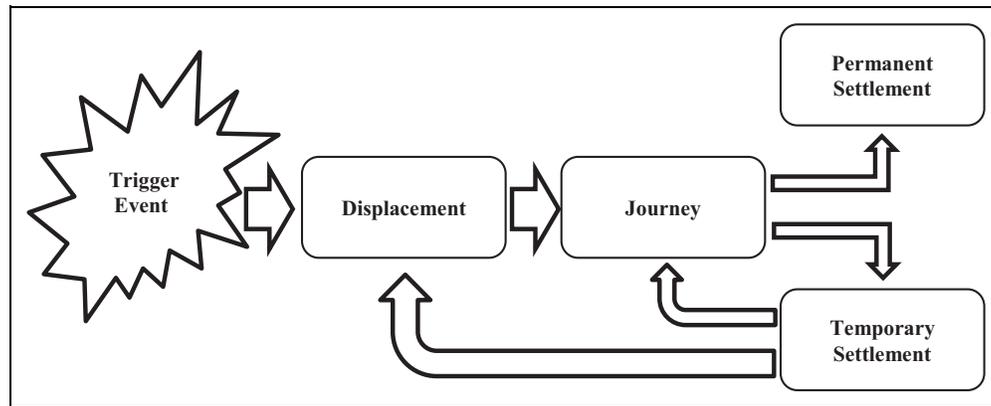
Implicit in this definition, refugee status is officially recognized once a person fearful of being persecuted is beyond the borders of his/her country of residence and terminates once they have repatriated or become a resident of another country. Additional limitations of the designation preclude immigrants who have committed war crimes and/or serious, non-political crimes, from qualifying for refugee status. Again, given the similarities of difficulties and challenges experienced by refugees and IDP, both groups are often categorized as FDP.

As suggested, we propose a reconsideration of the very conceptualization of FDP. (1) We submit they have needs to thrive as *consumers* and to contribute as *producers*. (2) Catalytic institutions of marketing systems can judiciously administer policies, businesses and marketing endeavors to meet the needs of FDP. (3) Several interdependent systems – in camps, communities and regions/countries in which FDP reside and through which they travel, and in donor countries – are integral to on-going well-being for FDP and other stakeholders, and to crisis management over time and space, from displacement to return or resettlement. (4) Ideas, technologies, institutions, capital and other resources exist *now* to mitigate, if not fully eliminate, the crisis. This becomes apparent during journeys along a pathway, which we explore below.

## Pathways, Vulnerabilities, and Participants

Fundamental to the development of a more Humanitarian Marketing System is an understanding of the Refugee Pathway and vulnerabilities associated with it. Though each refugee has a unique experience, refugees’ aggregate paths to safety share identifiable patterns. The specific nature of a refugee’s journey is idiosyncratic and largely includes personal anecdotes and studies exploring the causes and consequences of exile (Ben-Ezer and Zetter 2014; cf. BenEzer 2002; Gonsalves 1992). To develop therapeutic psychological interventions, Gonsalves (1992) posited a four-stage journey model, dividing the path by timeframe rather than action, starting with the first week and terminating after seven years, recognizing that refugee-needs vary at each juncture. World Vision (2010) suggests a four-step process: including leaving home, being on the road, seeking refuge, and resettlement; offering multiple outcomes during the latter half of the journey. Roads to Refuge (2017) also shared a four-stage process, with a less optimistic conclusion: flight, seeking refuge, crossing borders, and detention.

Building on the aforementioned studies, we examine FDP experiences by studying FDP and their *pathway*. We seek to identify provisioning agents that help to improve the well-being of refugees while sustaining integrities of the societies, governments, and individuals affected by the refugee crisis. Instead of narrowing to a specific need (e.g., shelter) or risk



**Figure 1.** The refugee pathway.

(e.g., violence), a systemic approach enables us to understand phenomena endemic to the complex interactions and exchanges in which FDP are involved. As such, we identify catalytic institutions (e.g., businesses, NGOs, and governments), which may cooperate to improve the well-being of FDP, along the pathway (cf. Hunt and Burnett 1982; Layton 2015; Shultz et al. 2012).

The Refugee Pathway, as seen in Figure 1, is generic enough to reflect numerous experiences; it is appropriately specific to depict individualized undertakings.

The Pathway is precipitated by a trigger event, such as a natural disaster or war, which initiates the process of people's *displacement* from their home(s). Once displaced, refugees or IDP begin a *journey* to a safer place. They envisage *permanent settlement* to rebuild their lives. However, if this is not possible, they find themselves in, or are placed in, *temporary settlement*, such as a refugee camp or community, where they remain until a *permanent settlement* is available. Depending on various factors, refugees may enter a cyclical process, including temporary settlements and repeated displacements.

Refugee-centric humanitarian interventions should recognize the implications and limitations associated with heightened levels of consumer vulnerability faced during the Refugee Pathway. That is, "a state of powerlessness that arises from an imbalance in marketplace interactions . . . It occurs when control is not in an individual's hands, creating a dependence on external factors (e.g., governments, NGOs, marketers) to create fairness . . ." (Baker, Gentry, and Rittenburg 2005, p. 134). Levels of vulnerability are affected by life-event transitions (Gentry 1997; Shultz and Holbrook 2009), post-traumatic stress (Adhikari 2013), marketplace exclusion (Wang and Tian 2014) and (in)ability to assimilate changes (e.g., Adkins and Jae 2010). Below, we describe each of four steps along the Refugee Pathway, highlighting needs and vulnerabilities.

### Displacement

Displacement occurs when a trigger event forces dislocation because a victim's life is (or many victims' lives are)

threatened. An exit therefore must be implemented, and, if time permits, planned. A plan typically includes establishing a safe destination that may work as either temporary or permanent settlement for self, possibly relatives and friends, and perhaps – due to obligation, expedience or fiat – mere acquaintances. Trigger events include war, other forms of violence, or more generally any significant threats to the integrity and well-being of a person, which deprive individuals of their habitats, assets, human rights, and are degradations that affect people's decisions to leave (e.g., BenEzer 2002; Cernea and McDowell 2000; Muggah 2000). In some instances, even anticipation of threats, injury, disarticulation or losses may expedite displacement (Cernea 1999; Davenport, Moore, and Poe 2003).

### Journey

Displacement provokes a journey from an endangered place (e.g., home, community) to a comparatively safer location. A collapsed marketing system – including infrastructure degradation/destruction, lawlessness and violence – may render difficult the access to affordable, reliable, and safe modes of transportation, basic food, and shelter (Pecotich, Renko, and Shultz 1993). Victims are vulnerable due to the limited access to essential economic, social, and psychological resources; they experience difficulties in obtaining access to basic food and shelter, as well as affordable, reliable, and safe transportation (BenEzer and Zetter 2014).

The journey potentially exposes FDP to further risk of structural violence, resulting from systemic inequalities, racism, sexism, exploitation, resource-scarcity, poverty, rape and other assaults when traveling across borders, and through war zones and other hostile territory (cf. Galtung 1969). In some instances, violent acts toward FDP have been encouraged by militias and local authorities (Nagai et al. 2008). Refugees/IDP obviously are interested to reduce such risks. Higher security however often comes at a cost of lower mobility (Gerard and Pickering 2013). Thus, each step potentially requires calculations and re-calculations regarding direction, pace, and other decisions and tradeoffs along the journey.

### Temporary Settlement

The journey may include sanctuary in a specified or makeshift location, for indefinite lengths of time. Such locations include sympathetic homes, centers or communities, refugee camps, or in extreme conditions perhaps little more than an open field where the victims stay until they can continue to a more permanent destination. FDP face vulnerabilities that are common to their transient status: disconnection from existing social networks, depressed socioeconomic status, and lack of protections afforded to citizens (Derose, Escarce, and Nicole 2007; Wang and Tian 2014). Depending on local policies, they can enter into a cyclical process, with temporary settlements and repeated displacement.

Consider, for example, FDP experiences at refugee hosting areas (RHAs) or refugee camps where states/governments are responsible for providing security and (re)settling FDP (Johnson 2011). The needs of FDP may be determined by ascertaining the combination of capabilities, assets (both material and social) and activities required for a means-of-living (e.g., Jacobsen 2002). The underlying logic of this process: FDP possess different endowments (e.g., physical, human, social, political, and financial), which they deploy to adapt to trends and use to cope with the vulnerability-context (Korf 2004). The extent to which FDP may effectively use such assets is determined by the local authorities and NGOs that control and provide access to such resources. The assessments facilitate decisions regarding how and whom to employ within a temporary settlement, whom to allow to work outside the camp, how to sanction or prosecute informal economic activities (e.g., petty trading) and illegal activities (e.g., prostitution and drug dealing) (Porter et al. 2008). This dynamic presents opportunities for constructive engagement, by coordinating local and international stakeholders, processes, policies and practices vis-à-vis commonly shared interests and institutions that promote social resilience of FDP, with negligible impact on well-being of the host communities. Indeed, particularly resourceful, constructive engagement may result in positive outcomes for host communities as well.

### Permanent Settlement

This stage occurs when FDP reach a destination and obtain residence, at which “permanence” is ideally determined by law and the protections and privileges that accompany it; that is, full and fair integration into a well-functioning marketing system. Despite permanent status, victims often experience vulnerabilities resulting from xenophobia, stigmatization, marginalization, selective interpretations and enforcement of laws, and limited access to social services and economic opportunities.

Permanent settlement therefore should be integrative across domains. Naturalization (i.e., a hosting state grants nationality to a non-national refugee) is a foundation for this process, and serves as markers and means of a common citizen with regards to employment, housing, education, and access to healthcare

(Ager and Strang 2008). Equally important for refugees’ return to “normal life” are processes, by which refugees forge links to a hosting culture, build social connections in communities and embrace or at least respect their new nation’s sense of identity. This can be difficult, as traditions, personal trauma during displacement and journey, stresses associated with temporary settlement, and travails of resettlement in permanent host-country all affect the integration process. Therefore, a more holistic, humanitarian account for variety of influences at this stage is required, while acknowledging that international, local, formal and informal catalytic institutions need to mitigate or mediate conflicts arising from refugees’ interactions with various groups, organizations, and agencies.

### A More Humanitarian System

The term “Humanitarian” is understood as “to save lives and alleviate suffering in a manner that respects and restores personal dignity” (UNHCR 2018b). Thus, a humanitarian system intends to ameliorate or eliminate a particular problem – e.g., human suffering in the form of the global refugee crisis. Instead of focusing on conventional measures of success (e.g., sales, profits), a Humanitarian Marketing System highlights roles of multiple participants, their collaboration(s), alliances and reciprocities, and ultimately the well-being of the most vulnerable of those collaborators/stakeholders, over time and space. Principal among those stakeholders are, of course, the refugees and other FDP, but they also include people, institutions, systems and places left behind and the people, institutions, systems and places in which they temporarily reside and permanently resettle.

The Refugee Pathway implies that refugees’ needs change substantially along their journey. In turn, the serving institutions (governments, NGOs, businesses) must better anticipate such changes with more tailored offerings. The value of a humanitarian system is derived not only from a single action or a solo entity, but also from a system of interdependent, sequential activities by adaptive organizations (Ladd 2017; Layton 2015, 2019; Shultz et al. 2012; Shultz, Rahtz, and Sirgy 2017; Wooliscroft and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft 2018), which often span thousands of miles, across geographic and climatological conditions, cultural norms and of course political boundaries. Truly, more than 70 million FDP, from or to all corners of the world, long for a more Humanitarian *Marketing System* capable of delivering life- and hope-sustaining goods, services and experiences along their journey.

### The Syrian Conflict

The Syrian conflict is a complex amalgam of many forces. It is generally considered to have begun as mass demonstrations for democratic reforms, which quickly escalated to violence and a complicated civil war. More systemic and historical analyses suggest prolonged drought, agricultural failures and water mismanagement, and subsequent migrations of rural workers into urban centers contributed to the deterioration of socioeconomic

structures, which in turn led to violence (e.g., Gleick 2014). In a cauldron of underlying political and societal tensions mixed with meteorological and economic misfortune, the Syrian conflict metastasized into war among religious, secular, ethnic and political groups, and their militias and militaries.

As the Civil War grinds into its eighth year, more than two million Syrians have been killed. The war has severely damaged the country's infrastructure, crippling life-sustaining marketing systems and in some regions obliterating entire villages and communities, rendering them utterly uninhabitable (UNHCR 2018f). Living conditions for survivors are so bleak or dangerous more than 11 million Syrians have been displaced (UNHCR 2017b), exacerbating the destruction of the socio-economic fabric. The effects have been felt most acutely within Syria and among Syrians, but regional neighbors also are affected, and in many respects the war has become a global conflagration, felt not only from Damascus to Raqqa, but also from Washington to Moscow. The conflict increasingly seems to be intractable.

Whatever motives existed or now exist for the war, the death, destruction, displacement and suffering would seem to serve as arguments that it was and is unjustifiable (Shultz 2016). Current and long-term costs are difficult to fathom; they go well beyond traditional economic estimates and, when calculated systemically and temporally, it becomes clear the devastation will impose costs for generations (Stiglitz and Bilmes 2008; Watson Institute 2018). The scale and scope of human suffering is unimaginable, redoubling the sense of urgency and necessity for a more humanitarian system, and ways such a system can be administered to enhance the well-being of Syrian refugees along their pathway, and potentially the well-being of more than 70 million FDP around the globe.

## The Syrian Refugee Pathway

### *Displacement*

The war has severely damaged or destroyed Syria's infrastructure, "breaking down" life-sustaining marketing systems and key components of them: the most basic resources, including potable water, shelter, channels for food and other basic supplies (forcing prices for them to skyrocket), schools and hospital networks. Most humans cannot survive under such conditions (UNHCR 2018f); consequently, more than half of all Syrians have been forcibly displaced: 6.3 million are IDP and more than 5.1 million are refugees (UNHCR 2017b). Among the 5,165,317 Syrian refugees, two million are registered by UNHCR in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon; 2.97 million Syrians were registered by the Government of Turkey; more than 30,000 Syrian refugees registered in North Africa. Since 2011, almost one million Syrians have also applied for asylum in European countries, of which 64% were/are in Germany or Sweden, 21% in Hungary, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark and Bulgaria, and the remaining 15% in other European countries.

Below, we identify the stages along the Refugee Pathway, and some of the different stakeholders of the Humanitarian Marketing System across them. While we identify separate stages, we also recognize that human mobility in any FDP situation is not necessarily time-specific or time-bound. A stream of individuals may continually envision departing from a conflict-ridden home and thus the different stages may merge or include issues and concerns from each other.

### *Journey to Temporary Resettlement*

Syrian refugees usually have sought safety in neighboring countries Lebanon (1 million), Jordan (.67 million), and Turkey (3.6 million) (UNHCR 2018h). Fleeing their homes and livelihoods, they embark upon a path that continues to be risky, uncertain, stressful and hazardous; difficulties are compounded because refugees are limited in their ability to help themselves and to support each other (Sijbrandij et al. 2017).

Dangers and costs of their journeys vary – border closings are common and often unpredictable or seemingly capricious, leaving people stranded in Syria. One's starting location, course, personal resources, ethnicity, tribal and political alliances, and contacts on the Pathway also affect whether and when to begin the journey, number of temporary stops along the way, degree of safety and probability of arriving at the destination of choice.

Neighboring countries furthermore monitor and restrict the entry of Syrians. For example, temporary border closings have been common by Lebanon since 2013. Jordan closed its borders to Syrian refugees in 2016. Turkey, in turn, has started building a concrete wall along its border with Syria; Turkey also closed 17 of its 19 border-crossings and has been reported to use violence against refugees trying to enter from Syria (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2017).

### *Temporary Settlement*

Once in the neighboring country, refugees seek safety in refugee communities/camps or cities. In Turkey – again, the (temporary) home to some 3.6 million Syrian refugees – 21 refugee camps are funded by the Turkish government, which house approximately 260,000 people (UNHCR 2019a).

No official Syrian refugee camps exist per se in Lebanon, but more than one million Syrian refugees are dispersed across the country, settled at the homes of family and friends in the region, or in squatter communities (Syrian Refugees 2016). Approximately 350,000 reside in makeshift camps in the Bekaa Valley, while another 240,00 have melded into Beirut (UNHCR 2019b). The Bekaa communities, just a few miles from the Syrian border, enable some freedom of movement; men, for example, often work in the local agriculture sector. "Homes" are tents of various sizes, comprised of wooden frames and covered by plastic sheets or canvas and battened-down by ropes and discarded tires; they typically are a solitary room; many have concrete floors; they often are connected to a crude electrical grid, but do not have running water or indoor

plumbing. Portable toilets are shared by the community. Water is delivered by trucks and then poured into centrally located large containers with faucets and pumps, which enable households to fill jugs that can be carried to tents. Water can be scarce. Social services – e.g., education, health care, a modest stipend, transportation – are offered by various NGOs. Note too that Bekaa experiences wide temperature swings: cold and sometimes snowy winters, scorching and dry summers (Shultz and Aoun 2017; Shultz and Aoun Barakat 2018).

Despite a willingness by Lebanese to offer refuge at considerable distress to an already fragile social/political/economic/marketing system, full access to all services is not permissible. Syrian refugees must pay annually to renew their residence permits to remain legally in the country, which grants access to government services (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2017). This situation leaves those who cannot afford the costs, unregistered and more vulnerable (UNHCR 2017c).

Over 655,000 Syrian refugees reside in Jordan. Most of them – approximately 80% (UNHCR 2018g) – do not live in refugee camps. Zaatari refugee camp in Northern Jordan, which opened in 2012, is a notable exception (Syrian Refugees 2016). The camp covers an area of five square kilometers and currently shelters about 80,000 Syrian refugees. Almost half a million refugees have passed through the Zaatari camp, which has a remarkable and impressively adaptive marketing system. The camp is known for its residents' marketing/consumer activities; approximately 3,000 shops and businesses not only serve the camp economy but engage adjacent communities (Al-Husban and Adams 2016; UNHCR 2017d). Some of these businesses are quite creative and resourceful, offering a plethora of goods and services. A supermarket, for example, accepts World Food Programme (WFP) food coupons instead of cash as payment for groceries (Knell 2014).

### *Journey to Permanent Settlement*

Once Syrian refugees pass into/through an adjacent country, some refugees continue their travel to Europe or beyond. Given the lack of opportunities to be included in official resettlement plans, most Syrians wishing for permanent settlement in Europe embark on the refugee journey independently and plan to apply for asylum upon arrival in the destination country. Almost 90% of the refugees attempting to reach the European Union have paid organized criminals and human traffickers to transport them across borders (European Commission 2016), often with tragic outcomes. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that nearly 25,000 migrants have died or gone missing between 2014 and 2017, indicative of the unsafe passage or the “death toll” of migration (IOM 2017).

Refugees who arrive to the European Union (the Schengen Area) are, in theory, able to move freely without border controls, frequently proceeding by trains and buses, as well as walking. However, some European Union member-states such as Austria, Slovenia and Slovakia have tightened their intra-European border controls in the wake of the refugee crisis (Gotev 2017). Many of the people enter the European Union

via its southeastern borders, with the goal to continue their journey to northern and western EU countries. Providing people with food, water and shelter during their journey and temporary settlement – especially in Greece and Italy, where most refugees and migrants first arrived in the EU – is an enormous task for the local governments and NGOs. To ease the situation, other EU member-states agreed to relocate 160,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy; however, many countries are behind their relocation goals (European Commission 2016).

Since 2011, almost one million Syrians have applied for asylum after arriving in European countries, of which 64% are in Germany or Sweden, 21% in Hungary, Austria, Netherlands, Denmark and Bulgaria, and the remaining 15% in other European countries. In most EU countries, persons who apply for asylum are directed to government-funded reception centers to wait for their asylum appeals to be adjudicated. The services and circumstances of these temporary housing centers vary greatly depending on the country and region. For example, in Hungary, more refugees were held at closed detention centers than in open reception centers – in many cases against the requirements of the European Court of Human Rights (AIDA 2017). Another example of temporary housing is found in Germany, the initial reception centers (aimed to house asylum seekers for the first months of their stay) and the longer-term collective accommodation centers are run by the federal, state or in some cases, local municipalities (AIDA 2017). During the peak year, 2015, many asylum seekers were housed in emergency reception centers and stuck in lengthy administrative procedures. Many refugees waiting for asylum decisions are also housed in private homes with family, friends or volunteers (brought together by networks such as Refugees Welcome). When not recognized as refugees, European countries may differ in their provision of healthcare and potentially other services for asylum seekers or undocumented migrants who are potentially traumatized and have experienced great loss (Mladovsky et al. 2012).

### *Permanent Settlement*

Temporary settlement in a country is considered permanent when a refugee receives a residence permit based on the need of international protection. In some cases, a settlement that was initially planned to be temporary may be prolonged and turned into a quasi-permanent stage. However, without residency permits, full participation in many activities is restricted.

Typically, the permanent settlement stage is reached by receiving a positive decision on an asylum application in the European country in which the refugee wishes to settle. In EU countries, the rate of recognition – that is, the share of positive asylum decisions of the total number of decisions – was considerably higher for Syrian refugees than any other refugee group: 98.1% in 2016 (Eurostat 2017).

Another option is to be admitted to a country through the UNHCR resettlement program (i.e., quota refugees). In that case, the person is immediately provided with legal and physical protection, including rights similar to those enjoyed by

nationals (UNHCR 2018d). These so-called “quota refugees” are transported to a third country (country of resettlement) from their temporary asylum country, and issued residence permits, housing and integration support from day one. Only a limited number of refugees however have the possibility to enter the European Union in this way; most of them are resettled to non-European countries (UNHCR 2018e).

The possibilities for Syrian refugees entering non-EU regions are limited by geographical constraints and entry restrictions. Therefore, the numbers of Syrian refugees outside the Middle East and Europe are lower. However, some countries – e.g., Canada, the United States and Australia – accept the quota. The Canadian government furthermore has made efforts to issue visas and to allocate resources for the resettlement of Syrian refugees; approximately 40,000 Syrians have been resettled in Canada, about 14,000 through private sponsorships (Government of Canada 2017).

Even though the residence permit gives refugees legal rights and responsibilities similarly to those enjoyed by local citizens, time and investments to support integration and learning are necessary during the first years of permanent resettlement. During this stage, local governments and municipalities can provide assistance for housing, language training, education and employment. The informal community and volunteers often prove to be crucial for the social integration and well-being of refugees. EU law does not mandate any particular integration-model, but the EU Common Basic Principles define integration as a two-way process between the immigrants and nationals of the European states. Also, the importance of employment, education, civic and community participation and of cultural and religious diversity is emphasized. EU funds integration programs in the member states, but the national governments are responsible for carrying out the actual policies and actions (Sunderland 2016).

The situation of the Syrians displaced in the neighboring countries is perhaps even more challenging. The international community is encouraging Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey to grant Syrian refugees legal rights to participate in the workforce. However, the countries are already severely distressed, and their own citizens experience high levels of unemployment. Hence, the local informal communities continue to be important sources of support for refugees (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2017).

## **Toward a more Humanitarian Marketing System**

Marketing systems reflect the context in which they emerge, change, or break down (e.g., Mittelstaedt, Duke, and Mittelstaedt 2009; Shultz et al. 2005); they “require trust in remote, and often never met or personally encountered, individuals” (Wooliscroft and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft 2018, p. 355). Given the traumas, disconnects and treachery suffered along their pathway, FDP especially need to establish individual and community connections to new, complex and remote environments, while maintaining/restoring relationships with one’s family

and community (Shultz, Rahtz, and Sirgy 2017). The analysis of the Syrian Refugee Pathway reveals that connectedness, a feeling of belonging to or having affinity with a particular group (Berkman et al. 2000), underpins FDP wellness-outcomes (Brough et al. 2003). The event triggering displacement often severs connections to/among people and fragmented communities that may have been dispersed to refugee facilities, regionally and perhaps even globally. (Re)Connecting not only benefits refugees and their families, it also helps governments and NGOs to plan and create safe environments for affected individuals and communities; indeed, the Commissioner of the UNHCR contends it is vital:

Connectivity has the potential to transform how we communicate, the way in which we respond to the protection needs of displaced people, and our delivery of humanitarian services. Most significantly, better connectivity can promote self-reliance by broadening the opportunities for refugees to improve their own lives (UNHCR 2016b).

Thus, to create, enhance or restore FDP connections – to people, places, resources and institutions – is to build a more humanitarian marketing system.

Our research reveals numerous, promising grass-roots initiatives for creating, enhancing or restoring connections. Communication technologies, such as IT networks, smartphones and their apps deliberately or coincidentally shared by various refugees and other persons along the Pathway emerged as most viable conduits. This explosive growth and far-reaching diffusion of technological initiatives has not bypassed FDP: approximately 68% of urban and 22% of rural refugees have internet capable phones (UNHCR 2016b). Information Technologies help to transcend any particular marketing system, even one profoundly degraded or fully demolished by war; just as these technologies are thought to have contributed greatly to the “Arab Spring” social/political movement (Skålen, Kotaiba, and Edvardsson 2015), they now enable FDP to have some connection to – perhaps even a beacon to – more hospitable marketing systems.

The implications of this transcendence are manifold and profound (e.g., Benton and Glennie 2016; Deutsche Welle 2018); not only in providing potentially life-saving information, but in offering hope – even during the most harrowing steps along the Pathway. For example, during a trigger event and initial displacement, access to geolocation services such as GPS (USA), Galileo (EU), Glonass (Russia) or BeiDou (China) may be essential for route planning and safe passage through dangerous areas. Sharing such services may mitigate or eliminate disasters, may save lives, and help humanitarian and rescue organizations. MeshPoint developed a rugged, portable, autonomous, user-friendly device that creates a Wi-Fi-hotspot for multiple, simultaneous users, which can be used in response to pressing communication needs of humanitarian organizations and FDP during temporary settlement (Weiss-Meyer 2017). Using existing face-recognition technology, the International Red Cross commissioned a family reunification service

named Trace the Face, which allows displaced individuals to post photos of themselves and loved ones, and to conduct searches by images, thus helping families to reunite.

The business and marketing endeavors for improving FDP connectedness and well-being need not be merely an offshoot or one-off of existing businesses in a new segment. A more humanitarian marketing system involving multiple stakeholders embedded in a social matrix – which collectively creates economic value through the offer of assorted products, services, experiences, and ideas, along the FDP pathway – should adapt (cf. Layton 2015). Such adaptation will be expedited by efforts and activities by well-coordinated catalytic institutions (Shultz et al. 2012), which will stimulate or positively “jolt” the system (Layton and Duffy 2018), rendering it more humane.

Consider Techfugees, a social enterprise coordinating the international tech community’s response to the needs of the FDP (Benton and Glennie 2016). Techfugees not only organizes conferences and events around the world in an effort to generate tech solutions for and with refugees, but also links, curates, and promotes the best projects to the humanitarian sponsors. Additionally, new partnerships imply new roles for the existing stakeholders. For example, UNICEF started the Innovation Fund that supports early stage, open-source technology that can benefit children and other vulnerable groups (UNICEF 2015). By identifying clusters of initiatives around emerging technologies (such as machine learning, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, etc.), UNICEF aims to shape future markets and use these technologies for humanitarian purposes. Essentially, UNICEF assumes the role of venture investor that solicits projects from tech entrepreneurs around the world. These partnerships and alliances promoting new business models may be characterized by new roles and responsibilities of/for humanitarian and international organizations, including private businesses. Thus, these organizations may assume more holistic roles as partners of sorts – such as investor, buyer, or collaborator – which are common in for-profit settings.

The development of more humanitarian marketing systems may also jolt the use-efficiencies of shared assets (Layton 2011), if they are deployed effectively at different or multiple stages of the Refugee Pathway. Services utilizing geographic information systems (GPS) may help FDP on their journeys, including while planning permanent settlement, by identifying areas most friendly to refugees. “Migreat”, an online platform explaining migration rules at different countries is a prime example. Therefore, if a key asset may be deployed for multiple occasions and different customers, the value of such an asset increases (Kortmann and Piller 2016); it moreover may serve as part of a platform, intended for use by diverse customers and stakeholders. Therefore, the development of a Humanitarian Marketing System may optimize the efficiency and utility of assets, which facilitates the ability to reduce the incremental cost of addressing specific needs of individuals in FDP group(s), and to justify the economic rationale behind investments in such assets (Magretta 2002).

A crucible of the technologies, products and services, and their utility to enhance connectivity is clearly evident in the refugee communities located in Bekaa Valley. These technologies, *in aggregate*, are vital to daily life in the camps and outside the camps – and to future lives and livelihoods wherever refugees are settled. Re-consider the previously described tents in the Bekaa Valley. They typically have a functioning electrical outlet, a satellite dish and a television; most families have at least one cell phone. In their immediate surroundings they communicate with fellow refugees; they also learn about and communicate with businesses and NGOs in the adjacent community – to ensure a steady flow of life sustaining goods and services, but also to understand the world around them, and the possibilities for going forward. While children attend to school-lessons offered by NGOs, parents simultaneously occupy their time elsewhere: mothers visit friends, some leave the refugee community to shop in or simply to explore local villages and the wonders of markets, the likes of which were often obliterated in the villages and cities they fled; older brothers and fathers attend to chores in the community or work in various jobs – typically in agriculture on nearby farms (Shultz and Aoun Barakat 2018).

The importance of the opportunity to work, to find meaning in and to contribute to the marketing system cannot be overstated (see also Ndege 2018; Kenrick et al. 2010; Maslow 1943; Shultz et al. 2005; cf. Porter et al. 2008), as these refugees are connected to institutions, ideas, education models, health care, attitudes, and visions that were destroyed or inaccessible where they lived in Syria. For all the suffering and deprivations experienced during displacement, along the journey and in their tents, these refugees – these *people* – now have access to more uncensored information, more diverse ideas; more advanced health care; more liberal education – and better access to it, especially for girls and women – and in some instances better professional opportunities, if not now, certainly when the war and refugee-status eventually ends. They have new visions about what life can be, should peace ultimately prevail and permanent settlement occur.

A more Humanitarian Marketing System is embedded in social, cultural, economic, and political expectations for an active, compassionate involvement of every participant, given the depth and scope of refugees’ deprivation (Jamali and Mirshak 2010). Several marketing-systems cases revealed the capacity of adaptive, catalytic institutions, including public and private organizations, to ensure that fundamental human needs – e.g., access to food and shelter, physical health, basic education, decent employment and community connectedness – are met, and well-being is enhanced. As established partnerships of the UNHCR (2018c) underline, complementary efforts from critical public, private, and civil entities, local to international, are needed to end or to mitigate the FDP crisis.

## Discussion and Implications

More than 70 million refugees and IDP are in desperate need of fresh ideas, policies, businesses, and the responsible marketing

and consumption of goods, services and experiences to enhance their well-being. We have explored ways in which marketing systems can be assessed, integrated and adapted to facilitate relief and to offer hope when challenged by catastrophe in scale and scope of the global refugee crisis. We propose a Refugee Pathway to understand the unique hardships and vulnerabilities FDP experience at each stage of their journey. From the initial trigger event until permanent settlement and integration into a host country, or until home-repatriation, FDP often share many common hardships while traversing various systems, including marketing systems, some of which are destroyed, some of which are makeshift, some of which are established and in various forms of adaptation in response to the crisis. The vulnerabilities of FDP also may vary depending on the stage of their journey, the provisioning capabilities of catalytic institutions, marketing mechanisms and marketing systems, and the motivations of constituents and leaders of those institutions and systems, respectively. Our research indicates the need for constructive engagement along this pathway, which in turn suggests the possibility for a more Humanitarian Marketing System to ameliorate, if not fully resolve, the crisis.

Enhanced well-being of FDP and the societies in which they settle is of course a long-term objective of this on-going study. Refugee and IDP settlements, usually intended to be temporary but sometimes extending over decades, greatly challenge marketing systems, which often lack infrastructure and basic services to meet the acute and chronic needs of FDP. Legal status, right to participate in society through civic activities and duties, access to education and the workforce, and property ownership are often nonexistent or compromised. While integration into the host country is difficult, degraded or demolished marketing systems and/or violence in the home country make repatriation risky and inhumane. Even when permanent residence and societal integration are “complete”, many FDP suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders, which may cause chronic vulnerabilities and thus special needs, which can require various goods and social services for years.

Significant support nodes and alliances in marketing systems along that pathway include governments as host countries that allow either transit through or settlement in the sovereign territory administered by those governments. The role of dedicated humanitarian agencies – e.g., UNHCR – is vital in identification and registration of FDP, in some cases the facilitation of the onward journey and the management of refugee/IDP services such as camps and health centers. NGOs, which are financially, materially and logistically supported by governments and donors, may not only assist the refugees along the pathway but also may assume new roles (such as investor, buyer, or business partner) that may help develop new and effective solutions. The involvement of community organizations, volunteers and local civic groups is also paramount.

Despite tireless efforts and good deeds from the aforementioned institutions and groups, our research indicates significant gaps and omissions still exist, suggesting the need for a more streamlined and humane pathway. Recommendations for streamlining are systemic and integrative; they include, for

example, greater coordination of activities among governments, international humanitarian and development agencies, and grassroots and global participants. The process of how issues relating to refugee-settlement, integration with host or home communities, repatriation and well-being are managed in both home and host countries may well provide the solution to the current global refugee crisis. A more humanitarian approach involving greater engagement and understanding, empathy, consensus, and partnership between and across all nodes and agencies in the task and process of refugee management, refugee welfare and well-being is increasingly apparent, as is the need for constructive engagement by businesses and related marketing endeavors, which are underutilized resources.

A more Humanitarian Marketing System would greatly facilitate the health and well-being of FDP, as it would/should recognize FDP as vulnerable consumers in need of predictable goods and services along a dynamic pathway of various, but foreseeable stages (cf. Baker, Gentry, and Rittenburg 2005; Layton and Duffy 2018). The importance of connections/connectedness – and the technologies that expedite them/it – throughout such a marketing system of near and remote participants, in both time and space, is emphasized; information technologies particularly enhance both efficiency and effectiveness of relief efforts and ultimately well-being for the FDP (cf. Wooliscroft and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft 2018).

The authors’ research furthermore suggests opportunities for alliances and cooperation among catalytic institutions – governments, businesses and NGOs – as integral to the Humanitarian Marketing System, to collaborate and ultimately to affect FDP wellness via improved connectivity and community (Shultz et al. 2012). Again, information technologies are proving to be especially valuable – even before explicit, catastrophic events trigger departure from home – to chart pathways, to communicate about the existence of safe passageways (and to warn of unsafe passageways), to communicate regarding supplies and services, and so forth. Indeed, these technologies often serve as shared assets, which help to coordinate most if not all participants and activities in the marketing system: financial services, healthcare providers, education, food and water-delivery, employment, entertainment; they help to facilitate closed-loop products in the forms of water containers, transport containers, machinery, housing supplies, construction equipment, to name but a few examples. Truly, *in aggregate*, information technologies are vital to the coordination and connection of institutions, people, goods, services and experiences; they are tantamount to the central nervous system of an adaptive Humanitarian Marketing System along the Refugee Pathway (cf. Layton 2015, 2019).

The Refugee Pathway offers a schema for future research to design and adapt a more Humanitarian Marketing System to better meet the needs of FDP, from displacement to resettlement or permanent settlement. By revealing gaps, system shortcomings and abject failures, it also reveals research opportunities. These opportunities will require multiple methods, diverse perspectives and some alternative approaches to

facilitate further understanding and action (cf. Haase, Becker, and Pick 2018). Perspectives can be macro or micro, and likely the coordination of both; that is, systemic exploration of the Refugees' Pathway and/or studies of arcane experiences, traumas, and challenges of individual consumers and consumer-communities. Some specific considerations and foci are shared below.

Digital technologies will increasingly enable researchers to collect and to model data pertaining to flows of people, goods and services; purchase, consumption and disposal patterns; attitudes toward living conditions, and FDP needs and wants. These technologies can or will provide behavior-based criteria to correct intervention-shortcomings and to improve well-being at stages and places along the Refugees' Pathway.

Businesses, markets and marketing are indispensable to a more Humanitarian Marketing System to affect well-being for FDP. How might we increase constructive engagement with people, places and other catalytic institutions, and equally importantly, how might we encourage governments, NGOs and businesses to cooperate in ways to design and offer goods and services – ideally, “best practices” – that contribute to peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and sustainable societies, which in turn would reduce the number of wars and other forms of armed conflicts and violence that produce millions of refugees and IDP? In this effort, and similarly to some of the IT initiatives described above, more business and marketing leaders might embrace “Queenship,” to discern ethical, sustainable, historically sensitive and systemic activities to enhance life-quality for FDP (Peterson 2013). Toward that desirable orientation, what are the best practices for intervention, service provision and resettlement; as determined by whom, when and for whom? Similarly, what constitutes “well-being”; again, as determined by whom, when, and for whom? How is it monitored and measured?

What lessons from research on war-induced displacement might be relevant and applicable to other disenfranchised and vulnerable consumers – climate refugees, for example – which some models estimate will be larger in number than war-refugees (cf. Barrios et al. 2016; Shultz et al. 2005). Will the preponderance of climate refugees incite more intolerance, violence and wars, thus creating still more refugees?

These are fruitful areas of research not only for macromarketing scholars, but for ethicists, sociologists, physicians, psychologists, political scientists, biologists, decision scientists, economists, statisticians, oceanographers, geographers, meteorologists and indeed any scholar/researcher interested in improving the human condition. The complexity and trans-disciplinary nature of the issues suggest collaboration across disciplines would be welcome and useful. Longitudinal studies administered by eclectic macromarketing teams – à la the one assembled for this project – committed to understanding the dynamic interactions among policy, business and consumption as they affect and are affected by variances in well-being of FDP and the marketing systems in which they are found would be especially useful, welcome and humane.

Our research reveals that crisis begets opportunity and ingenuity, and that FDP are not merely isolated, vulnerable consumers. Refugees and IDP in fact can be dynamic economic assets, not only where they are settled – even if only temporarily – but also potentially in their home countries and regions from which they have been displaced. Furthermore, they are links to new and old, functional and fractured, with capabilities and motivations to be reverse-conduits, of sorts, back to the homeland; for financial and social capital, technology, goods and services, which in turn can expedite recovery, and peaceful and prosperous integration into the responsible community of nations. They are a macromarketing bellwether for the effects of natural and human-induced disasters that affect all of us, directly or indirectly, which require cost-saving investments in peace-marketing and disaster prevention and preparation. Lastly – and perhaps most importantly – refugees and Internally Displaced Persons can be tangible evidence of the wonder and power of fresh-thinking, tolerance, compassion and cooperation that thrives in a well-administered, inclusive, democratic, adaptive and Humanitarian Marketing System designed and administered to affect sustainable and equitable consumer and societal well-being.

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