



## AHI ACTIVITIES

Dear friend of AHI:

***In the two months since we last wrote you, our world added at least 1,000,000 refugees to a global population that now tops 50,000,000.<sup>1</sup>*** Aside from the immediate tragedies we see on the news, prolonged displacement is an enduring tragedy, and also a tragedy of the clashes among good intentions. Temporary cities in everything but name, refugee and IDP camps bring overcrowding, idleness, frustration, and despair – and with them come crime, hidden violence (much of it domestic), and rage seeking a chance to lash out.

***Housing civilizes people; lack of housing brutalizes them.*** Because of this, at AHI we are passionate about the issues of post-disaster resettlement, reconstruction, and re-urbanization. Focusing solely on the immediate delivery of humanitarian goods is an all-too-understandable mistake because it closes the relief agency's collective eyes to the city they are making people live in. We want policy makers and humanitarian agencies to see themselves as urban-planners-on-fast-forward, to reshape the agenda from immediate relief to accelerated renewal, and to create conditions where the new settlement that arises is acknowledged as an urban condition that needs not just short-term charity but also long-term investment.

As an example, consider the UN-developed Self Reliance Strategy: in Uganda, where refugees are allowed to work, researchers have found that they contributed to the Ugandan economy by buying and selling from Ugandans and employing Ugandans. As NPR's Planet Money put it in their Episode 557: Doing Business Like a Refugee (8/1/2014):

*"It's sort of a label problem. When people come to another country to work, they're called migrants. That's what [interviewee] wants to be called: a migrant, not a refugee. ... 'Refugee is not a good word because a refugee wants to be helped. But a migrant; that sounds good.... Being a refugee is temporary; even when you're busy working, you're in limbo. You're waiting.'"*

***For AHI, sometimes we make impact by making change; sometimes by recommending; and sometimes by witnessing.*** When it comes to instant cities, we will continue to research and publicize the challenges. As a first and important step, we've just published a book, Zaatari: The Instant City, about a place in Jordan six miles from Syria that from nothing has come to house more than 125,000 people. AHI conceived, commissioned, and published this 100-page curation. The electronic version is a free download (6 Meg pdf), but the book is most impactful when a reader holds it in her hands. For \$40 apiece, we can place them in the hands of policy makers, global thought leaders, and people in a position to make change. We will print as many as we can afford; if you'd like to help us, click here to donate \$40 or more, designate "Zaatari" as the purpose and include the person's name and address, and we'll deliver a copy<sup>2</sup> with your compliments.

David A. Smith, Founder and CEO

1 If, as seems likely, 2014's refugee population growth matches 2013's, <http://www.unhcr.org/53a155bc6.html>.

2 To make a bulk purchase, email me directly, [dsmith@affordablehousinginstitute.org](mailto:dsmith@affordablehousinginstitute.org), and we'll work it out.

# Zaatari: The Instant City

We have just published *Zaatari: The Instant City*, a book which documents Jordan's Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees, what it is and what it is becoming, as an example of post-disaster resettlement. It is now available for free download and also to print at cost.

Though considered to be a temporary settlement, Zaatari is one of the largest and fastest-growing cities in Jordan, housing more than 120,000 Syrian refugees on a 2-square-mile plot of desert and costing \$500,000 a day to run. Instant cities like Zaatari are not acknowledged as such, even though they last an average of 17 years and currently house 45+ million people worldwide. *Zaatari: The Instant City* brings home this dreadful reality. We want it to spur change. Right now, relief-oriented agencies focus on the immediate delivery of humanitarian goods; no one looks at the place as a city-in-the-making. We want policy makers and humanitarian agencies to see themselves as urban-planners-on-fast-forward, to reshape the agenda from immediate relief to accelerated renewal, and to create conditions where the new settlement that arises is acknowledged as an urban condition that can benefit from investment as well as charity.

*Zaatari street (UNHCR Image)*



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# Affordable housing in Ulaanbaatar

**Location:** Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

**Client:** Municipality of Ulaanbaatar

In late August, AHI Founder and CEO David Smith and Project Manager Anya Brickman Raredon traveled to Ulaanbaatar (UB) to present the AHI team's recently submitted draft affordable housing strategy. They led a 50-person workshop with UB's visionary Mayor and other city officials, followed by a series of individual meetings. Working alongside our team of Mongolian consultants, David and Anya received great feedback, which the team will use as we finalize the affordable housing strategy document for delivery by year-end. While in UB, David and Anya also, explored a ger area neighborhood, sampled mare's milk, and ate lots of delicious Mongolian dumplings and soups.

*Housing workshop at UB City Hall*

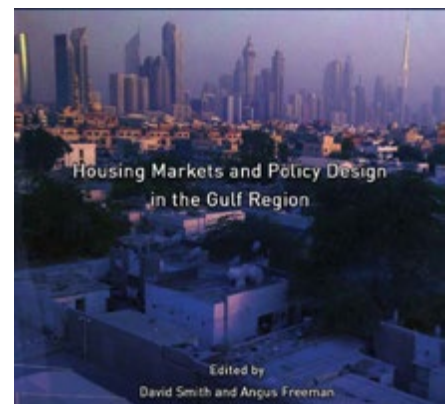


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# Housing Markets and Policy Design in the Gulf Region

In 2012, CEO David Smith co-hosted, and GCC Managing Director Maysa Sabah participated in, a two-day symposium on housing markets and policy in the Gulf Region, run by Cambridge University's Gulf Research Centre. This book, now published by the GRC and available for free download (or \$15 a hard copy), presents nine papers from the symposium that illustrate some of the principal topics and conversations discussed debated at the symposium.

*Gulf Research Centre Book*



**For questions and comments about our work contact: [mmcgowan@affordablehousinginstitute.org](mailto:mmcgowan@affordablehousinginstitute.org)**