



Special Initiative

Tackling the Root Causes of Displacement, (Re)integrating Refugees (Special Initiative on Displacement)

There are almost 82.4 million displaced people around the world. They are forced to leave their homes to escape war, crises, oppression and persecution.

The overwhelming majority remain in their own country or seek refuge in a neighbouring state. 86 per cent of all refugees can be found in developing countries, which work extremely hard to provide shelter despite facing major challenges of their own. In many cases, however, host communities and refugee camps have reached the limits of their capacity. Accommodation and work are both in short supply. Schools cannot admit all the children who need places, and both water and food are increasingly scarce. These conditions frequently lead to heightened social tension.

Our development policies focus on mitigating the structural factors that often cause displacement. That includes the failure of state institutions, poverty, inequality and a lack of opportunities. We see these structural problems as our starting point.

WHAT IS THE SPECIAL INITIATIVE ON DISPLACEMENT?

The Special Initiative entitled 'Tackling the Root Causes of Displacement, (Re)integrating Refugees' (in short: Special Initiative on Displacement) was launched in 2014. It complements our traditional approach to development cooperation and enables us to deliver a rapid and targeted response to global refugee crises that includes support for host regions. In both acute and long-term situations, our goal is to improve the living conditions of people on the ground and create opportunities for them whether they stay in the host community or return to their country of origin.

Main areas of intervention

- Support for refugees, internally displaced people and returnees
- Stabilisation of host regions
- Mitigating the causes of forced displacement

The successful use of flexible crisis instruments for development cooperation, such as the Special Initiative on Displacement, has made German development cooperation a pioneer in the implementation of projects at the interface between short-term humanitarian needs, long-term development prospects and peacebuilding (HDP nexus) in refugee and displacement contexts.

The initiative addresses specific needs in several areas: water and electricity supplies; health care; education and employment; psychosocial support for those who are traumatised; reconciliation and peacebuilding. All our projects are guided by the 'do no harm' principle. With a view to preventing further conflicts, support is directed not only at those who have been forcibly displaced but also at local people and official bodies in the host regions.

Geographically, the Special Initiative focuses on the Middle East and Africa, although there are also projects in other regions, for example in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador and Ukraine.

In March 2016, we launched our flagship **Partnership for Prospects initiative** in the Middle East. This involves creating job opportunities that allow refugees to earn a living based on the 'cash-for-work' principle. Thanks to these jobs, they can support themselves and their families and take back at least some control over their lives. Typically, cash-for-work jobs involve municipal services such as collecting waste, recycling, and building and improving roads, homes and schools. Partnership for Prospects also funds the salaries of additional teachers and health care workers.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Between 2014 and the end of 2020, the Special Initiative provided funds totalling 3.1 billion euros for around 268 projects. Over this period, roughly 15.5 million people benefited from the measures implemented by these projects.



Education

To date, 2 million children have benefited from projects that increase access to education and improve the learning environment. In 2020 alone, Partnership for Prospects enabled 473,000 children to attend school by funding teachers' salaries.



Training

The Special Initiative on Displacement has funded vocational training and business start-up courses for around 500,000 people, mostly in the Middle East but also in East Africa.



Opportunities to work and earn a living

Since 2016 the Partnership for Prospects has created over 460,000 job opportunities for refugees, internally displaced people and those living in host communities in the Middle East. On top of this, Special Initiative projects to boost employment and income have benefited around 138,000 people in other parts of the world.



Psychosocial support

The Special Initiative on Displacement funds projects whose activities include providing psychosocial support. So far, around 445,000 people have benefited. A set of guidelines for those working in this field was published in collaboration with civil society organisations.



Health care

A number of projects have been set up under the Special Initiative to improve local health care provision. These have benefited over 1.1 million people in several countries, e.g. Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya and Yemen. In addition, Syrian health care workers in Turkey and Syria provided more than 250,000 treatments for Syrian refugees and IDPs in 2020.



Gender

The Action Network on Forced Displacement – Women as Agents of Change was founded in 2020. It connects members and partners working on the political and economic participation of displaced women. The network is endowed with a fund that supports projects by women for women.

In its projects, the Special Initiative focuses on promoting gender equality. More than a third of

projects include women as a specific target group, especially in the education and employment promotion sectors.



Water supply and sanitation

By the end of 2020, the Special Initiative had funded measures to improve water supplies and sanitation for approximately 6.5 million people. In Ethiopia, for example, over 230,000 people have gained access to water through the expansion of water supply systems in refugee camps and adjacent host communities.



Energy

At Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, a solar power installation has boosted the supply of electricity to meet the energy needs of 80,000 people. UNHCR is saving 7 million euros per year as a result, which now can be used for other urgent needs. With UNHCR, we are working in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia to provide refugees and host communities in protracted refugee situations with access to sustainable energy supplies.

Partnerships have been established with **UN organisations** to multiply the impact of the Special Initiative on Displacement. In partnership with UNHCR, we strengthen the UN refugee agency in its role as a coordinator of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach. With UNDP and ILO, we have initiated an international dialogue on the issue of employment creation in the context of forced displacement. Meanwhile, with UNICEF, we are working on approaches to the provision of mental health and psychosocial support. The recommendations drawn up by international experts following a series of workshops on these subjects featured prominently in discussions at the Syria conferences in 2019 and 2020.

OUTLOOK

The challenges involved in addressing displacement will no doubt remain with us for the foreseeable future, and climate-induced displacement will increase. There will continue to be great demands in terms of development policy to create prospects quickly and flexibly for refugees, internally displaced persons and people from host communities. In protracted crises, our work is to build bridges towards sustainable development in the host regions.

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