Responding to Refugee Crises in Developing Countries

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What Can We Learn From Evaluations?



Working Paper

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Cover image: Hundreds of refugees come across the border from Syria into Jordan at remote eastern desert locations.
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Foreword

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has recognised that international co-operation and development assistance in relation to forced displacement, refugees, and migration need greater attention. In 2016, the DAC formed a Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration.

This working paper provides evidence from evaluations to feed into guidance on better programming in refugee contexts that is being developed through the DAC Temporary Working Group. The paper draws from evaluation findings to highlight some of the key lessons and recommendations for positive change going forward. Key topics covered in the paper include: lessons on bridging the gap between humanitarian and development programming; efforts to strengthen international response to protracted crises; lessons on whole-of-government approaches in refugee contexts; learning from work in urban settings; improving access to employment and quality education; new financing mechanisms for refugee crises in middle income countries; and lessons on financing in response to the Syria crisis. The paper highlights the evaluation work of DAC members and aims to help strengthen the evidence base to improve response to situations of displacement in developing countries.

Three cases studies (Afghanistan, South Sudan and Ethiopia/Uganda) complement the main paper and look at how policy objectives have been implemented in specific country contexts.

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A large medieval fortified palace in the centre of the old city of Aleppo.
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Acronyms and abbreviations

3D	Development, Defence, Diplomacy
3RP	Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan
BEFARe	Basic Education for Afghan Refugees, Pakistan
CALL	Syria Coordinated Accountability and Lesson Learning
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
DFATD	Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (Canada)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ECHO	European Commission Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid
ERF	Emergency Response Fund
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FSPs	Fragile states principles
GHA	Global humanitarian assistance
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
HA	Humanitarian assistance
HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan (ECHO)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (Netherlands)
LRRD	Linking relief, rehabilitation and development
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
MIC	Middle income country
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ODA	Official development assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHARP	Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
TSI	Transitional Solutions Initiative
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	UN Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

Displacement is at a historic high, with over 65 million individuals currently displaced. The world is facing a refugee crisis that is unprecedented in scale. Forced displacement and population movements have led to unrest, demographic changes, and increasing political attention. While many of the situations and contexts that people are fleeing are not new, the impacts of recent movements have been strongly felt around the world. The global impact of the current refugee crisis has led to renewed efforts to find better programming solutions to prevent, respond to, and find longer-term solutions to forced displacement.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has recognised that international co-operation and development assistance strategies in relation to forced displacement, refugees, and migration need greater attention. In 2016, the 30 members of the DAC formed a Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration with the aim of looking at reporting of ODA and to work towards better programming guidance. This working paper provides evidence from evaluations to feed into guidance on better programming that is being developed through the DAC Temporary Working Group.

A large number of evaluations look at different aspects of programming in refugee contexts. This paper covers the key areas and priority topics in relation to forced displacement that the DAC Temporary Working Group identified. It draws from evaluation findings to highlight some of the key lessons and recommendations for positive change going forward. Evaluations of strategy and programming in many refugee contexts bring to light complex realities that are faced on the ground in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The existing evaluation evidence on responding to situations of forced displacement in developing countries suggests that many practical barriers to better programming remain. International consensus at the policy level is increasing. But it is not a simple task to turn policy objectives into better programming in specific refugee contexts and to ensure coherence between humanitarian and development efforts. There are no silver-bullet solutions or one-size-fits-all approaches to deal with the complexity of situations related to forced displacement. Evaluations shed light on the obstacles, while pointing to areas where response can be improved and to new approaches that may be working.

Key findings

The review of evaluation evidence undertaken for this study confirms some areas of existing knowledge and brings to light other lessons. The following are some of the key messages from evaluation evidence identified in this study.

> **Obstacles to complementarity between humanitarian and development actors to support refugees' immediate and long-term needs are difficult to overcome in practice.**

Traditionally, humanitarian actors have largely provided refugee response. However, there is a growing consensus in the international community that longer-term development responses to displacement are needed. Evaluation evidence, however, suggests that there are still important gaps to overcome to improve linkages between humanitarian assistance and longer-term development planning. Evaluations found these two areas to be largely disconnected in practice.



South Sudanese refugees
crossing into Uganda
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Evaluations suggest that most efforts to address root causes of conflict and promote state building in major refugee countries of origin have not proven to be effective short- or medium-term solutions to refugee crises.

By definition, refugees are fleeing contexts in which conflict and insecurity have left them few options. Changing the factors leading to conflict and forced displacement in countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, Iraq and Somalia cannot be achieved in a short time span. Evaluations demonstrate the significant challenges and obstacles faced in these contexts, with efforts at addressing root causes not necessarily leading to obvious short-term success. The research in this study, therefore, suggests that the international community should not view efforts to address root causes of displacement as a short-term solution to refugee movements. There is little evidence to date to suggest that programming designed to address the root causes of conflict has been successful in preventing population movements (although most programming has not been undertaken with the goal of preventing population movements as its main objective). More evidence and research on the possible impact of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and state building on population movements may be needed.

In many refugee contexts, humanitarian needs have tended to remain high over many years, and in some areas humanitarian needs have remained high over decades.

There is reason to believe that this will continue to be the case, suggesting that the international community should not expect situations to improve so quickly, that providing immediate humanitarian assistance to displaced populations is no longer a priority. The crises that provoke forced displacement tend to be protracted. This means the humanitarian needs of displaced populations, and the need for funding for humanitarian assistance, are also likely to remain high over an extended period of time. Given the probable long-term need for humanitarian assistance in many contexts, international donors should work to ensure that their actions including development efforts and stabilisation initiatives are consistent with humanitarian principles and do not lead to inadvertent negative consequences that could limit "humanitarian space".

Funding for responses to forced displacement and population movements has not kept pace with needs, leading to competition between immediate humanitarian and longer-term programming.

Evaluations suggest that the main challenge facing the international community is how to work to meet the immediate needs of people who have been forcibly displaced while simultaneously working for longer-term solutions. In refugee countries of origin such as South Sudan, the needs of people who are now fleeing South Sudan as refugees compete with: the needs of people displaced within South Sudan; the needs of South Sudanese communities who are impacted by ongoing fighting and famine; and the needs of refugees from South Sudan who fled in previous refugee waves and have settled in surrounding countries. Limited funding also forces donors to choose among responses, and often leaves them unable to address all aspects of the crisis. In response to the Syrian crisis, for example, large funding shortfalls have led to programme disruptions. Evaluations have frequently highlighted a lack of evidence and clear criteria on which donors can base funding decisions. Funding shortfalls may limit the coherence and overall effectiveness of donor efforts to address refugee contexts in a holistic manner.

Evaluations clearly show that multi-year funding allows humanitarian and development actors to better address longer-term needs, while flexible funding allows actors to adjust to evolving situations.

However, evaluations highlight numerous cases where international donors continue to use short-term funding, although many have established partnership agreements which allow for more predictable funding. They also note instances where donors have struggled to match funding with the evolution of needs on the ground. The flexibility of funding has been highlighted by evaluations as an essential element to respond to evolving needs in volatile contexts.

Evaluations found that in many cases international donors were slow to react and often failed to anticipate the impact of protracted conflict and instability on population movements.

OECD countries have largely had to play catch-up in relation to the current refugee crisis – a crisis that is a result of several long-standing conflicts which have led to successive waves of displacement and secondary displacement. Forced displacement is often the result of slow-onset crises and protracted conflict. It may therefore be possible for the international community, and in particular donors, to improve efforts to better predict and more quickly respond to future situations of forced displacement. Evaluations suggest that donors may aim to move from a "reactive" model to a more "proactive" approach.

Evaluations suggest that international donors faced challenges to organise assistance for refugees fleeing Syria as a result of institutional weaknesses and a lack of existing modalities for supporting refugees in middle income countries.

Many international donors did not have field presence in the Syria region and were unprepared to deliver a rapid response at scale. Institutional weaknesses included a lack of experienced humanitarian staff with field experience and regional expertise; weak forecasting and anticipation of the evolving sequence of events; weak ability to adapt quickly to evolving situations; and bureaucratic and administrative processes that hampered responsiveness. New modalities of financing to support middle income, heavily indebted host countries (Lebanon and Jordan) had to be put in place, with existing modalities not appropriate for the context.

Evaluations found that many international donors have yet to formulate clear policies and strategies to support refugees in urban contexts and have had to "learn as they go".

Traditionally, refugee programming has often focused on camp settings. The Syria crisis presented a new challenge: it was essentially a regional crisis as most Syrian refugees were in urban areas in surrounding countries, meaning that international donors faced challenges to ensure programming could reach refugees in urban areas. The dynamics of supporting refugees in urban host communities are radically different from the dynamics of traditional support in formal refugee camps. In the Syria region, an ongoing challenge for donors is finding effective ways to work with local authorities and support local capacities in the host country to provide essential services to urban refugees.

Evaluations consider the consequences of failures to provide education to displaced children and youth, and the need for greater efforts to support equitable and sustained access to quality education.

Evaluations found that education planning must continue to adapt to challenges of both large-scale and protracted displacement by moving beyond short-term emergency provision of education to longer-term strategies. The challenge for international donors is to ensure refugee populations both access to education and quality of education, while being conscious of not creating divisions between refugees and host communities. Evaluation evidence suggests that including education for refugees in national development planning and viewing education programming as part of a holistic child protection framework may help.

Evaluations recognise the importance of livelihoods and jobs for the forcibly displaced and suggest that some existing programmes and models may be effective, while new approaches such as compacts will need to be assessed once they have been implemented.

Evaluations highlight that formal access to the labour market is important and suggest that diplomatic efforts to improve refugees' labour market access may be needed. Evaluations also suggest that cash-based programmes have generally been successful in urban and middle income environments and could be scaled up. Evaluations highlighted that many programmes have created short-term employment opportunities for refugees and returnees, but that the sustainability of such initiatives over the longer term has often been a greater challenge. Compacts for job creation have been put in place in Jordan, Lebanon and now Ethiopia, and may prove promising. However, it is too early to measure their impact on job creation and future assessments of their performance will be needed.

OECD countries have tried different approaches and models to respond to refugee situations that bring together different government departments in a whole-of-government approach, with varying success.

Working in refugee countries of origin on the drivers of forced displacement in contexts such as Afghanistan and South Sudan, OECD member countries have attempted to bring together different areas of expertise by having development, humanitarian, diplomatic, military and security actors work together. In Afghanistan, these efforts led to multi-disciplinary teams and the Provincial Reconstruction Team model, but evaluations suggest that this approach led to a number of difficulties. In South Sudan, there was greater success with a different whole-of-government model that was based on information sharing among actors working on development, humanitarian response and security sector reform. The evaluation evidence highlights the variety of whole-of-government approaches that have been used and suggests that learning from previous attempts is important, as some attempts have been less successful than others.

Evaluations of policies and programmes in a variety of contexts caution that short-term political pressures and intense focus on immediate, visible results can undermine longer-term positive change.

Evaluations have highlighted some dangers related to the militarisation and politicisation of aid in some contexts. Foreign policy objectives, domestic concerns and development needs sometimes align, but in other cases they can compete. Overall, the evaluations reviewed for this study suggest that effective solutions to complex crises are often long-term and gradual, with past efforts that did not take into consideration the absorptive capacity of institutions often failing. Quality programming and sustainable development gains often take time. Addressing the underlying structural causes of displacement has to be a long-term objective, with the trajectory towards peace and stability often a long one.

No simple solutions

Evaluations do not offer simple solutions to these complex, long-term challenges. But they do highlight areas where programming and strategies can be improved. Lessons from evaluations of past programming in refugee contexts should be used to support learning and practices going forward.

Policies, strategies and programming in refugee contexts should be evidence-based and respect the principles of development effectiveness. Evaluations have much to offer in this regard, as they highlight the complexity and challenge of translating high-level policy objectives into practice and into reality. They can provide important guidance to the international community as it deals with challenges related to forced displacement and the current refugee crisis.

Introduction

Unprecedented numbers of people forcibly displaced

At the end of 2015, displacement reached a historic high with over 65 million individuals forcibly displaced due mostly to conflict, violence, persecution and human rights violations.[1] The majority of these, 40.8 million people, were displaced internally and another 21.3 million refugees and 3.2 million asylum seekers had crossed international borders.[2] While the current crisis is global, it affects some countries and regions disproportionately with high levels of displacement seen in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.[3] Over 50% of the world's refugees came from three countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.[4] Syrians comprise the largest displaced population: more than half of the Syrian population is internally displaced and an estimated 4.2 million registered Syrian refugees reside in five neighbouring host countries.[5] With the conflict in Syria showing no signs of abating, the number of Syrian refugees has continued to increase.[6]

While international attention has focused on refugees arriving in Europe and on the Syria crisis, conflict and violence in Africa and Central America have contributed to increasing refugee populations in these regions. Sub-Saharan Africa hosts the largest number of refugees of any region, with the majority of these refugees from Somalia, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and the Central African Republic. Increasingly, violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras has also forced thousands of people to flee their homes in Central America.[7] Despite increasing global attention, countries adjacent to the country of origin of refugees bear the brunt of forced displacement; developing countries host the vast majority (86%) of refugees.[8]

In the majority of cases, forced displacement becomes protracted. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), a protracted refugee situation is one in which 25 000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five or more years in a given asylum country. At the end of 2015, UNHCR counted 32 protracted refugee situations where the average duration in displacement was 26 years.[9] This number is a key indicator of the great limitations to voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement – traditionally considered durable solutions for refugees. Long-standing legal, political and practical barriers to permanent integration have forced many people to remain with temporary status for years in host countries, often in precarious situations. Where resettlement is not possible, some governments and organisations promote labour mobility, matching refugees with labour market needs in host countries. This is often referred to as the fourth durable solution.[10]

As noted above, the majority of refugees are hosted in developing countries, with refugees often fleeing to poorer areas where the host community may also be vulnerable. Refugees often face limited economic opportunities in many host contexts and sizable refugee influxes can place additional burdens on local and national public services. The situation is straining many host countries' already overburdened capacities, especially when no aid reaches refugees. Such situations create tensions between host populations and refugees, sometimes leading host governments to further restrict or tighten asylum systems and national policies towards refugees including through the formal restriction of access to official labour markets.[11] The majority of refugees who have fled the Syria crisis are hosted in middle income, rather than low income countries, representing a relatively new trend. Urbanisation is another global trend: the majority of refugees in middle income environments in the Middle East, Europe and the Americas are in urban areas. There is also increasing urbanisation in many African contexts. When refugees have been able to return to their country of origin, individuals may prefer returning to cities and urban centres where there are often more job opportunities and better access to services and education.

Why work on this issue is of global importance: Will a crisis offer an opportunity for change?

Forced displacement is increasingly acknowledged as a global phenomenon. As such, it requires global solutions to address cross-border "political, economic, social, developmental, humanitarian and human rights ramifications".[12] Against a backdrop of growing political interest and domestic attention to migrants and refugee flows, the international community has stepped up its search for solutions to forced displacement and population movements. This concern has been translated into a greater focus on how development co-operation can contribute to solutions and be used to prevent and resolve conflict, support refugees in neighbouring countries, and better support host governments and communities in developing countries.

Development assistance focuses increasingly on fragile and conflict-affected contexts with large humanitarian as well as development needs. In 2015, humanitarian aid rose by 11% in real terms to USD 13.6 billion.[13] The bulk of humanitarian assistance goes to a relatively small number of countries, but with larger numbers of affected people. In 2015, five emergencies – Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, Iraq and Sudan – accounted for more than half of all funding allocated to specific emergencies, according to funding reports provided to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).[14] However, the international community has increasingly recognised that humanitarian assistance alone is insufficient to address the dynamics of forced displacement, which requires longer-term and more development-oriented programming.

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul in May 2016 was the first global UN humanitarian conference bringing together the humanitarian community with other actors working in development, peacebuilding and peacekeeping to argue for a more coherent approach. While not all humanitarian organisations agreed with the objectives and approach of the WHS, the summit succeeded in bringing more attention to some of the long-standing and unresolved challenges to making humanitarian assistance more effective, including how to forge better linkages between humanitarian approaches and longer-term development goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise how global threats can undermine the achievement of development objectives. The 2030 Agenda, for example, acknowledges that "spiralling conflict and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades".[15] The SDGs thus allow forced displacement, as well as the welfare of internally displaced people and refugees, to be considered as development challenges that need greater investment and efforts from the international community. Increasingly, the concept of resilience is providing a framework for co-operation between humanitarian and development actors to tackle protracted refugee crises. In the "formulation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, the principle of 'leaving no one behind' will require both development and humanitarian actors to work together to address the needs of the most vulnerable and to create conditions for building resilient states and societies."[16]

On 19 September 2016, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which calls for greater burden sharing by the international community to support the countries hosting the largest populations of refugees. The New York Declaration called on UNHCR to develop and initiate the application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in close co-ordination with relevant states and in collaboration with relevant UN agencies, applying a multi-stakeholder approach towards the achievement of a global compact on refugees in 2018. The objectives of implementing the CRRF are to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.[17]

The large-scale movement of refugees and irregular migrants into the European Union (EU) in 2015 and 2016 has made migration and forced displacement a focus of intense political attention. In 2017 a study published by the Expert Group for Aid Studies reported that the increased political focus on migration has led to changing official development assistance (ODA) trends, with "a rebalancing of ODA disbursements towards countries hosting and generating refugees".[18] Large-scale displacement has also prompted countries to focus increasing attention on efforts to tackle root causes of displacement in developing countries to ultimately reduce irregular migration into Europe.[19]

There is also increasing recognition of the potential costs, of not addressing the needs of the displaced – particularly the large number of young people who are affected by forced displacements due to conflict in volatile regions. The 2017 study by the Swedish Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) underscored the risks:

> Especially in protracted refugee situations, socio-economic aspects such as access to education and health, infrastructure for refugees and host communities need to form part of the assistance. In their absence, there is a risk of 'lost generations' with little opportunities to build capacities they can utilise later, whether they decide to stay, move on or return.[20]

The study found that "increased migration flows have impacted on the volume as well as on the orientation of aid".[21] It examined donor responses to the crisis of irregular migration and refugee flows, focusing on the approaches taken by European Union institutions, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Netherlands.

The study also raised a number of concerns about the development effectiveness of aid being spent in relation to this narrative, noting that:

> There is a political pressure for quick action disbursement of budgeted funds, sometimes at the detriment of prudent procedures. This risks undermining the agreed aid effectiveness agenda and sound approaches towards working with fragile states. Many decisions on aid allocations appear to be taken much too quickly, without doing the requisite quality controls or taking due consideration to ownership in partner countries.[22]

The purpose of this working paper

This working paper aims to identify emerging policy messages and bring greater attention to key lessons, drawing on existing evaluations and evaluative work related to policy and programming in refugee contexts. It was produced by the OECD Secretariat team at the DAC Network on Development Evaluation and draws heavily from evaluations commissioned and produced by members of the Network.

The paper is designed to provide contributions and lessons from evaluations as part of the DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration (TWG). The TWG was formed following the DAC 2016 High Level Meeting[23] with the objective to "enhance the effectiveness of our ODA to respond to the refugee crises and to sharpen our focus on identifying and addressing the root causes of conflicts, forced displacement, and refugee flows". The Terms of Reference[24] for the TWG recognise the need to build on existing good practices and learn lessons from failure with plans for "translating existing knowledge and cutting-edge thinking into practical 'how to' guides". This working paper will feed into the TWG Guidance on Development Assistance in Situations of Forced Displacement.

The working paper is organised in three parts. The first part engages with the broad efforts that DAC member countries have made at the policy level towards providing a coherent response to refugee crises. The second part examines how coherence has been specifically applied to programming responses for refugees in urban environments, and in the areas of productive work and business creation and education. The third and final part assesses the impact of new financing mechanisms in middle income countries in the context of the Syria crisis. Each part introduces the topic with some background information, follows with main findings and concludes with emerging key messages for policy makers based on evaluative evidence. The main report focuses primarily on the Syria crisis, but also includes lessons from evaluations of refugee programming in other contexts.

Three case studies complement the main report. Two case studies are on countries of origin: Afghanistan, with a focus on whole-of-government approaches, and South Sudan, with a focus on local context and conflict drivers and with a lesser focus on links between internally displaced people and refugee populations. A third case study on Uganda and Ethiopia compares their approaches to hosting large numbers of refugees, looking specifically at self-reliance and access to employment and business creation. The case studies aim to provide concrete examples of programming in specific contexts including lessons that may be applicable to other contexts or crises. The case studies examine evidence from past programming efforts and strategies in a variety of refugee contexts. Lessons and evidence from the case studies support the analysis, policy implications and conclusions of this working paper.

Scope and methodology

This paper draws from evaluation findings to highlight lessons and policy messages related to DAC members' policies, strategies and programming in refugee contexts. As the working paper is intended to feed into the Guidance on Development Assistance in Situations of Forced Displacement, the focus is on the priority areas identified in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Temporary Working Group. The primary, overarching priority is greater coherence among different actors.

The four specific priority areas are:

- Support to productive and business opportunities for refugees
- Responses in urban environments
- Education responses
- Financing for refugee crises in middle income countries

The paper is based, for the most part, on evaluations that have been commissioned by OECD DAC members, as the aim is to focus on development providers' challenges, approaches and successes in managing assistance in complex refugee contexts. The paper draws from evaluations and evaluative evidence relevant to the thematic priorities defined above.

The ToR for the Temporary Working Group emphasises the importance of coherence, the use of whole-of-government approaches[25], linkages between humanitarian and development programming, and how to better address root causes to prevent and contain crises. At the same time the ToR acknowledges that more development does not automatically lead to fewer migrants.[26] The main report of this working paper therefore focuses mostly on policy-level findings, drawing from evaluations on humanitarian policy, linkages between humanitarian and development approaches, and on strategic approaches, primarily in relation to the Syrian regional crisis. The use of whole-of-government approaches is also emphasised.

At the earliest stage of the project, an informal search of evaluation databases and sources was conducted, using key search terms (e.g. refugee, Syria, whole-of-government). The initial search of evaluation databases led to a large number of potential sources, as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), UN agencies and other actors have produced a substantial body of material and many evaluations, many of which are focused at the project level. A decision was made at that stage to narrow the scope to focus primarily on evaluations commissioned or produced by DAC member countries, in view of the primary target audience for this report. In order to identify these evaluations, the team searched the DAC Evaluation Resource Centre (DEReC) database[27] of members' evaluations maintained by the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, to which the vast majority of DAC members contribute completed evaluation reports.[28] The DAC Network on Development Evaluation Secretariat also requested DAC member countries and observers to send any relevant evaluations. Using the references and bibliographies in these evaluations, the team identified additional evaluation sources using a snowball sampling approach. Finally, the team received additional literature and sources from members of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation working on evaluations on similar themes.

A selection of evaluations and evaluative work for closer review was then made based on the following criteria: the amount of relevant information addressing programme coherence in refugee contexts and related to the specific selected themes; the quality of the evaluation work, based on the DAC evaluation quality standards and principles; and a focus on evaluations looking at donor perspectives and strategies. The selected evaluations were then reviewed and synthesised, extracting key messages and findings.

The policy and strategy-level evaluations of DAC members often covered the topics of coherence between humanitarian and development approaches, strategies related to the Syria crisis, and to a lesser degree funding for refugee crises. In general, there was less information in the strategy and policy evaluations on education and business opportunities for refugees and responses in urban areas. Therefore, in order to better cover these thematic areas in this working paper, the team identified some additional programme, country and project-level evaluations commissioned by DAC members as well as some non-DAC member evaluations (focusing on the major actors in the area of refugee programming, such as UN agencies, other international organisations and specialised NGOs working on refugee programming).

Key research questions

This working paper focuses on four key research questions:

1

Which policy approaches and strategies have OECD countries adopted to implement coherence in their responses to refugee crises in the countries receiving humanitarian and development aid? Have these been successful? What challenges did they encounter? What are the lessons learned?

Emphasis is on the coherence between development and humanitarian actors; the coherence among different actors (international, national and local); on the whole-of-government approach including development, humanitarian, diplomatic and foreign policy; and on the co-ordination between DAC members in the context of joint programming.

2

To what extent has coherence occurred in the areas of productive work and business opportunities and education for refugees? What successful approaches have been developed in these areas? What has not been successful and why?

Focus is on examples of successful programming as well as on inherent difficulties encountered by members, and on external factors that have limited their capacity to respond in a coherent manner.

3

What approaches have been successful in adapting responses in urban environments? What can be learned from these?

More specifically, how have DAC members shifted their focus, strategies and approaches to deal with refugees residing outside of camp settings? How have they worked with host countries' authorities to provide support for urban refugee populations and support for the delivery of basic services?

4

What can evaluations tell us about the financing decisions of DAC members working in refugee contexts? Is there evidence that the new financing mechanisms for refugee crises in middle income countries have been successful?

Focus is on how new financing mechanisms have helped fill the gap between humanitarian and development assistance.

Country Case Studies

In addition to the main report, which covers policy and strategic issues with a focus on the Syria crisis, the research presented in this working paper includes three case studies to better contextualise the issues and explore them in greater depth. The case studies look at how policy objectives have been implemented in practice in specific contexts other than Syria. They focus on countries of origin (and potential return) and countries hosting significant refugee populations. Each case study is based on specific country contexts and focuses on a key theme. For instance, the case study on Afghanistan is focused on the use of whole-of-government approaches, as it is the context in which many DAC member countries piloted models for 3D (Defence, Diplomacy and Development) and whole-of-government programming.

The selection of countries for the case studies is based on:

- some of the contexts with the largest refugee crises (Afghanistan, South Sudan)
- the desire to highlight contexts in different geographic areas covering Asia (Afghanistan) and sub-Saharan Africa (South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda)
- the desire to highlight contexts that are facing different dynamics including ongoing and protracted crises (South Sudan, Afghanistan) and countries hosting significant displaced populations (Uganda, Ethiopia).

The case studies draw from DAC members' country programme evaluations and other actors' evaluations of programmes.

Process of review, revision and finalisation of the working paper

An early draft of the working paper and emerging findings were presented at the DAC Network on Development Evaluation meeting in Paris on 22-23 February 2017. Comments, feedback and additional evaluation sources were then taken into consideration to refine the paper. On 10 March 2017, progress on the work to date was presented to the DAC Temporary Working Group (TWG) on Refugees and Migration. The paper was then reviewed by three external experts. The paper was shared with OECD internal experts on conflict, fragility, risk and resilience. Feedback and written comments were then used to finalise the draft paper. On 15 May 2017, the main findings were presented to the fifth meeting of the DAC TWG on Refugees and Migration.

Research notes and citations

1 UNHCR, 2016a

2 UNHCR reported that by mid-2016 the number of refugees registered with UNHCR had increased to 16.5 million from 16.1 million at the end of 2015. See UNHCR, 2016a: 2.

3 Multilateral Development Banks, 2015: 5

4 ICRC, 2016: 9

5 A significant (but largely unknown) number of non-registered refugees have also crossed borders.

6 UNHCR reported that by mid-2016 some 5.3 million Syrians had fled their country. See UNHCR, 2017a: 7.

7 UNHCR, 2016a: 7

8 Ibid.: 18

9 Ibid: 20

10 ILO, 2016: 27

11 Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016: 4

12 See www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC(2016)23/FINAL&docLanguage=En.

13 OECD, 2016a: 1

14 Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2016: 59

15 For details of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, see: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7891TRANSFORMING%20OUR%20WORLD.pdf.

16 Mowjee, Garassi and Poole, 2015: 13

17 UNGA, 2016: 22

18 Knoll and Sherriff 2017: 12

19 ICAI, 2017: 12

20 Knoll, A. and A. Sherrif, 2017: 37

21 Ibid.: 1

22 Ibid.: 2

23 See www.oecd.org/dac/dac-hlm.htm.

24 See www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC(2016)23/FINAL&docLanguage=En.

25 Whole-of-government approach refers to external assistance that is designed and implemented in a coherent, co-ordinated and complementary manner across different government actors within an assisting country, and most critically security, diplomatic and development agencies.

26 See www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/DAC(2016)23/FINAL&docLanguage=En.

27 See www.oecd.org/derec.

28 For various reasons, not all evaluations commissioned by members of the Network are in the database. In particular, decentralised and smaller, project-level evaluations are often not included. Evaluations of some larger actors such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US State Department were found through searches on these actors' websites.



Microsoft connectivity Project in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi.
© UNHCR/Amos Gumulira



I. Policy programming: Towards a coherent approach for refugees

Context

There is growing recognition that addressing the long-term challenge of protracted displacement is fundamentally central to development. Greater policy efforts are being made to connect assistance for refugees to longer-term development planning. Absorption of displaced populations is more difficult when a country's development strategy fails to specially address forced displacement. In addition, framing refugee displacement as temporary and as separate from development, when displacement is often long-term, limits host states' opportunities to fully benefit from refugees' potential social and economic contributions.[1]

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) was developed after the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants" in September 2016. The CRRF demonstrates the recent commitment of the international community to support local and national institutions and communities receiving refugees and to expand opportunities for solutions.[2] Institutionally, however, refugee assistance has traditionally been dealt with separately from development planning through annual humanitarian strategies and funding appeals. These are often largely divorced from development planning at both the national and global level. More generally, "humanitarian and development approaches diverge by being rooted in different principles, and having programmes built on different evidence, planning and budgeting processes."[3]

Many OECD member countries increasingly have linked their humanitarian and development assistance to foreign policy objectives. Some countries have merged development assistance agencies with ministries of foreign affairs or, in some cases with ministries of trade. Connecting international humanitarian, development and stabilisation efforts has become a high priority for a number of stakeholders, given the levels of official development assistance (ODA) being spent in protracted and recurrent crises. However, in practice, humanitarian and development assistance still tend to function as siloes that are to a large extent operating under separate objectives and delivery modalities.[4]

Current refugee crises have political, economic and geostrategic impacts. The political ramifications of these crises have led to an increased focus on diplomatic, military and development efforts to address the root causes of forced displacement and conflict in countries of origin. Key policy objectives of interventions often include to prevent or contain the root causes of violent conflict leading to displacement; stabilise the economies of impacted countries; help countries of first displacement better accommodate growing refugee populations; assist countries of transit including in the area of border control; support voluntary returns; and undertake other development efforts to ultimately reduce secondary displacement. These efforts are in addition to providing humanitarian assistance to help meet the immediate needs of people forcibly displaced and traditional support for refugee populations who need assistance in camp setting. In recent years, some donors have also connected their international humanitarian and development responses with military efforts, devising specific modalities to unite these components in stabilisation efforts.

Closing the gap between humanitarian, development and resilience initiatives

There have been attempts to bring together humanitarian and development assistance programmes for several decades. Many of these efforts have met with limited or mixed success, despite substantial efforts. Many of the evaluations reviewed for this study address efforts to reconcile humanitarian and development objectives. Evaluations highlight how a stronger focus on resilience may help address the long-term impacts of current humanitarian crises. Many of the evaluations also acknowledge that persistent challenges remain to ensuring complementary and holistic programming in practice.

A 2016 evaluation of the 2010-15 humanitarian action strategy of Denmark notes the "need to link humanitarian and development assistance to address the causes of vulnerability" and that Denmark's strategy emphasises "strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable requires a holistic approach".[5] Despite the attempts made by Denmark to link humanitarian and development assistance, the evaluation found that there was an absence of a "specific strategic priority on linkages with Development Cooperation and the [Humanitarian] Strategy and the lack of guidance on how to promote synergies between humanitarian and development assistance in practice".[6] A 2015 study published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark on coherence links the limited success in achieving coherence to the fact that "institutional mandates and political interests, rather than the needs on the ground, often dominate the priorities of international engagement in protracted crises."[7]

Humanitarian and development actors have tried to achieve greater coherence in their response to the Syria crisis in particular. A 2016 evaluation of the response of the European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) to the Syria crisis notes that "towards the end of 2014, ECHO, but also the wider donor community, took specific initiatives that contributed to redesigning the aid architecture in the sense of a more comprehensive and strategic approach towards efforts to link relief, rehabilitation and development".[8] For example, ECHO and the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) have collaborated to develop Joint Humanitarian Development Frameworks in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.[9]

On the Syria crisis, the evaluations reviewed find that the scale, unpredictability and complexity of the crisis has overwhelmed the international community in general. Addressing both the immediate and long-term needs of Syrian refugees has been a challenge. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, in its 2014 evaluation of Australia's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, notes the "difficulty of the task of the international response in the face of a protracted crisis, to continue to address immediate humanitarian needs, promote resilience among displaced and host populations and focus on stabilisation of the surrounding countries".[10] Similarly, a 2015 evaluation of the Syria Crisis Unit of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) notes that the "varying social and political realities in the host countries have contributed to the complex context in which humanitarian assistance is provided to affected populations".[11]

The international response to the Syria crisis has placed significant emphasis on resilience including through the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan that the United Nations co-ordinates, and which is known as 3RP.[12] Several evaluations describe the 3RP as a concrete effort to focus on the resilience agenda while creating greater linkages between humanitarian and development approaches. A 2016 Evaluation Synthesis and Gap Analysis conducted by the Syria Coordinated Accountability and Lessons Learning (CALL) initiative reviewed 24 evaluative studies of responses to the Syria crisis by the UN and by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). The CALL synthesis noted that the resilience agenda, as set out in the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), "demands consideration of the wider impact of the refugees' presence on host communities", adding that "the question of how the various components of the international system are to achieve this support, and with what funding streams, remains to be fully addressed".[13] (See Box 1.)



Syrian refugees cooking in a restaurant in Beirut, Lebanon. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

Box 1. The Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan in response to the Syria crisis

A model of coherence to address the Syrian refugee crisis?

The Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) for the Syrian crisis is often cited as an illustration of a coherent approach and the successful co-ordination across humanitarian and development action. Some analyses nevertheless found limitations in its implementation in practice.

The 3RP reflected the collective realisation, in 2013, that the Syria regional refugee crisis would be protracted. It recognised that a classic humanitarian-led response would not adequately address the impact of hosting such large numbers of refugees on economies in the region and on the resources of communities. At the end of 2014, the first 3RP, covering the 2015-16 period, was agreed by the United Nations, with UNHCR and UNDP as its lead agencies, and the governments of the five main regional refugee-hosting countries: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. The 2017-18 3RP described the impetus for the initiative: "A development crisis was emerging alongside the humanitarian crisis, and development assistance would be needed to support both refugees and citizens of the host nations throughout the region". The 3RP "combines a humanitarian response focused on alleviating the suffering of the most vulnerable, addressing basic needs and preventing large numbers of refugees from falling deeper into poverty, with longer term interventions bolstering the resilience of refugee and host communities, while also capacitating national systems", according to the 2017-18 Plan, and engages in a "dynamic process of constant adaptation, bringing the different facets of assistance to Syrian refugees and host communities into an increasingly coherent and effective framework linking humanitarian and resilience-building actions". It also explicitly endeavours to break down "humanitarian and development institutional and financing silos with the emergence of innovative multi-year financing mechanisms". Further, the 2017-18 3RP restates the "global commitment to invest in resilience in countries neighbouring Syria"; confirms the wide acceptance of "the centrality of using and supporting national systems and local responders"; and notes the progressive shift in the funding architecture "towards multi-year predictable funding".

In 2015, an interagency analysis on International Cooperation at New York University also focused on some of the innovations of the 3RP. These included the move towards integrated and nationally owned response plans with regional coherence; responses though local systems; the reinforcement of the resilience development approach; and greater financial predictability in the context of a protracted crisis. It found the 3RP rationalised a wide range of alternative funding mechanisms within a single national framework, or national plans, and thus offered donors a menu of options to engage development or humanitarian resources and provided a model that "constitutes concrete evidence of integrated funding for protracted crisis".

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, in a 2015 study, acknowledged the 3RP is a "significant attempt to bring humanitarian and development activities under a joint plan although delivering longer term assistance across refugee and host populations can be challenging in practice".

However, the Danish study also found that "in practice humanitarian assistance continues to focus largely on refugee populations while development activities are predominantly being targeted at local communities. The model of having both refugee and host populations benefitting from longer-term development assistance is thus not fully achieved". It further noted that "there has been insufficient donor support for the longer-term development financing needs of the 3RP and particularly requests for direct budgetary support from refugee hosting governments". In some instances, the study added, this has led to host governments scaling back previous commitments towards refugees. The Center on International Cooperation 2015 analysis stated that approximately 75% of 3RP funding is invested in refugees and 25% in building local resilience or supporting stabilisation measures.

> 3RP is a significant attempt to bring humanitarian and development activities under a joint plan.
>
> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark, 2015

Sources:

Center on International Cooperation (2015), "Addressing protracted displacement: A framework for development-Humanitarian cooperation", A think piece drawing on collaboration between OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and the World Bank, CIC, New York University, New York, http://cic.nyu.edu/publications/addressing-protracted-displacement-framework-development-humanitarian-cooperation.

Darcy. J. (2016), Evaluation Synthesis and Gap Analysis: Syria Coordinated Accountability and Lesson Learning (CALL) Initiative, Commissioned by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on behalf of the Steering Group for Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations, New York, www.alnap.org/resource/23125.aspx.

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Mowjee, T., D. Garassi and L. Poole, (2015), "Coherence in conflict: Bringing humanitarian and development aid streams together", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, www.solutionsalliance.org/system/files/resources/Coherence%20in%20Conflict.pdf.

Bennett, C. (2015), "The development agency of the future, fit for protracted crisis?" ODI Working Paper, Overseas Development Institute, London, https://www.odi.org/publications/9490-future-development-agencies-protracted-crises.

Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) (2017), Regional Strategic Overview 2017-2018, www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/3RP-Regional-Strategic-Overview-2017-2018.pdf.

While DAC members now recognise the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis, not all have followed that through in policy terms. Positively, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) have both elaborated an overall development strategy for Syria. Sida's five-year strategic framework for the Syria crisis, for example, is oriented towards resilience and seeks to bridge the gap from humanitarian to development modalities. The strategy complements Sida's humanitarian assistance by supporting livelihoods and local municipal authorities to provide basic services such as water, health and education, in addition to continuing support for human rights and democracy assistance.[14] Sida has also developed draft operational guidance on contributing to resilience through humanitarian action. While it acknowledges that "development actors have the main responsibility for building resilience, Sida believes that humanitarian assistance can and should strengthen resilience while addressing the immediate needs of affected populations".[15] Notably, Sweden has also worked with the OECD to conduct Resilience Systems Analyses in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.

In contrast, the aid management system and funding allocations of some countries have kept humanitarian and development aid streams mostly separate. As a 2015 evaluation of Norway's response in Syria put it, Norway has had a "focus on emergency assistance, rather than explicitly framing the response within a resilience agenda or discourse or a humanitarian-development linkages".[16] An evaluation by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) of its response to the Syria crisis found that "most projects funded by Norwegian assistance over 2011-2015 focused on immediate needs of target groups, rather than analysing potential changes and threats in the medium to longer term".[17] The evaluation found that in 2015, funding for "conflict prevention and resolution" and "peace and security" declined with no identified rationale for such de-prioritisation of funding "given the widespread recognition of the importance of peace-building and state building initiatives in the Syrian context".[18] The 2016 evaluation of ECHO made a similar observation that funding did not align with needs, noting that "ECHO was the fourth largest international donor to the Syrian crisis" but that "funding allocations per country varied considerably however, from EUR€18 per refugee in Turkey to €EUR 237 in Jordan, without clear link to the humanitarian needs".[19] The evaluation stated that the lack of predictability in funding had negative impacts, particularly in neighbouring countries, because ECHO was forced "to focus on only the most direct emergency needs, and to significantly cut the number of supported partners. This made it harder for partners to address the resilience of refugee households in the context of an increasingly protracted crisis".[20] Section three of this chapter further discusses funding modalities in the Syria crisis.

A number of OECD member countries have struggled with challenges in linking humanitarian assistance to longer-term strategies in refugee countries of origin. An evaluation of Australia's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis found a lack of coherence in programming that it attributes to "the absence of a clear strategic vision" and the difficulty to strike the right balance between humanitarian funding and resilience and development funding because they are treated separately.[21] Evaluations observed a similar pattern in other crises. A 2015 Netherlands government review of its humanitarian assistance noted in relation to the South Sudan crisis a "lack of coordination across humanitarian and development prioritisation and decision-making which limits opportunities to advance shared policy objectives".[22] A 2015 evaluation of the Canadian Afghanistan Development Program found that while the Canadian International Development Agency (now part of Global Affairs Canada) and other donors "introduced the international concepts of 'linking relief, rehabilitation and development' to move humanitarian assistance closer to development, in practice, there were important gaps to overcome".[23] Hence many countries, while recognising the need to link response to crises to long-term planning, have been struggling to do this in practice.

A 2015 Danish study, *Coherence in Conflict: Bringing Humanitarian and Development Aid Streams Together,* identified some key challenges to achieving more effective and coherent engagement by the international community in crisis-affected environments. One challenge is that "international actors continue to […] stand behind state-led processes (rather than inclusive national processes) in contexts where governments may be party to a conflict and where opportunities of promoting inclusive processes are limited."[24] The study noted that in the context of Somalia "donors have tended to focus their development assistance on state-building at the central level and strengthening the credibility of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) through a focus on the constitution, the elections, security and justice, the first three of the New Deal Peace-building and State-building Goals rather than social sectors such as education". The study found that "the consequence of the lack of adequate development funding to support chronic vulnerability at community level was that humanitarian actors were continuing to use their short-term funding to address these needs in the long-term despite their recognition that humanitarian approaches are inappropriate for addressing the causes of vulnerability and poverty."[25] It also noted that:

> In protracted crisis contexts, the interests and agendas of international actors can drive interventions because partner country governments that face widespread needs, low capacities and resources, and perhaps challenges to their power and legitimacy, have limited incentives and capacity to influence the funding and programming decisions of international actors. In conflict situations, programming decisions based on political or agency priorities make it more challenging to ensure collaboration between humanitarian and development assistance. Humanitarian actors, anxious to protect their neutrality, particularly in conflict-affected contexts, are less willing to coordinate and collaborate with partners that they perceive as being driven by political imperatives.[26]

The report suggests that shared assessments and conflict analysis "about interventions that work" would help promote needed collaboration in such contexts.[27] It may be debatable, however, to what extent humanitarian organisations, eager to defend their neutrality and independence, would be willing to participate in such exercises.

The South Sudan case study also illustrates the challenges of working in conflict-affected states where the state is a party to the conflict. Humanitarian principles such as neutrality and impartiality are often tested in these contexts, where the approaches of humanitarian actors may well diverge from those of actors promoting state building. Evidence from evaluations tends to show that state building programmes in countries in which the government is a party to conflict are challenging at best, and that humanitarian needs often remain high in cases of protracted conflict and forced displacement. It would therefore not seem appropriate to ask humanitarian actors to abandon their stance on these principles. In many conflict contexts, parties to the conflict including state actors may obstruct humanitarian actors with deliberate efforts to impede, block or inappropriately profit from assistance activities.

While the international community remains committed to addressing the root causes of conflict, in practice, attempts to do so have not always met with success. International efforts in countries such as Afghanistan and South Sudan have often set overly optimistic objectives. Evaluations in these two contexts found that ambitious objectives and great initial enthusiasm have not brought about greater stability, despite considerable international efforts and significant financial commitments in the case of Afghanistan. Long-term planning and strategies in these contexts have often failed to take into account the practical barriers to turning ambitious, but unrealistic, policy objectives into on-the-ground security and development gains (see the Afghanistan and South Sudan case studies for details).

Strengthening the international response to address protracted crisis and displacement

Several evaluations identify structural and organisational weaknesses that may have a negative impact on the response to refugee crises, and in particular the absence of staff on the ground with the needed experience and skills. A 2015 evaluation for the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), *Evaluation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action 2010-2015*, noted that Denmark is a visible actor on the international scene, but with the exception of South Sudan its lack of presence at field level limits its engagement at country or regional level.[28] In South Sudan, the evaluation noted, that "Denmark was active in policy discussions and donor groups because there is a fragile states advisor with humanitarian expertise based in the country."[29] A 2015 review of Netherlands humanitarian assistance found that few Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff interviewed for the evaluation had field experience.[30] Several evaluations noted as well that the staff of development providers may have lacked sufficient humanitarian experience to respond to evolving crises. The evaluations found that when staff did have such experience, it helped promote more active engagement with other actors and implementing partners.

The 2015 Danish study found that "in many bilateral and multilateral agencies, humanitarian and development staff members and work-streams are clearly separated in terms of management, policies, budgets, rules and procedures".[31] It identified some efforts made to promote institutional collaboration and coherence, which "in turn, facilitates a more coherent response in protracted and recurrent crises" including staff rotation across humanitarian and development programmes and teams and mixed teams.[32] Institutional incentives could support more collaborative and coherent work between donors' humanitarian and development staff. A 2015 OECD paper, part of a series on risk and resilience, said these could include identifying collaboration across development and humanitarian streams as a key responsibility in staff job descriptions; rewarding collaborative efforts in the performance management system; and introducing an appropriate results framework that applies across humanitarian and development programmes.[33]

The structural and organisational weaknesses identified in some evaluations were evident in the Syria crisis, where a co-ordinated international response was slow to materialise. Most donors and agencies began to respond only in 2013, when the massive internal displacement of people and flight of refugees from Syria began. The slowness of the response was due to a lack of staff on the ground in the region and failure to prepare for the possibility of a protracted crisis. Some governments initially may have assumed (or hoped) the humanitarian crisis in Syria would be temporary because the violent conflict would not last or would end with regime change.[34] Implementing partners also took some time to build the needed capacity to deliver programming, which further contributed to donors and other agencies having to "play catch up", as an

evaluation of the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom put it.[35] The evaluation also noted that DFID initially did not have a presence in Syria and in the wider largely middle income region where countries did not meet the threshold for DIFD assistance ("due to its policy of targeting low-income countries"); nor did it have "a pre-existing model of how to operate or resource a response to a challenge like the Syria crisis".[36] These "restricted its ability to anticipate and prepare for early action" and "affected the initial effectiveness (and arguably efficiency) of the strategic response".[37]

The Norwegian model, which largely relies on partners' assessments of needs, also faced challenges in adapting to the evolution of the Syria crisis. A 2015 evaluation of the Syria response of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), for example, found that relying mainly on partners' assessment of needs has limitations. It noted that there was "limited information available within Syria itself and weaknesses in forecasting systems in some cases", "refugee flow numbers have been repeatedly underestimated or inaccurate; and the difficulties confronted by host countries in absorbing their volumes insufficiently anticipated".[38] Other countries with limited presence in Syria likewise had difficulties in anticipating and predicting the scale and unfolding nature of the crisis. This was true for Australia, for example, because "the Middle East is not a traditional focus area for Australian aid and the department's aid expertise within the region is limited".[39]

Other OECD members have greater humanitarian capacity; invested more in training and learning for staff; and recruited a larger number of humanitarian professionals. Notable among them is Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); increasingly the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida)[40] with the secondment of staff from the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency to strengthen field-level co-ordination; and now DFID.[41] The European Commission's ECHO also stands out. The evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis noted that ECHO's strong and early field presence, and its expertise, enabled it to provide its partners with informed support and advice and greater capacity to adapt "to the specific and evolving context inside Syria and its neighbouring countries".[42] For instance, ECHO was the first humanitarian donor to open a permanent office in Lebanon at the beginning of the Syria crisis, which "contributed to increase its ability to adapt its approach to the needs and their dynamics".[43] Through close monitoring and engagement with other partners, such as UNHCR, ECHO was better able to anticipate increases in the flow of refugees and plan ahead accordingly. There is strong evidence that in-country presence and having senior, experienced humanitarian staff in place, can help improve donor strategy and programming in relation to unfolding crises.

There is strong evidence that in-country presence and having senior, experienced humanitarian staff in place, can help improve donor strategy and programming in relation to unfolding crises.

Box 2. Lessons on organisational structures to support holistic programming

Organisational restructuring in Netherlands and Denmark

DAC members have tried different organisational structures to support more holistic programming, some with limited success.

In 2012, Netherlands made the Humanitarian Assistance Division a part of the newly formed Department for Stability and Humanitarian Assistance. A 2015 evaluation of the humanitarian assistance effort over the 2009-14 period described the aim of the new department as "a major integration of Dutch policy in the fields of reconstruction, stability and fragile states as well as humanitarian assistance". It is the budget holder for activities in the fields of security, rule of law and good governance; administers the stability and reconstruction funds; and is responsible for all official development assistance (ODA) and non-ODA funding of humanitarian assistance, while embassies advise on distribution of humanitarian financing and "are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the support provided". This evaluation also found that the merger made the whole-of-government approach to conflict and fragility more effective. It also noted humanitarian staff felt they were still able to defend principled humanitarian action against demands of other parts of the government and to maintain their independence of other foreign policy or military objectives.

Denmark took another route. A 2015 evaluation of the strategy for Danish humanitarian action found that the incorporation of the humanitarian section into the development policy department activities within the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) was not sustainable. The evaluation found that the merger in 2008-09 at first "promoted a closer working relationship with development staff and greater cross-programme linkages in countries to which DANIDA was providing assistance. The model, however, was not sustainable because the humanitarian team was keen to keep its funding separate in order to protect principles and to avoid 'politicisation' and because the merged humanitarian and development policy departments were too large for management purposes". DANIDA as a result again separated out the humanitarian section. The evaluation noted: "The lesson learned from this is that combining departments or budget lines alone does not necessarily promote complementarity and it is necessary to find additional ways of encouraging humanitarian and development staff members to share information and collaborate. […] Currently, the embassies are responsible for development programmes while humanitarian aid is still centrally managed from Copenhagen. Although the two forms of assistance are administered and managed separately, humanitarian and development programme managers provide input into each other's decision-making processes and this is an important step in promoting linkages."

> ...the humanitarian team was keen to keep its funding separate in order to protect principles and to avoid 'politicisation'...
>
> (Mowjee, et al., 2015a: 66)



Al Hol camp in Syria. Preparations to provide emergency assistance for Mosul's displaced.
© UNHCR

Sources:

Taylor, G., P. Harvey and E. Couture, (2015), Review of the Netherlands' Humanitarian Assistance 2009-2014, Commissioned by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mowjee, T., D. Fleming and E. Toft, (2015a), Evaluation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action 2010-2015 – Synthesis Report, Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, International Development Cooperation, www.oecd.org/derec/denmark/Evaluation-strategy-Danish-humanitarian-action-2010-2015.pdf.

Of the DAC members that produced evaluations on the Syria crisis, some have taken leading or strategic roles in political and humanitarian fundraising and co-ordination efforts. This was reflected in the co-hosting by Norway, Germany, the UK, the UN and Kuwait of the February 2016 pledging conference, which raised USD 12 billion in pledges, to implement goals that include education and economic opportunities to transform the lives of refugees caught up in the Syria crisis.[44]

As it became clear that the Syria crisis would be protracted, some countries began to reframe their response, moving from purely humanitarian action to what was termed a "blended response" that is more fully integrated with traditional development activities. DFID, for example, has increasingly incorporated resilience in longer-term development projects and stabilisation programmes, although relief operations remain its predominant activity.[45] In addition to supporting an effective international response to the crisis and responding to the needs of people inside Syria, a core objective of DFID's Humanitarian Strategy for Syria is strengthening support in countries hosting Syrian refugees including by encouraging a broader development response in Syria's neighbours.[46] A 2015 evaluation of the DFID Syria Crisis Unit noted that the United Kingdom successfully advocated for the creation of a UN-led High Level Group on the crisis and its humanitarian challenges, and it also pushed for a comprehensive regional strategy, including through the appointment of a single UN regional co-ordinator.

Similarly, the 2015 evaluation of Denmark's strategy for humanitarian action noted Denmark's advocacy and lead role in building partnerships for a development approach to long-term protracted displacement.[47] This was demonstrated through its support to UNHCR for durable solutions and in the establishment of the Solutions Alliance, which seeks comprehensive approaches to help displaced people and communities.[48] The 2015 review of Netherlands humanitarian assistance noted Netherlands's instrumental role in supporting the Solutions Alliance and, earlier, the Transition Solutions Initiatives.[49]

Overall, evaluations have clearly noted positive recent efforts to strengthen international co-ordination and learning in response to the ongoing conflict in Syria. They also generally noted that linking humanitarian and development approaches in the context of refugee situations has advanced, despite significant challenges.

Some evaluation findings on implementing a whole-of-government approach

Some DAC members' evaluations address internal coherence and assess whether a whole-of-government approach[50] was applied in responding to specific crises. The 2015 evaluation report for the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), for example, found that Norway's strategic approach to the planning of its Syria response lacked a "'whole of Norway' written strategy or intended results for its assistance to the crisis".[51] Several countries are now more explicitly aiming to adopt whole-of-government strategies. Sweden, for example, has recently produced a five-year strategy (2016-20) for assistance to the Syria regional crisis; Denmark is updating its existing strategic framework for its stabilisation work in Syria (2015-16); and the UK is also currently undergoing a strategic exercise to bring its humanitarian, development and stabilisation assistance under a single strategic framework.[52]

Evaluations of whole-of-government approaches have assessed to what extent various whole-of-government models have enabled sustainable development. The approaches used by many OECD countries in Afghanistan, where the whole-of-government concept was first tested, involved the creation of interdisciplinary teams – known as Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These PRTs combined military, diplomatic, development and civilian government resources to directly implement development and reconstruction activities. However, evaluations have underlined some potentially concerning unintended

consequences of this approach in the Afghan context. The unintended consequences include: possible reductions of "humanitarian space", risks related to the preservation of humanitarian principles, and development objectives more broadly from militarisation and the possible negative consequences of an increased politicisation of development assistance. Evaluations highlight an increased risk of ODA spending being directed to areas on the basis of military or foreign policy objectives, as opposed to demonstrated development needs. Evaluations in Afghanistan suggested that inter-departmental and civil-military teams may be prone to what were called "turf wars" over resources and influence, if they are not carefully constituted. There is also evidence from US evaluations and reports of the US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction that spending in Afghanistan through PRTs and Department of Defense budgets may not have followed stringent accountability and monitoring standards commonly used for ODA expenditure. Evaluations in the Afghan context, and most notably in a 2016 lessons learned report on corruption by the US Special Inspector General on Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), have found that large expenditures may have fuelled corruption and US government departments were slow to take action to combat corruption.[53] Evaluations have also questioned the cost effectiveness of military actors implementing reconstruction activities and raised concerns that some assistance efforts in Afghanistan using a whole-of-government approach had limited sustainable development impact. The case study on whole-of-government approaches in Afghanistan addresses these aspects in more detail.

Different whole-of-government approaches were used in South Sudan. Canada, for example, pursued a whole-of-government approach that consisted of weekly meetings for information sharing among representatives of different parts of Canadian government, but with funding streams kept separate. A key feature of the Canadian model in South Sudan was the creation of the Sudan Task Force. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (now called Global Affairs Canada) led the Task Force, which met weekly and brought together the Canadian Department of National Defence, which contributed personnel to the UN mission; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which contributed officers to the UN mission to train local police officers; and development and humanitarian personnel including staff working on reconstruction and stabilisation efforts. A 2017 evaluation noted the meetings were meant to share information "but were not intended to coordinate programming between the member departments".[54] It generally found this model to be successful but also noted that "each delivery channel" tended to guard "its space", with further integration "constrained by corporate culture".[55] Furthermore, the evaluation found, each programme was responsible for the management of results towards separate and independent logic models that reflected different timeframes and different approval channels."[56] Canada's whole-of-government approach in South Sudan ended in 2013, when the mandate for the South Sudan Task Force came to an end, it left "a gap: as the programme was especially relevant in the post-2013 context".[57] The South Sudan case study provides more detailed discussion.

Evaluations of DAC members' humanitarian strategies have often found risks related to the use of whole-of-government approaches. The 2015 evaluation of Denmark's humanitarian strategy highlights how for some of DANIDA's partners implementing a whole-of-government approach involves a perceived risk of compromising humanitarian principles. This perception was a potential barrier to building synergies between humanitarian and development assistance, particularly in Afghanistan where Denmark had a military presence. However, the evaluation did not identify any specific instances in which Denmark violated humanitarian principles and noted that development and stabilisation policy and strategy documents[58] all included a commitment to humanitarian principles.[59] A 2015 evaluation of Canada's Afghan Development Program, on the other hand, clearly found that "the politicization of assistance, including humanitarian aid, in the context of the 3D (Defence, Diplomacy and Development) and Whole of Government approaches was perceived by some to affect the neutrality of humanitarian aid".[60] Evaluations also suggest that maintaining humanitarian

principles may be a particular challenge in Syria. The 2015 evaluation of Norway's response to the Syria crisis found that "the Syria crisis has highlighted the challenges of assuring impartiality – even for some of the world's most experienced humanitarian actors – in a highly contested political space".[61] The evaluation also suggested that Norway needs to ensure that "the International Humanitarian Principles are being upheld" given Norway's strong commitment to being "a principled and impartial actor", and also noted that other donor evaluations have raised similar concerns.[62]

A 2013 Danish Study of whole-of-government approaches by Stepputat and Greenwood reviewed over a dozen evaluations and other literature. The study highlighted the increasingly politicised and militarised aid in Somalia, with donors increasingly focusing on state-building and counter-terrorism.[63] It also noted that "the ability of humanitarian action to reach those in need seems to have decreased [since 2006] in the same period".[64] Another finding was that "whereas the establishment of cross-departmental units does not necessarily entail an encroachment on ODA funds and principles, there is little transparency concerning dilemmas, priorities, trade-offs and their possible consequences".[65] Finally, the study said, there also appears to be a weak evidence base supporting the outcome and impact of whole-of-government approaches. But the evaluations and analyses that do exist make clear points about the assumptions behind these approaches, and specifically the assumptions behind using development aid to improve security and stabilise fragile situations. "Contrary to what has been widely assumed in government offices, and in particular in military headquarters, there is little evidence to show that improved service delivery and short-term reconstruction necessarily lead to the increased security, stability and legitimacy of the central government."[66] Similar findings from evaluations in the Afghanistan context have challenged the assumptions used by stabilisation efforts to increase perceptions of government legitimacy through the implementation of so-called "quick-win" programmes. The Danish study stated that evaluations reviewed "acknowledge that transaction costs are high, that cross-departmental planning entails a trade-off in terms of speed, that an integrated approach is 'not the answer to everything', and that in many cases core development, diplomacy and development work should occur separately".[67]

A 2010 report by the Stabilisation Unit of the United Kingdom government, which looked at lessons learned for stabilisation challenges in insecure contexts, argued that an integrated approach is essential to stabilisation but identified certain risks. This suggests that the model must depend on the context and be fit for purpose.

> Integration does not mean everyone must be involved in everything all the time. If activity is intelligently planned, diplomatic, development and military staff should not necessarily all be in the same place at the same time. It is also important to avoid the cookie cutter approach. Teams must be flexible and organised for the task at hand. It is unlikely that any two integrated teams will look the same. Policymakers must also remember that the integrated approach in this context is not the answer for everything. Much core diplomacy, development and defence work still needs to be undertaken separately.[68]

Additional concerns about these approaches were raised in a 2009 evaluation of Norway's whole-of-government approach that compared the Norwegian model to those of Canada, Sweden, Netherlands and the UK.

> The need for an integrated or comprehensive approach is widely accepted, but many obstacles remain when it comes to implementing the concept in a meaningful way, and most (if not all) actors still fall short of their own commitments in this regard. This is because there is a significant difference between a policy commitment to an integrated or comprehensive approach, and the challenge

> of navigating the real-world dilemmas that decision-makers face in trying to coordinate multiple independent agencies, each directed by their own mandates, governing bodies and priorities, acting under pressure as a result of limited resources, limited knowledge and their own time-tables and reporting lines.[69]

A 2016 lessons learned report focusing on Australia's whole-of-government approach in Afghanistan recommends the establishment of a statement of "principles and protocols" for whole-of-government responses. Such a statement of principles, the report said, helped the Australian government establish guidelines for civilian and military collaboration, and clarified issues around chain of command and reporting requirements.[70] The report recommended that such guidelines and principles need to be established from the onset for future whole-of-government interventions and that the protocols should aim to "define the working relationships and responsibilities and expectations of the different services and agencies, and be as clear as possible on the chain of command and management responsibilities of the respective agencies in the field".[71] This Australian government report also recommended that the principles and protocols be reviewed annually and adjusted as needed. Finally, the report highlights the variety of approaches and context in which Australia has used a whole-of-government approach: "Over the past two decades, Australia has accumulated considerable experience with whole-of-government missions in complex environments. Each response has been developed to meet the particular circumstances and context of that crisis, with different coordination mechanisms and composition."[72]

> **Contrary to what has been widely assumed in government offices, and in particular in military headquarters, there is little evidence to show that improved service delivery and short-term reconstruction necessarily lead to the increased security, stability and legitimacy of the central government.**
>
> (Stepputat and Greenwood, 2013: 6)

OECD members have faced challenges to co-ordinate their whole-of-government stabilisation approaches with other donors. Evaluations and lessons learned exercises have also frequently found that stabilisation objectives have been ambitious and often focused on short-term success, while not always taking into account the challenges and time scales needed to see results. A 2014 Wilton Park (UK) conference on stabilisation concluded that, in general, there is not enough attention on international co-ordination in stabilisation operations. "In nearly every case study ranging from security and justice in Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria to quick impact projects in Mali and responses to cross-border issues in the Sahel a key lesson has been that insufficient attention has been paid to international co-ordination and programmatic coherence in stabilisation operations."[73] Furthermore, the conference found, "the international community has compounded the issues around coherence, commitment and necessary levels of resourcing through short term military rotations […] and a tendency towards relatively short deployments by civilians, both civil

servants and contractors".[74] The conference report further argued that "stabilisation is resource intensive, in time, money and people. If Western governments wish to engage in these operations then it is necessary to resource them sufficiently over time rather than apply insufficient resources and lose interest when the crises become protracted which is almost a certainty".[75] In reference to Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan, the conference report noted: "The international community has frequently leapt into a state building process without really accepting that a political settlement had not yet been reached."[76] The conference report concluded that despite the challenges of stabilisation activities, "there is little scope or appetite to abandon them".

> Equally, in an increasingly unstable world, where the broader pressures from globalisation, development itself, climate change and geo-political shifts there is likely to be more, not less, demand for stabilisation […] Given that context, the challenge is that we, collectively, need to get better at identifying and understanding out what works and applying that learning to ourselves and one another – and informing our political systems.[77]

Overall, evaluations suggest that adopting a whole-of-government approach will not necessarily lead to better results. There are a variety of models, and the approach adopted, the context in which it operates, and how various actors are brought together appear to make a significant difference. A focus on information sharing, as used in the Canadian approach in South Sudan, was found to be more successful than the Canadian whole-of-government model using an interdisciplinary civil-military team (PRT) that was put in place in Afghanistan. Clear guidance on civil-military co-ordination (and monitoring of its enforcement) along with the establishment of well-defined operating principles and clear chains of authority, emerge as good practice in whole-of-government responses that involve military actors. There is some evidence to suggest that civil-military teams may be most effective in the area of security sector reform, and that civil-military teams should avoid duplication of activities traditionally undertaken by development and humanitarian actors, as costs and risks are likely to be higher with military deployment.

There is growing evidence that some whole-of-government models involving military actors may be perceived to lead to reductions in "humanitarian space". The need to respect humanitarian principles, to protect humanitarian workers from attack and to promote the preservation of "humanitarian space" is generally recognised by development providers. However, evaluations of whole-of-government approaches raise some serious questions that the international community will need to grapple with going forward. In responding to the crisis in Syria, where many countries are providing humanitarian assistance and also planning for more long-term assistance and may, in addition, also have active military operations – there are likely lessons to be learnt from past experiences using 3D and whole-of-government approaches in fragile states.

The case studies on Afghanistan and South Sudan provide more information and lessons from evaluations looking at whole-of-government approaches.



Student at Jesuit Worldwide Learning virtual global classroom in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.
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Key messages from evaluations

Evaluations show there is clear need for greater complementarity between humanitarian and development assistance strategies, which often remain disconnected in practice.

There are still important gaps to overcome to improve linkages between humanitarian assistance strategies and longer-term development planning, as evaluations frequently found these two areas to be largely disconnected in practice. This is true across the spectrum, in countries of origin, transit and destination.

- More extensive context analysis based on risks and vulnerabilities (e.g. through the OECD's Guidelines for Resilience Systems Analysis), and better analysis and forecasting of evolving and volatile situations and regional dimensions of crises (such as conflict early warning systems and surveillance) can provide a valuable input for efforts to build more holistic programming.
- Some evaluations recommend setting clear strategic priorities on linkages between development co-operation and humanitarian assistance. These could include the development of specific guidance and country or regional strategies to promote complementarity between humanitarian and development assistance in practice. Staff members located in country (field postings) may be best placed to develop coherent longer-term assistance strategies in collaboration with country partners and local counterparts.
- Incentives need to be strengthened for co-operation and information sharing among development, diplomatic and humanitarian staff of OECD members' governments. Rotating staff among ministries of foreign affairs, development co-operation agencies and humanitarian response units may improve programming and cross-departmental learning.
- Development and humanitarian actors need to strengthen partnerships and increase learning, through sharing of positive experiences and lessons, to design a development approach to long-term protracted displacement. There is a need for increased learning with greater attention to out-of-the-box thinking and potential new approaches to overcome existing bottlenecks and challenges. These could include increased funding for co-ordination, learning initiatives and innovative pilot programmes.
- Donors should continue to create and promote opportunities for various actors (multilateral, developmental, humanitarian, diplomatic, defense and southern actors, and beneficiaries and host governments) to share experiences and better understand each other's needs, approaches and challenges.

Evaluations suggest that attempts at better co-ordination between humanitarian and development actors should respect the principles on which each approach is based.

Humanitarian needs are likely to remain high in many protracted crisis situations. At the same time, development actors need to work on establishing longer-term strategies that over time may help reduce conflict, as this objective is outside the scope of traditional humanitarian action.

- Co-ordination and programming coherence should respect the concerns of humanitarian actors in regards to neutrality, impartiality, independence and other core humanitarian principles. Some DAC member countries include references to humanitarian principles in their development and stabilisation strategies, which emerges as a good practice.
- Both development and humanitarian actors, for their part, must recognise the political, economic and ethical risks of providing assistance in situations of protracted crisis and forced displacement and adhere stringently to "do no harm" principles.
- It is particularly important to consciously avoid undermining "humanitarian space" in refugee countries of origin and transit where humanitarian needs have often remained high. This includes remaining conscious of how perceptions related to unclear distinctions between military and civilian actors may lead to inadvertent confusion.
- Humanitarian and development actors should continue to work simultaneously at different levels of the state and society to comprehensively address the protection and livelihood needs of people and communities. The international development community should aim to address the structural causes of crises and to build the foundations to reduce fragility and vulnerability in the long-term.

Key messages from evaluations

Evaluations show the need to build organisational capacity to better understand and manage operational responses to evolving crises.

Evaluations describe how low "organisational readiness and preparedness", a lack of field presence, and lack of experienced staff (especially staff with previous operational field experience managing complex humanitarian crises) in key positions have undermined organisational responses to large-scale and protracted crises. This was particularly acute in the Syria crisis, where many organisations lacked presence and were slow to react to the evolving situation. Evaluations have found that nimble, flexible approaches to programming allow for adaptation to changes in evolving contexts.

- Many refugee crises are slow-onset crises, resulting from unresolved situations of protracted conflict, with successive waves of displacement taking place over a period of several years. Donors should try to move from a reactive to a more proactive response model, with better analysis of the evolving situation. Predictive analysis models of unfolding crises should be encouraged.
- Having preparedness and crisis contingency plans in place would support effective operational responses, enabling rapid adjustments in response to changes in the situation and refugee flows. Greater investment and international co-operation on early warning systems for monitoring and measuring conflict and fragility should be pursued.
- Donors should anticipate and overcome structural and organisational weaknesses by strengthening the presence and expertise at field level and ensuring expertise and field experience of civil servants including ministry of foreign affairs staff. This may require realigning recruitment, incentives and human resources structures to attract and retain experienced staff, as well as ensuring that adequate funding is available to support these positions.

Evaluations have highlighted lessons from whole-of-government approaches used in fragile contexts including potential risks and emerging good practice.

Evaluations pertaining to the whole-of-government approach used in contexts as varied as Afghanistan where the model was first tested (see case study) to South Sudan (see case study) and Syria (where some donor are considering pursuing similar approaches) show that there are many different understanding of whole-of-government and different models have been tried in various settings. Evaluations of whole-of-government approaches point to a number of challenges for humanitarian, development, diplomatic and military actors to effectively align divergent interests, including: institutional differences; conflicts over funding and resources; competing priorities; and different approaches towards work with local institutions, authorities and government actors.

- Whole-of-government models used in Afghanistan faced challenges related to high rates of staff turnover, unclear integration of planning with local government priorities, and generally weak long-term planning. Evaluations have questioned the sustainability of tasks undertaken by civilian-military teams in the Afghan context. Evaluations in Afghanistan have also found the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) model may have resulted in a reduction of "humanitarian space" as an unintended consequence. Evaluations of whole-of-government approaches in Afghanistan have also highlighted how corruption became a significant issue that undermined effectiveness.
- Experiences with whole-of-government approaches suggest that establishing principles for civil-military relations and monitoring their enforcement may be good practice. Similarly several evaluations in the Afghan context found that creating "safeguards" for development activities within a whole-of-government approach were positive. An Australian evaluation of whole-of-government approaches suggested clear cross-government principles around chain of authority are important.
- Evaluations suggest that assistance and reconstruction activities undertaken by joint civil-military teams should adhere to high standards for accountability and basic principles for development effectiveness, such as those traditionally used with ODA expenditure. There is some evidence to suggest that civil-military teams may be most effective in the area of security sector reform and that civil-military teams should avoid duplication of activities traditionally undertaken by development and humanitarian actors, as costs and risks are likely higher with military deployment.

Key messages from evaluations

Evaluations suggest that most efforts to date to address the root causes of conflict and promote state building in countries of origin have not been shown to be effective in the short or medium term. Programmes addressing root causes of conflict and forced displacement are therefore unlikely to provide a short-term solution to refugee crises.

Peacebuilding, conflict prevention and military efforts in many countries of origin (including Afghanistan, South Sudan, Iraq and Somalia) have not yet led to increased security and stability. Indeed refugee flows from these contexts have been increasing in recent years. Evaluations have found that potential politicisation and militarisation of development funding in some contexts carry significant risk.

- The donor community needs to ensure that long-term planning is put in place at the onset of conflicts that risk becoming protracted. Evaluations suggest that in Syria, many donors failed to anticipate the likelihood of the situation leading to protracted displacement.
- Evaluations of past international efforts in Afghanistan and South Sudan suggest that strategies to address the root causes of conflict and promote state building should be based, to the extent possible, on realistic and achievable objectives and on well-developed conflict analysis that is flexible enough to allow programmes to adapt in volatile contexts.
- Evaluations highlight numerous challenges relating to work to address root causes and tend to suggest that an overemphasis on visible, short-term results can undermine the likelihood of longer-term positive change. Evaluations also make clear that such efforts are resource-intensive and donors have tended to underestimate the timescales necessary to see results.
- Greater investments in monitoring and evaluation of stabilisation efforts should be put in place to further build a solid evidence base, testing existing theories of change. Reviews of stabilisation and state building efforts in Afghanistan and South Sudan have often questioned the theories of change being used by donors in these contexts.



South Sudanese refugees at Imvepi settlement in Uganda.
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2 UNHCR, 2016b: 1
3 Mowjee, Garassi and Poole, 2015: 12
4 Mowjee et al, 2016: 5
5 Mowjee et al., 2015a: 64 and 65
6 Ibid: 64
7 Mowjee, Garassi and Poole, 2015: 12
8 ADE/URD, 2016: 81
9 Ibid.
10 Many of the DAC members' evaluations pointed out that the nature of the Syrian conflict has imposed significant limitations to monitoring and evaluation. See DFAT, 2014: 15.
11 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 9
12 The first plan was developed in 2014. Updates of the 3RP have been made in 2015 and 2016.
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17 Ibid.: 26
18 Ibid.: 36
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30 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 83
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35 bid.: 15, 24, 7
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37 Ibid.: 27 and 16
38 Betts et al., 2015: 25 and 26
39 The Australian Government's new development policy articulates a clear focus on the Indo-Pacific (90% of program aid). See also DFAT, 2014: 7 and 17.
40 Mowjee et al, 2016: 22
41 A 2014 OECD peer review of DFID found that, "having humanitarian specialists improves the quality of policy debates and programme decisions". See OECD, 2014.
42 ADE/URD, 2016: 91
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44 Of the USD 12 billion, USD 6 billion were pledged for 2016 and USD 6.1 billion for 2017-20 to enable partners to plan ahead and also set itself ambitious goals on education and economic opportunities to transform the lives of refugees caught up in the Syrian crisis – and to support the countries hosting them. See The Supporting Syria and the Region Conference (2016), Co-Hosts' Declaration, 4 February 2016, London, https://www.supportingsyria2016.com/news/london-conference-one-year-financial-tracking-report-co-hosts-statement/.
45 ADE/URD, 2015: 15
46 Ibid.: 3
47 Mowjee et al., 2015a: 44 and 72
48 The Solutions Alliance was established in 2014. The Solutions Alliance Governing Board members include the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, UNDP and UNHCR. During the 2016 Solutions Alliance Roundtable, UNHCR was confirmed as the 2016 Chair of the Board. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was confirmed as Vice-Chair. In March 2016, the World Bank Group accepted an invitation to join the Governing Board. See www.solutionsalliance.org/about.html.
49 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 51
50 In 2005, an OECD DAC work stream on policy coherence and whole-of-government approaches (WGAs) in fragile states was initiated to produce an agreed DAC framework or guidance on good practice for WGAs in fragile states that would inform international donor country practice. See OECD, 2006.
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II. Programming reponses to refugees in urban environments and in the areas of productive work and business creation and education

Context

The urbanisation of refugee populations is a major feature of recent refugee crises. However, this is not an entirely new trend. Some countries have hosted refugees in urban centres for decades. "Major urban centres in Pakistan and Iran, for example, have been home to refugees from the conflict in Afghanistan and their descendants for over 30 years."[1] Refugees are primarily settling in urban areas in middle income countries in the Middle East and in the Americas. This trend is less prevalent in South Asia and most of Africa, "but given the projected rapid urbanisation of these regions, there too displaced people are increasingly likely to seek refuge in cities and towns".[2] Yet policy and programming initiatives have not fully come to grips with the issue of increased urbanisation. Humanitarian assistance in many contexts continues to focus primarily on refugees in camps, giving less attention to displaced populations outside camps and to the communities hosting them.[3] In 2009, UNHCR adopted a policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas and in 2014, it adopted a policy on alternatives to camps. More recent initiatives have put urban displacement higher on the international policy agenda. Among these are the September 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the New Urban Agenda adopted at the Habitat III conference in October 2016, the Global Alliance for Urban Crises, and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas.[4] The humanitarian community as a whole, however, is still developing good practice for providing aid in urban contexts and only a few donors have developed clear approaches to operate in such contexts.[5]

The policies of host states regarding refugee settlements vary and have various impacts on the scale and conditions of urban refugees. In the Syria crisis, for example, the governments of Turkey and Jordan initially focused their relief efforts on formal refugee camps while the Lebanese government deliberately chose to limit refugee camp development. With the dramatic increase in the number of refugees fleeing Syria, the situation has shifted and the majority of refugees now reside in non-camp settings, dispersed across urban and peri-urban areas among host communities.[6] The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has noted that "in many contexts, essential urban services do not keep pace with the 'natural' population growth of cities".[7] Large and rapid influxes of refugees place serious strains on urban infrastructure, as is evident in the Middle East in the areas of water management, health and education. Limited absorption capacity have humanitarian consequences for both refugees and host populations.

The ability to engage in productive work and business, either by accessing the labour market through regular work or self-employment, is central to refugees' self-reliance. The Centre on International Cooperation, in a 2015 report focused on the challenges of protracted displacement, noted that it is "critical for the welfare of displaced people themselves, who generally aspire to become independent of humanitarian assistance, to contribute to the local economy, save and create opportunities for their children".[8]

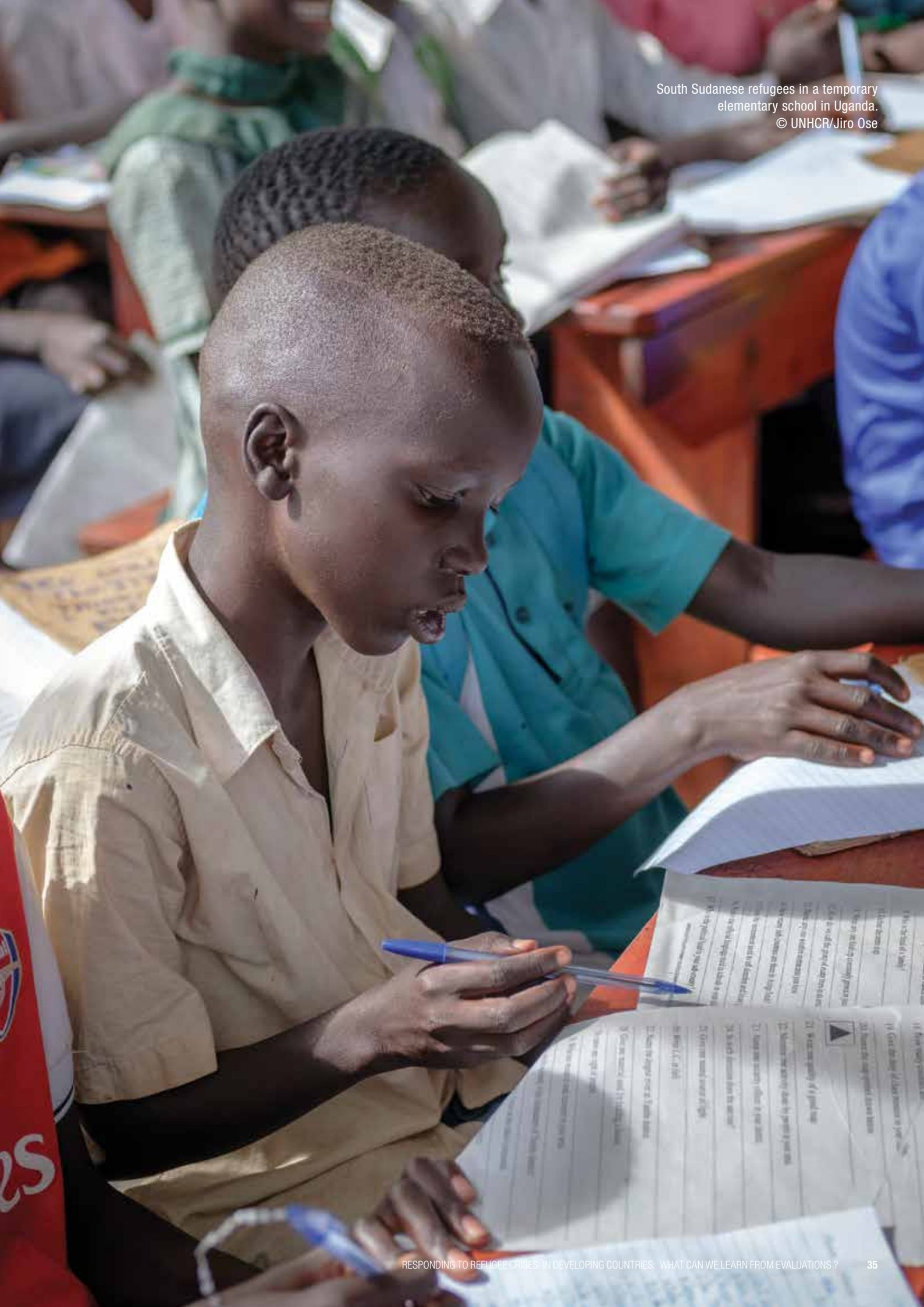
The impact of an inflow of forcibly displaced people on a labour market is largely dependent on the initial conditions of the host economy. These include its unemployment levels, skills, demographics and labour market flexibility, as well as "the size and composition of the flow of displaced people, including the extent to which their skills are complementary to, or overlapping with, those in the host community".[9] The process

of economic integration of refugees is also directly related to their social and legal integration, as "a refugee who is employed within the host community will by default increase the social links and knowledge of the community; certain elements of legal integration, such as freedom of movement, increase the ability of a refugee to have access to markets thus increasing the chances of economic integration and self-sufficiency".[10]

The prolonged duration of displacement has led a number of multilateral organisations to increasingly focus on resilience and more develop-oriented programming, often paying greater attention to refugees' ability to access labour markets.[11] The Syria crisis has underscored the importance of this focus.[12] Employment, training and education in the country of asylum may not only benefit displaced people in host countries, but may also better equip them for a successful return, as "refugees with assets and skills who chose to return do so faster and reintegrate more sustainably than returnees who have lost or depleted their assets and have marginal or eroded capacities".[13]

Education features high among the aspirations of displaced people. Educational access and quality education for school-age refugee children build their knowledge and skills, and is a prerequisite to continue to a secondary education that can open doors to decent work and longer-term employment. Secondary education pays economic and social dividends. "Each additional year of formal education on average adds about 10% to an individual's earnings, and secondary education adds 20% for low-income individuals".[14] Education including vocational training demonstrably improves refugees' ability to access sustainable employment and related income.[15] The provision of education can also protect children from abuses such as trafficking, forced recruitment, child marriage, sexual exploitation and forced labour.[16] Forcibly displaced persons have been included in several recent global-level resolutions and frameworks including the 2015 Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 and the Framework for Action. These reaffirm that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, ("ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning") can only be achieved by meeting the education needs of vulnerable populations including refugees and internally displaced people.[17]

Notwithstanding international commitments and progress in some countries, the reality is that refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than non-refugees.[18] Access to secondary education is particularly limited for refugees in many countries.[19] In practice several factors can constrain or prevent refugees from pursuing educational opportunities and completing their education. Language barriers, a poor or inexistent national education system, education fees, and distance to schools or education centres all constitute potential blockages that further limit refugees' access to education. Refugees also often tend to be "concentrated in the most educationally deprived regions of host countries".[20] Overall, large influxes of refugees also place serious burdens on a host community's public services, notably on health and education with often deterioration of access and quality.[21]



South Sudanese refugees in a temporary elementary school in Uganda.
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Responding to the urbanisation of refugees

DAC members appear to have commissioned relatively few strategy-level evaluations that specifically address responses to refugee crises in urban contexts. This apparent gap in the evaluation literature has been noted. The Syria Coordinated Accountability and Lesson Learning (CALL) initiative evaluation synthesis noted "that given the challenges associated with providing assistance and protection to non-camp refugees, it is surprising that more attention is not devoted to this topic".[22] Some evaluations have called for actors to respond and adapt to this new reality in order to better address the challenges of ensuring suitable accommodation, access to employment and services for large numbers of refugees. Several evaluations also noted that the vast majority of Syrian refugees in the region are living outside camps and are mainly concentrated in urban areas.

The 2016 evaluation of ECHO's response to the Syria crisis is one of the few evaluations that considered the issue of urbanisation of refugee populations at length, and engaged with the broader shortcomings of ECHO and other actors on this topic. The ECHO evaluation stated that "much of the learning in this area has been informed by the results of the Syria response itself. The flow of refugees in or around cities in neighbouring countries has significantly increased the urban population of some cities and engendered a range of economic and social impacts, including an increased demand for housing, jobs and health services".[23] It also found that ECHO lacks a global policy approach towards the provision of humanitarian aid in urban contexts, and that despite awareness of the scale of the urban refugee crisis in countries neighbouring Syria, urban challenges have not been systemically integrated into ECHO's Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) over the period 2012-14. The HIPs also failed to systematically consider the needs of the displaced in urban areas or to "explicitly encourage partners to 'urbanise' sectorial programming or engage with local markets or municipal plans".[24] Another "persistent weakness in the urban response" noted by the ECHO evaluation was "the limited engagement with municipal institutions and authorities".[25] As noted by one municipal authority in Jordan cited in the evaluation, this created "a sense of disconnect regarding the needs of host communities and limited scope for transition towards community ownership of projects in the future".[26]

In 2012, UNHCR conducted a global survey reviewing the implementation of the organisation's 2009 policy on refugee protection and solutions in urban areas. It noted the protection risks that refugees face across different urban contexts including "the threat of arrest and detention, refoulement, harassment, exploitation, discrimination, vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), human smuggling and trafficking".[27] In many contexts refugees are not free to settle where they choose. Countries often insist on settling refugees in "designated sites" or enforce stricter encampment policies, as in Kenya where the government issued relocation directives in 2012 and 2014 to forcibly relocate refugees in urban areas to designated refugee camps.[28] Another example noted was Thailand, where refugees from Myanmar have been "confined to close camps since they began arriving in the 1980s".[29] The 2015 evaluation of Netherlands' humanitarian response to the Syria crisis also found that refugees sometimes are not free to choose where they can live.[30] The evaluation noted that the government of Jordan, beginning in mid-July 2014, started to apply more strictly an encampment policy for refugees, and instructed UNHCR to cease registration in urban areas for refugees who had left the camps without so-called "bail-out" documentation.[31]

Assistance providers often have great difficulties in locating and providing aid to refugees in urban settings as urban refugee populations are often widely dispersed. The ECHO evaluation noted "the difficulty of profiling needs in urban contexts and of distinguishing between displaced populations and the urban poor".[32] Similarly, the 2015 Netherlands evaluation found that partners in Lebanon had a number of challenges assessing the needs of refugees dispersed geographically and in privately rented accommodation in urban settings.[33] The 2014 evaluation of Australia's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis also noted "that 85% of Syrian refugees in surrounding countries are living outside camps" and called for a "new model of refugee support that is able to both reach refugees across densely populated urban areas and cope with rapidly changing circumstances".[34]



Syrian refugees in Turkey, father and son collect recyclables to support their family.
© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

Box 3. Emerging lessons on urban response

The 2016 evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis identified a number of "key lessons" that have emerged in the literature on the challenges that increased urbanisation presents for humanitarian assistance. These include:

- the importance of local/municipal authority engagement in any response
- the difficulty of profiling needs in urban contexts and of distinguishing between displaced populations and the urban poor
- the difficulty of distinguishing between short-term response and longer-term development and resilience-building activities
- the potential for using "area-based" approaches that address cross-sectoral needs of a displaced population and host community in a distinct geographical zone
- the potential for using cash-based programming in urban areas and working with local markets and private-sector initiatives
- the importance of "urbanising" sectoral interventions to meet the specific needs arising from urban settings in terms of shelter, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), protection and health programming.





Refugees housed in former military barracks near the Bulgarian border with Turkey.
© UNHCR/Gordon Welters

Sources:

ADE/URD (2016), "Evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syrian Crisis 2012-2014: Final report", Commissioned by the Evaluation Sector of the Directorate General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection - ECHO, European Commission, Analysis for Economic Decisions (ADE)/Urgence Réhabilitation Développement (URD), http://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/syria_evaluation_report.pdf.

A 2013 real-time evaluation of UNHCR's response to the Syria crisis and refugee emergency emphasised the "need to address the situation of refugees in urban contexts and in out-of-camp areas, while at the same time highlighting the risks associated with conventional camp responses".[35] The evaluation of Netherlands' humanitarian assistance also suggested that "better connected responses will deliver more effectively to non-camped refugees, deliver benefits in terms of the social cohesion between refugees and stressed host populations, and deliver better cost efficiency and sustainability", and recommended that UNHCR "integrate responses better into nationally led frameworks".[36] The evaluation noted that to support such efforts, the Netherlands government's humanitarian unit developed partnerships between UNHCR and municipality associations on issues such as town planning and public transport.[37] More specifically, from 2014, the International Co-operation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities – in collaboration with the city of Amsterdam – has been implementing a technical assistance programme (International Municipal Assistance to Al Zaa'tari Refugee Camp and Local Governments in Al Mafraq Governorate) to foster resilience at local government level and improve living conditions of the Jordanian population and Syrian refugees in host communities and refugee settlements in northern Jordan. The programme's purpose is to maintain service delivery levels at local government level for both Jordanian citizens and Syrian refugees, and enable longer-term planning for spatial and economic development in the context of increased urbanisation and pressure on resources.[38]

In Jordan and Lebanon, several donors reportedly contributed to innovative shelter programmes for refugees and host communities.[39] These provided support to landlords to rehabilitate accommodations to Sphere standards, in return for allowing refugees to live there rent-free for an agreed period (see Box 4).[40] ECHO responded to the urbanisation of refugees in the region by supporting "the provision of unconditional cash transfers to meet the basic needs of refugees arriving in some of Syria's neighbouring countries. The use of this modality proved an efficient and effective way to deliver aid in the largely urbanised, middle income countries bordering Syria, where the financial systems and electronic transfer mechanisms are well developed, and the markets can supply many of the diverse goods and services required".[41]

> **The flow of refugees in or around cities in neighbouring countries has significantly increased the urban population of some cities and engendered a range of economic and social impacts.**
>
> (ADE/URD, 2016: 76)



Syrian refugees living in a half-finished mosque and university in Lebanon.
© UNHCR/Elena Dorfman

Box 4. Norwegian Refugee Council programming for housing urban refugees in Jordan and Lebanon

Bridging the gap between humanitarian and development approaches in the shelter sector

In Jordan, the majority of refugees from Syria have settled in impoverished urban areas. Their presence has exacerbated the existing shortage of affordable housing, raising rental prices, increasing social tension and straining urban infrastructure. For refugees living outside of camps, shelter is their most pressing need and rent is the largest monthly expenditure. Some refugees are living in rudimentary shelters or tents, abandoned or partially constructed buildings, or in overcrowded and poorly maintained apartments. These conditions increased the vulnerability of refugees, especially women and girls who were exposed to increased family violence and early marriage (as a solution to leaving the home). Many refugees living in rented accommodation do not have basic tenancy agreements and are vulnerable to eviction and further displacement.

To address these shelter issues, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) developed an innovative programme aimed at responding to refugees' short-term shelter needs and building long-term resilience for host communities. The Integrated Urban Shelter Programme, which began in 2013, focuses on poor urban areas with a high refugee density. ECHO, the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida); the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration; the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Global Affairs Canada and UNHCR provide funding. The programme gives conditional cash grants and technical support to Jordanian property owners to complete unfinished buildings; refugees, selected according to vulnerability criteria, are matched with suitable housing units where they can live in rent free and with a secure lease for a period of 12 to 24 months.

At the end of 2014, the programme brought an additional 4 000 housing units onto the market. It provided adequate shelter and secure tenancy for more than 10 800 Syrian refugees, more than half of them women and girls. With an estimated USD 8 million invested in the local economy, the programme was a direct investment in local communities. The NRC also provides counselling services to refugees living in urban areas, and aims to help people exercise their rights to access essential services, refugee registration and adequate housing. The NRC initially projected that refugee beneficiaries would be able to stabilise their economic situation. But a 2015 evaluation of the NRC programme found that the situation of many refugee households instead is likely to deteriorate once the rent-free period is over, given the Jordanian government's restrictions on refugee employment.

In Lebanon, the government has not authorised the establishment of camps for refugees from Syria. The dramatic increase in the number of refugees arriving in Lebanon between 2012 and 2014 added tremendous pressure in the shelter market, and informal refugee settlements spread across the country, most within already low-income communities. The lack of accommodation combined with the rising unemployment and cost of living deepened the vulnerability of refugees and the poorest Lebanese. Shelter conditions are poor, with close to one-third of refugees living in unfinished buildings or in non-residential structures such as garages, shops, warehouses, factories and outbuildings.

The NRC set up a programme similar to its shelter programme in Jordan, called, the Small Shelter Units (SSUs) and Sub-standard Buildings (SSBs) Programme. It provides cash for property owners to bring their buildings up to minimum standards, and matches the improved accommodation to vulnerable families with 12-month leases. In addition to increasing the number of housing units on the market and providing shelter, the programme helped reduce the families' difficulties in access to other basic services and helped stabilise overall rental prices. The NRC had anticipated that at the end of the one-year lease period, refugees would be able to establish themselves economically and pay rent for shelter. But those assumptions proved to be over-optimistic. The evaluation of the programme found that NRC beneficiaries were unable to cope with even a basic minimum expenditure for rent, and on average their debt had increased during the period they were receiving NRC assistance.

Sources:

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)/ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway (2015), Shared Resilience for Syrian Refugees & Host Communities in Jordan, www.alnap.org/resource/21865.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) (2015), "Increasing the availability of host community housing stock and improving living conditions for the provision of refugee shelter", Evaluation of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Lebanon Host Community Shelter Programmes, www.alnap.org/resource/20329.

Addressing access to employment and business creation

Several of the evaluations commissioned by DAC members reviewed for this study underscored the pressures often placed on host communities by the arrival of massive numbers of refugees. For example, the 2015 evaluation of the humanitarian programme of the Syria Crisis Unit of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) emphasised that communities hosting refugees "are often in the poorer areas of the countries and the influx of refugees has added additional pressure on already overstretched services and struggling local economies".[42] Some evaluations considered how the lack of access to work and business creation constitute a challenge that negatively impacts refugees' livelihoods. The evaluation of Australia's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis noted that most Syrian refugees are unable to work in the countries where they live, so that their "savings become rapidly depleted leaving families dependent on assistance that rarely meets all their needs".[43]

In Lebanon women and young people are disproportionally affected by the lack of access to employment.[44] The evaluation of ECHO humanitarian assistance said the difficulty refugees experience getting work permits "has contributed to gradual exhausting of refugee assets and the increased use of negative coping mechanisms".[45] This evaluation also highlighted the impact on host communities, finding that "the availability of cheap Syrian workers and the loss of trade with Syria make it harder for unskilled people of host communities to find work".[46] A 2016 evaluation of the World Bank Group's engagement in situations of fragility, conflict and violence found refugee influx had a profound impact on Jordan and Lebanon, both high middle income but heavily indebted countries. The evaluation noted the increase in the labour supply put pressure "on the already fragile labour markets, increasing unemployment, with considerable impact on youth and unskilled workers, putting pressure on wages and increasing informal employment".[47]

Several evaluations also addressed the implications of host countries' different policies relating to the right of refugees to work. The evaluation of DFID in the context of the Syria crisis, for example, noted that "some countries strictly limit the economic livelihoods (and education) opportunities available to refugees, while others actively work to facilitate refugee employment and provide other services".[48] The evaluation of ECHO in this context identified the "limited engagement of local authorities and host governments to allow refugees the right to work" as a weakness, and noted the "ECHO and EU Delegations' limited impact on the policies of host governments with respect to refugee livelihoods".[49] Overall, evaluations indicated that major actors and providers of development assistance are aware of many of the issues limiting refugees' ability to formally access the labour market, but as of yet they may have achieved limited impact in encouraging more favourable policies in hosting states.

> **"Some countries strictly limit the economic livelihoods (and education) opportunities available to refugees, while others actively work to facilitate refugee employment and provide other services."**
>
> (Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015:9)

Evaluations noted that host governments in Africa also have a variety of policies that influence refugees' livelihood opportunities. The case study on Uganda and Ethiopia found differences in the two countries' approaches. Through its inclusive approach at both the legal and policy level, Uganda is seeking to give refugees more autonomy and is expecting to gain from their economic and social inclusion. Donors have supported the Ugandan self-reliance model since its inception in the late 1990s. Implementation of the latest initiative, the 2016-20 Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategic Framework, brings together the government of Uganda, UN agencies, the World Bank and development partners to support resilience-building efforts for refugees and host communities. Ethiopia, on the other hand, presents a more restrictive policy environment but nevertheless is moving towards allowing initiatives that enable refugees to find income-generating activities in the informal sector, which would allow them greater self-reliance. Most notably, some donors are supporting the development of a national compact in Ethiopia that is focused on job creation. The job compact has been developed, with an agreement that the Ethiopian government will grant refugees greater access to the labour market and, in exchange, will receive financial support for the development of industrial parks. The aim is to improve the conditions of refugees in the country of asylum and support host communities. There are also expectations that such an initiative will reduce secondary movements to Europe.

There have also been a number of diplomatic efforts in the African context to promote refugees' self-reliance. A 2014 US Department of State evaluation on humanitarian programming to promote integration of refugees in Zambia, Tanzania, and Cameroon noted that the most "critical factors in economic, social, and legal integration while controlled by the host government and communities can be supported through diplomatic interventions and programming".[50] The report suggested that diplomatic efforts could potentially include promoting host countries' adherence to the Refugee Convention of 1951 and implementation of the Convention's related articles on the right to work, access to education, freedom of movement, naturalisation and making land available to refugees to promote self-reliance.[51] The case study on Ethiopia and Uganda provides more information and lessons from evaluations of self-reliance and livelihood programming.

Several donors have been involved in the development of national compacts. The UK has been actively involved since 2015 in the development of compacts with Jordan, Lebanon and Ethiopia (see Box 5). Compacts are presented as innovative in a 2017 Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) rapid review of the UK's aid response to irregular migration in the central Mediterranean. The review stated that the compact model fits the UK's new policy objectives to help people who are displaced for a long-term to integrate locally, based on the expectation that integration will reduce the likelihood of secondary displacement.[52] National compacts aim to move beyond humanitarian assistance by providing refugees with access to public services and livelihood opportunities through burden-sharing arrangements with host countries.

Box 5. The Jordan Compact, the livelihood component

The Jordan Compact is a new long-term funding and planning strategy aimed to provide economic opportunities for refugees and vulnerable Jordanians. It was presented at the 2016 Supporting Syria and the Region Conference, where compacts were also agreed for Lebanon and Turkey. While it is too early to evaluate the impacts of the programme, there have been efforts to take stock of the progress made to date. A 2017 report by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) attempted to provide an overview of progress to date on the implementation of the Jordan Compact. Overall the report found slow progress in its first year. This was due in part to structural issues in Jordan's labour market, which is characterised by high unemployment and a large informal labour sector with relatively slow economic growth, and a foreign investment climate that is not particularly conducive to the creation of formal jobs. As a result, the majority of refugees only have access to jobs in the informal sector where they are at greater risk of discrimination and potential abuse. According to a 2016 welfare assessment of Syrian refugees conducted for the World Bank and UNHCR, "returns to informal work are so low that we do not observe any welfare difference between those who work and those who do not work".

The Jordan Compact aims to provide work permits for up to 200 000 Syrian refugees in the coming years, with a sector-specific provision for the creation of 2 000 jobs in the garment industry. The 2017 IRC progress report found that some 37 000 work permits have been issued over the first year, out of an initial intended figure of 50 000 permits. The report also found that in the first year, the Compact has yet to overcome existing barriers to refugees' employment. For example, while the Jordanian government waved fees for Syrians applying for work permits as of April 2016, the bureaucratic process has not yet been eased and hence obtaining a work permit remains cumbersome, especially as the permit is tied to a single employer and valid only for a year, offering little flexibility. The report was critical of the Compact for not providing a framework to support refugees in their search for a job, and said the Compact offers no guarantees about rights for a "decent" job.

While the Compact seeks to drive job growth through an EU trade liberalisation policy accompanied by promoting investment in Special Economic Zones (SEZs), there is some concern that there may not be enough evidence to date that these policies will support job creation on a significant scale. It has also been suggested that the remote location of the SEZs may prove to be an additional barrier for refugees. Another component of the Jordan Compact is designed to allow Syrian refugees to formalise their existing businesses and to set up new businesses. However, the IRC report suggested that it is not clear yet to what extent this new policy has been implemented, with many barriers to own and operate a business remaining. These include the need to demonstrate proof of residency status, strict financial requirements, and the requirement to have a Jordanian business partner. Overall, the IRC report found that the Jordan Compact provides an "innovative and meaningful way for the Government of Jordan and development actors to generate an agreed pathway for job creation", but it also noted that "so far its implementation has not matched its potential". To help ensure impact over time, the report suggested an annual review of progress. This would allow for adjustments to be made over time through a "test and learn" approach. Finally, the report suggested that "innovative ideas to increase formal employment should be implemented at small scale, rigorously evaluating their impact, and scaling up interventions that work while abandoning those that do not".



Syrian refugee succesfully granted work permit to work in Jordan..
© UNHCR/Ivor Prickett

Sources:

Center for Global Development/ International Rescue Committee (2017), Refugee Compacts: Addressing the Crisis of Protracted Displacement, Final Report of the Forced Displacement and Development Study Group, Washington, DC/New York, www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/Refugee-Compacts-Report.pdf.

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Promoting business and productive opportunities

Most evaluations reviewed for this report presented cash programming as largely successful in meeting the most immediate and essential needs of refugees. They also suggested that cash allows refugees to meet their basic needs in a dignified manner, giving them the liberty to set their own priorities. In the context of the Syria crisis, there has been a general consensus in the international community regarding the advantages of the use of cash transfers as an appropriate option for urban refugees in middle income countries with diverse needs. Evaluations also highlighted how cash interventions have the added advantage of incurring very low administrative costs. For example, the 2016 ECHO evaluation found that in Jordan 90% of ECHO's funds provided to UNHCR directly reached beneficiaries in the form of cash.[53] In addition, evaluations have found that there are limited risks of fraud when cash transfers are associated with biometric distribution platforms.[54] Some donor evaluations and other evaluative work recognises the multiplier effects of cash transfers on local economies with emerging (although hard to quantify) evidence on the impact of cash transfers on local markets and job creation.[55]

The ECHO evaluation noted that while ECHO is aligned with DFID on the greater use of cash transfers, other donors have policy reservations on the widespread use of cash transfers. The evaluation said cash transfers are sometimes inhibited by various policy, institutional, infrastructure or technical constraints. The ECHO evaluation concluded that "without broad donor agreement it will be hard to realise the use of Multi-Purpose Cash Transfer (MPCT) on a large scale".[56] Other evaluations are less assertive about the broader and longer term impact and effectiveness of such programmes, suggesting a need for more specialised research.[57] The Dutch evaluation further mentioned that cash programmes "may have added to growing tensions between host and refugee communities" when vulnerable host communities do not also benefit.[58]

The 2015 evaluation of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) reported that DANIDA strongly favours the promotion of economic solutions, in line with its objective of a longer-term approach to displacement, and as such had "provided catalytic funding to UNHCR for a more robust approach to livelihood programming that should help to address the issue of aid dependency of long-term refugees and also enable UNHCR to engage with governments on how refugees can contribute to economic growth".[59] It noted that DANIDA has also supported the development of partnerships with the private sector. For example, DANIDA's funding has enabled UNHCR to involve the private sector in livelihoods programmes for refugees.[60]

Lessons on creating employment can also be drawn from evaluations of programmes in Afghanistan, a country which has consistently had one of the largest displaced populations over the last 30 years. (It is also now experiencing a large-scale return of population, especially from Pakistan.) A 2015, evaluation of Canada's Afghanistan Development Program found that Canada's development aid in Afghanistan "resulted in economic growth and created short-term employment and income opportunities".[61] The evaluation also noted that "in many villages, community infrastructure works financed through national community-based programs, such as National Solidarity Program (NSP) and the National Area-based Development Programme (NABDP), have resulted in millions of labour days for the community. However, this employment creation has been mainly temporary in nature" with "no clear evidence of improved income or employment opportunities" as these jobs would be hard to sustain without continuing aid flows.[62] Hence, while there have clearly been some successes in creating access to employment, many of these achievements may not prove sustainable in the long-term or beyond the immediate life of the programme.

Refugees' access to quality education

Refugees' access to education was not extensively covered in most of the DAC members' policy-level evaluations reviewed for this study, which tend to engage with broader strategic issues and thus provided limited insight on the impact of refugee programing in this specific area. Education, nevertheless, is a priority for a number of countries. Norway, for example, has taken a leading role in relation to education in the Syria crisis and more broadly.[63] Australia also has provided longer-term assistance for education in response to the Syrian crisis, with the 2014 evaluation of its humanitarian assistance noting that Australian funding has shifted significantly towards education.[64]

The 2015 review of humanitarian assistance provided by Netherlands did not look at education as a stand-alone issue but provided an overview of the wider protection sector. It highlighted the difficulties of working on issues like child labour in isolation because protection and livelihoods issues are so closely intertwined.[65] The 2016 evaluation of ECHO in the Syria crisis, however, analysed some of the effects of refugee inflows on education in host communities. It noted that "the drastic increase in number of students enrolled is affecting the quality of education for all children with the return of double-shifts in schools,"[66] and that the influx is also causing growing tensions between refugees and host populations as Syrian children are widely perceived as "receiving more support for education".[67]

Unsurprisingly, evaluations conducted by international organisations, especially UNICEF and UNHCR, engaged more with some key challenges encountered at the programming level in the education sector. A 2013 real-time evaluation of UNHCR's response to the Syrian refugee emergency conducted in Jordan, Lebanon and northern Iraq found that while "refugees have been given access to public schools or camp schools in the three countries visited, many barriers to education exist. These include lack of documentation; transportation and other auxiliary costs; psychosocial issues; the need for children to work to support their family; and the limited ability of schools to absorb such a large number of recent arrivals".[68] The evaluation also found that refugee children who have not mastered the language of instruction of the host country face especially significant barriers to education. This has been a problem for Arabic speaking refugee children in Lebanon, where many classes are in French, and in northern Iraq where teaching is in Kurdish.[69] The language obstacle was cited as one cause of refugee children dropping out of school or not enrolling. The evaluation called for the urgent establishment of "targeted programs to address the language barrier provide remedial education services and address the other major barriers to education".[70]

A 2015 UNICEF evaluation found that some 40% of refugee children in Jordan do not have access to formal education. The evaluation highlighted various financial and managerial limitations of the Jordanian Ministry of Education and discussed the challenges faced by teachers. These included overcrowded classrooms, insufficient training to deal with the psychosocial issues of students, and salary and status discrepancies between teachers on different types of contracts.[71] The evaluation also cited a shortage of schools and infrastructure as a significant constraint to expanding access to education and providing quality education.[72] It also found that pathways between alternative education, formal education, higher education and employment are often lacking.[73] The evaluation, noting that the refugee situation is protracted, recommended a greater "effort to build resilience and sustainability" with a focus not only improving access to education, but also on the quality of the learning experience for both Syrian and affected Jordanian children.[74] In addition, it said, "UN officials and donors raised concerns that double-shifting with segregation by nationality will create longer-term risks to social cohesion, with Jordanians and Syrians educated in separate and unequal schools. Separation into morning and afternoon shifts creates two schools that

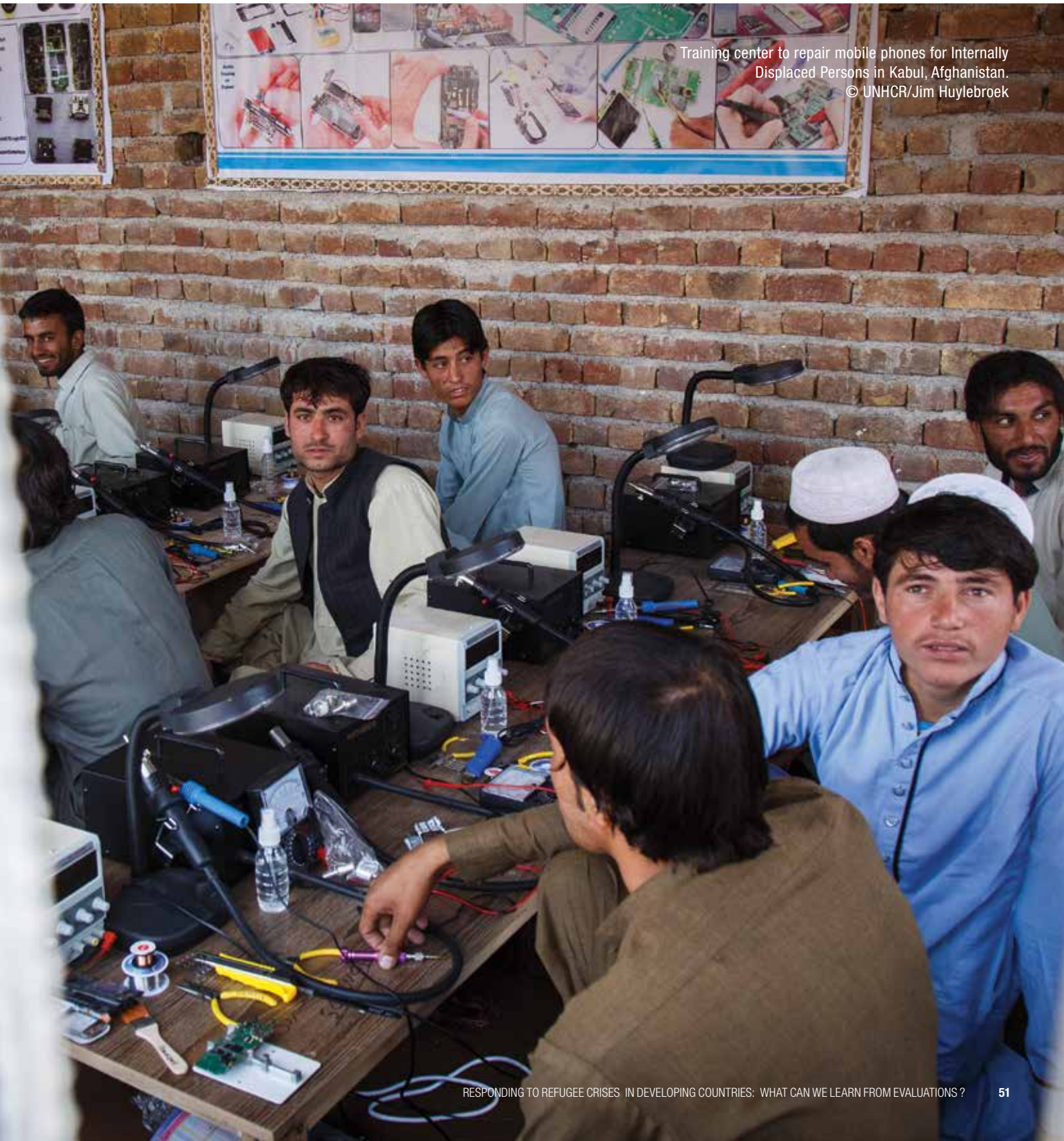
barely mix, limiting the scope for longer-term building of mutual understanding and trust".[75] The Syria Coordinated Accountability and Lesson Learning (CALL) initiative evaluation synthesis highlighted the "tensions between different priorities here, or at least between particular solutions to addressing them: the immediate priority of providing access to education and the longer-term priority of social cohesion".[76]

A 2013 GIZ "ex-post" evaluation report for the German government on basic education for Afghan refugees (BEFAREe) in Pakistan identified as a core problem "the very limited access [of refugees] to education which was believed to cause life-long disadvantages regarding employability or other forms of income generation, thus creating sustained poverty either in the host country Pakistan or in the home country Afghanistan".[77] The evaluation suggested that national authorities need to take "full responsibility for the provision of basic education for Afghan refugees" with some support from the international donor community to "strengthen their ability to perform their mandate".[78] The evaluation noted, however, that "phased planning and design of the Project and the insecure funding from UNHCR made it difficult for the project management to plan on a long-term basis".[79]

In 2016, UNHCR commissioned an evaluation of its response to the United Nations Level Three (L3) South Sudan refugee crisis in Uganda and Ethiopia. In Uganda, the education response was aligned with the Ugandan Refugee Act of 2006, the national legislation that accords refugee children access to national schools, and with UNHCR's strategic vision to facilitate refugee access to national schools.[80] While efforts were made to avoid setting up parallel education systems for refugees, the sheer number of Sudanese refugee children was beyond the absorption capacity of schools in northern Uganda. Therefore, "additional schools for refugee children (called 'community schools') were established in line with Ugandan education policies and standards, and in principle, accessible to refugee and local communities".[81] The evaluation, however, found that some of the targeted approaches, including the distribution of textbooks and other materials only to refugees, might not favour refugee integration and could contribute to friction between refugees and local populations.[82] The education response in Uganda also focused on providing pre-primary education through early childhood development centres. While post-primary education was in principle open to refugee children and some refugee children attended local secondary schools, the evaluation showed that very limited support was provided for secondary school education. The main barriers included "low absorption capacity of local secondary schools, high school fees and the need to prioritise in view of limited financial resources".[83] To address this shortfall, the evaluation recommended the development of an action plan to strengthen access to post-primary education and to link it to livelihoods and self-reliance programming including vocational training.[84]

The education sector in Ethiopia also had great difficulties coping with the large influx of South Sudanese refugees. The same evaluation, noting that over 70% of refugees were children, said "the education response was faced with a tremendous challenge of setting up learning opportunities for a very large group of children".[85] Compounding the challenge were the difficulties of poor infrastructure and high pupil/teacher and pupil/classroom ratios.[86] A shortcoming observed in Ethiopia was that almost no secondary education was provided for refugee children. The evaluation found that "the failure to create education opportunities for older refugee children (11-18) and youth in turn increased the risk of negative coping mechanisms such as recruiting young men into armed forces and child marriages".[87]

Overall, evaluations show that large refugee population influxes strain educational systems in host countries. Challenges include a lack of educational infrastructure, language barriers, limited resources and competing priorities. Opportunities for secondary education in many contexts are often particularly limited for refugees. Evaluations recognised the importance of refugee education and suggest that education be considered as part of overall child protection strategies. They also suggest education be linked to vocational training and potential future employment opportunities, and that educational policies ought to aim to reduce the potential for social tension between refugees and host communities.



Training center to repair mobile phones for Internally Displaced Persons in Kabul, Afghanistan.
© UNHCR/Jim Huylebroek

Key messages from evaluations

Evaluations show existing shortfalls in support to refugees in urban contexts.

Evaluations show that the international community is still learning to operate in urban contexts, and that the Syria crisis offers a testing ground given the significant urbanisation of the refugee population. They suggest that many donors have yet to formulate specific policies for refugee response in urban settings.

- Donors should consider formulating clear policies and strategies to support refugees in urban contexts aligned with existing policies of international organisations.
- As indicated in the evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syria crisis, donors need to increase support to reach refugees across densely populated urban areas and address the needs of non-camp based refugees and host communities. The use of "area-based" approaches that address cross-sectorial needs of both displaced and host population can be a viable model.
- Assisting refugees through unconditional cash transfers in the urbanised and middle income countries bordering Syria has yielded some positive results and should be expanded.
- At a diplomatic and policy level, donors need to improve engagement with national authorities and municipalities, working to ensure that the rights and freedoms of urban refugees are respected.

Evaluations confirm the socio-economic impact of refugees' presence on host communities and the need for greater support to expand refugees' access to decent work.

Evaluations noted that refugees have significant social and economic impact on host communities, and that limiting refugees' livelihood options and restricting their access to the formal labour market produce negative consequences.

- Donors should support assessments of the impact of refugee inflows on local economies and labour markets, and may wish to conduct in-depth studies on the implications of host state policies relating to refugees' access to livelihood options and the formal right to work.
- Greater diplomatic efforts may be needed to expand refugees' inclusion into local labour markets and ease restrictions on their employment options in host countries.
- Donors should support countries with weak labour markets to create new and sustainable jobs and business opportunities for both refugees and host communities. A learning approach – testing innovative programming and bringing successful efforts to scale – may be appropriate, given the lack of solid evidence and lack of consensus on good practice in this area.
- Evaluations have repeatedly shown that cash-based programmes are effective in supporting refugees in urban, middle income environments.

Key messages from evaluations

Evaluations consider the consequences of failures to provide education to displaced children and youth, and the need for greater efforts to support equitable and sustained access to quality education.

Evaluations found that education planning must continue to adapt to challenges of both large-scale and protracted displacement by moving beyond short-term emergency provision of education to longer-term planning. Evaluations especially showed a lack of support for secondary education in many contexts.

- Education programming initiatives should strive to ensure both access to education and quality of education for refugee populations, while taking care to not create divisions between refugees and host communities. This may be achieved by including education for refugees in national development planning.
- Evaluations show that secondary education for refugees is often not a priority and often receives insufficient financial support, particularly in contexts of large-scale displacement where primary education is often prioritised. Evaluations suggest establishing clear linkages between post-primary education, livelihoods and employment opportunities.
- Education programming should likely be viewed as part of a holistic child protection framework tackling risks of drop-outs, child labour, child-trafficking and exploitation. There is some evidence to suggest that education may help avoid future cycles of displacement, providing displaced youth with skills and competencies that they can use to either integrate into host communities or be better equipped to return to their country of origin and find decent work.
- Targeted interventions are also needed in the realm of education to address specific difficulties such as those related to the language of instruction.

Evaluations suggest that greater attention to social cohesion between refugees and host populations is needed, and should be at the centre of programming strategies, in areas related to education and employment.

Whether in the area of employment, education or services, differential access for refugees and hosts exacerbates vulnerabilities for both groups and may increase community tensions.

- A cohesive approach is needed that simultaneously works to address the needs of refugees and improve conditions for host populations.

Research notes and citations

1 ICRC, 2015: 5

2 Devictor, 2016: 12-13

3 Center on International Cooperation, 2015: 3

4 In 2014, UNHCR also released a Policy on Alternatives to Camps. The ICRC published its first collection of lessons learned regarding urban response to protracted conflict in 2015. In the run-up to the World Humanitarian Summit 2016, IRC and ALNAP (inter alia) published early attempts at lessons learned in this area.

5 ADE/URD, 2016: 43

6 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 1

7 ICRC, 2015: 31

8 Center on International Cooperation, 2015: 3 and 6

9 Devictor, 2016: 49

10 Development and Training Services, Inc., 2014: 13

11 These were the World Bank, the European Commission (through DEVCO and ECHO), UNHCR, UNDP, ILO, IOM, OECD members and other providers to promote access to labour markets and the right to work for refugees.

12 Zetter and Ruaudel, 2016

13 Harild, Christensen and Zetter, 2015: 17

14 UNHCR, 2011: 55

15 GIZ, 2013: 4

16 UNHCR, 2016c

17 The World Education Forum 2015 took place on 19 – 22 May 2015 in Incheon, Korea. The organisers included UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR. The Forum adopted the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, which sets out a new vision for education over the next 15 years.

18 UNESCO/ UNHCR, 2016: 3

19 According to available data, only 50% of refugee children are in primary school and only 25% of refugee adolescents are in secondary school. However, there are significant differences among countries. In Kenya, Pakistan and Bangladesh, for example, fewer than 5% of adolescents aged 12 to 17 were enrolled in secondary education (UNESCO/ UNHCR, 2016: 3 and 4).

20 UNESCO/ UNHCR, 2016: 4

21 World Bank, 2016: 76

22 Darcy, 2016: 42

23 ADE/URD, 2016: 43

24 Ibid.: 44-45

25 Ibid.: 47

26 Of 33 projects in neighbouring countries reviewed by the team evaluating the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis, only seven partnered with municipal authorities. See ADE/URD, 2016: 47

27 Morand, 2012: 7

28 International Rescue Committee/ ReDSS, 2016: 28

29 Morand, 2012: 49

30 Giesen and Leenders 2015: 65

31 Under the "bail-out" system, refugees are required to obtain sponsorship from a Jordanian citizen and pay a fee to leave the camps. This effectively enabled Syrians to move between urban and camp areas with few restrictions.

32 ECHO, 2016: 44

33 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 49

34 DFAT, 2014: 10-11

35 Crisp et al., 2013: 21

36 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 79

37 Ibid.: 51

38 In February 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Minister of the Interior of Jordan and the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG), Peter Knip, in Amman. The MoU will facilitate increased co-operation between Jordan and Netherlands in the fields of decentralisation, local economic development and maintenance of public service levels while coping with large numbers of refugees. See www.vng-international.nl/blog/mou-between-jordan-and-the-netherlands and VNG International Annual Update 2015, www.vng-international.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/DEFUPDATE2015small96.pdf.

39 Mowjee et al., 2016: 25

40 The programme also has the added value of avoiding inflation in rent costs by making more accommodation available. Sida was one of the first donors to this programme, but the programme's success has since attracted other donors.

41 ADE/URD, 2016: iv and 46

42 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 9

43 DFAT, 2014: 15

44 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 52

45 ADE/URD, 2016: 10

46 Ibid.: 32

47 World Bank, 2016: 76

48 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 9

49 ADE/URD, 2016: 32

50 Development and training Services, Inc., 2014: 31

51 Ibid.: 32-33

52 ICAI, 2017: 15

53 ADE/URD, 2016: 63

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.: 62

57 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 73

58 Ibid.: 79

59 Mowjee et al., 2015a: 45

60 Ibid.: 45 and 51

61 DFATD, 2015: 27

62 Ibid.: 27

63 Education is a key political priority of the current Norwegian government and funding towards education has increased since 2011 and particularly sharply since 2015. See Betts et al., 2015: 35

64 Australian funding has recently shifted to incorporate a greater emphasis on education with AUD 20 million allocated to "No Lost Generation", representing over 40% of the funding allocation for the financial year.

65 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 78

66 In 2013, 41% of Jordan's schools were overcrowded, against 36% in 2011.

67 ARD/URD, 2016: 32

68 Crisp et al., 2013: 5 and 6

69 Ibid.: 6

70 Ibid.: 14

71 Teachers hired for the second shifts are on short-term contracts and paid from 50% to 75% less than teachers in first shifts. Their salary is below the living wage (Culbertson et al., 2015: 77).

72 Culbertson et al., 2015: 78

73 Ibid.: 28 and 127

74 Ibid.: 3

75 Ibid.: 30

76 Darcy, 2016: 46

77 GIZ, 2013: 3

78 Ibid.: 6

79 Ibid.: 5

80 Ambroso, et al., 2016: 62

81 In both government and community schools (partly set up by the refugee community) refugees follow the national Ugandan curricula and are taught in the Ugandan language of instruction (English). Teachers in the government schools were Ugandan teachers while refugees were recruited as classroom assistants. Refugee teachers were recruited in community schools (Ambroso, et al, 2016: 63).

82 Ambroso et al, 2016: 62

83 Ibid.: 63 and 64

84 Ibid.: 68

85 Ibid.: 108

86 Ibid.: 17

87 While no evidence could link the lack of education opportunities and the reported an increase in child marriages and SGBV in 2014 and early 2015 in this specific context, such links have been established in many other contexts, proving the important safeguard played by education. See Ambroso et al, 2016: 108



Burundian refugee student at home in Nairobi, Kenya.
© UNHCR/Antoine Tardy



Mass displacement from fighting in Mosul, Iraq.
© UNHCR/Ivor Prickett



III. Financing mechanisms for addressing refugee crises in middle income countries

Context

Funding modalities for refugee programming tend to follow a "compartmentalised approach" whereby humanitarian and development funds are channelled through different budget lines and different departments in donor organisations. Refugees are at the centre of the humanitarian-development nexus. Unfortunately, it is still the case that "development plans, projects, and funding mechanisms rarely include refugees, while humanitarian funding that is earmarked for refugees often bypasses host communities and is devoted first and foremost to 'care and maintenance'."[1] Donors have acknowledged that protracted crises require long-term financing that is fast and flexible, as outlined in the 2007 Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations, or Fragile States Principles (FSPs)[2] and the 2010 OECD guidance on transition financing[3] and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.[4] Despite such principled commitments, the reality is that predictable and flexible financing is still lacking. As a 2015 study for the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) noted, "there are few incentives to introduce substantive changes to the way in which humanitarian and development actors operate and also no penalties for failure".[5]

The prolongation of the Syria regional crisis and growing refugee numbers triggered an important increase of global humanitarian funding volumes, even if the needs still remain largely unmet.[6] Despite the large sums of money spent in Syria and the region, funding deficits have been a feature of the crisis and funding received has been on a downward slope relative to need. This was noted in the co-hosts' declaration at the 2016 Supporting Syria and the Region Conference in London.[7]

Syria's immediate neighbours that have been most affected by the crisis are middle income countries that would not traditionally benefit from grant-based and concessional finance. This has created a number of challenges and has led to greater interest in new funding modalities for middle income countries. In general, there is recognition of the fact that offering grant-based or concessional funds to host countries allows for the implementation of more sustainable and inclusive approaches towards refugees' integration.[8]

Towards flexible and predictable multi-year funding

The majority of evaluations reviewed for this working paper found that the funding mechanisms employed in response to the Syria crisis have generally been flexible. For instance, the 2015 evaluation of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Syria Crisis Unit noted that DFID remained "highly flexible, allowing partners the necessary space for changes in approaches and priorities as the situation demands".[9] It found that DFID has adapted its response to increases in the number of refugees in both Jordan and Lebanon.[10] Similarly, the 2016 evaluation of the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) humanitarian assistance included a case study on Syria that noted the flexibility of Sida's funding provides added value for partners, enabling them to use lightly earmarked funding to focus on the greatest needs rather than being locked into working in specific areas or on specific activities.[11] The Syria response case study, in the 2015 evaluation by DANIDA, said DANIDA's partners appreciated that its flexibility allows them "to direct the funding towards the greatest needs and enables them to fill gaps that other donors are unwilling to fill", and specifically cited as an example that "DANIDA funding enabled an NGO to support secondary healthcare for Syrian refugees".[12]

Some donors such as ECHO were able to mobilise funds relatively rapidly in response to the Syria crisis.[13] However, initial funding did not keep up with growing needs. Many donors had not anticipated the crisis would continue and last as long as it has. While they have substantially increased their financial support, contributions remain largely insufficient when measured against UN agencies' appeals. For example, a 2015 evaluation of Netherlands' response said that "while the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plans (SHARP) and Refugee Response Plans (RRP) appeals between the end of 2012 and 2015 combined increased by more than sevenfold, the Netherlands financial allocations over the same period had less than doubled".[14] The Syria Coordinated Accountability and Lessons Learning (CALL) initiative evaluation synthesis, which provides a gap analysis, pointed out the "omission from the evaluative studies of analysis of the effects of the dramatic funding shortfalls that have affected almost every aspect of the international humanitarian response".[15]

The review of the Netherlands' Syria crisis response also reported that under-funding caused interruptions of aid delivery and affected mainly "early recovery and livelihoods, shelter and agriculture as humanitarian (lifesaving) food, health and WASH sectors needs were given priority", and said the funding gap "raises serious questions about the feasibility of current intentions to focus future efforts towards strengthening the resilience of affected communities and institutions".[16] It further noted that these funding problems were not resolved through the use of facilities for pooled funding, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) because Syrian allocations compete with other major humanitarian emergencies across the world. [17] The CALL initiative evaluation synthesis also emphasised the general "lack of analysis about the adequacy or otherwise of internal or external finance and funding mechanisms", with the exception of an evaluation of pooled funds by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). This evaluation confirmed the central role of the Central Emergency Response Fund, but found that it was "somewhat hampered by slow process".[18] The ECHO evaluation also highlighted the impacts of funding shortfalls, noting funding shortfalls caused "the World Food Programme (WFP) to suspend a food vouchers programme serving 1.7 million Syrian refugees in December 2014" and that "inside Syria, the number of people in need has grown at six times the rate of the global international humanitarian response from 2011 to January 2015".[19] The 2016 World Bank evaluation indicated that the flexible financial instruments it used to provide emergency assistance to Jordan and Lebanon "attracted additional donor financing — albeit far from the identified needs".[20]

Despite the overall funding shortfalls, most donors tried to provide funding based on needs. In general, they have prioritised Syria, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan; funding to Lebanon and Jordan has increased in proportion to increases in the number of refugees displaced. DFID's funding allocations have been consistent with the countries' relative burden and have increased in proportion to increases in the number of refugees displaced. UK funding has taken into consideration that while Jordan's share of the overall burden is less than Turkey's, refugees make up a greater proportion of Jordan's population, and that Lebanon's relative and proportionate burden is significant and carries risks of future instability.[21] This approach, the DFID evaluation said, means that, "the countries under the most pressure thus receive a significant proportion of the overall funding".[22] UK financial support also went to Iraq and Egypt, and several other OECD members also allocated funds to Egypt. According to the 2015 DFID evaluation, following the transition of government in Egypt "in 2013 authorities began cracking down on the Syrian refugee population". While the country has only a "small number and small proportion of Persons of Concern, they are currently experiencing some of the most difficult and precarious conditions".[23] The 2016 evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis also examined funding shifts, noting that "ECHO's funding allocations fluctuated over time, with a sharp fall in 2014 (to a level similar to the one of 2012, representing a decrease of about 50%) that applied to all the countries individually, except for Turkey, where there was a slight increase".[24] The evaluation also said that "although in some cases the evaluation could link the evolution of funding allocations to the evolution of needs, globally the linkage to needs were not clear".[25] Netherlands cited "cost effectiveness considerations" to justify supporting Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries within the region as opposed to supporting refugees seeking asylum outside the region.[26]

Most evaluations stressed the positive aspect of flexibility, while also noting that funding mechanisms in general still lack the level of predictability that could be provided with multi-year funding. Many DAC members' humanitarian resources continue to be available only on an annual basis or an even shorter period, with some donors providing funding for six to nine months only.[27] This creates some "tension between short-term funding streams and protracted needs such as in education that have created negative effects on the ground".[28] In the evaluation of Netherlands' response to the Syria crisis, UNHCR's partners voiced serious concerns over the negative impact of untimely and unpredictable funding as it made it difficult to retain staff and led to relatively high staff turnover. In some cases, poor predictability also negatively affected implementation of activities in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of some partner operations. It was noted in the 2015 Netherlands evaluation that to improve the situation, UNHCR now guarantees 12 months of operational funding.[29] The impact of annual cycles of funding for humanitarian interventions is also seen in responses to many other types of chronic crises. For instance, in the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Sida evaluation noted the continuous "burden related to addressing the annual humanitarian issues that persist as the conflict continues unabated year after year" and the "dependency of humanitarian actors on entities in the stabilisation and development communities to foster the changes needed that would bring about some economic and social stability to the region, thus enabling an environment that would finally result in fewer humanitarian needs".[30] A 2015 OECD working paper found multi-annual, predictable funding is beneficial in addressing long-term crisis.[31] However, many OECD DAC members work with annual public expenditure cycles that make it difficult for some of them to provide multi-year funding. Nevertheless, the 2015 evaluation of DANIDA noted, "despite the short-term nature of humanitarian funding, donors often use it as a default because it remains faster, more flexible and more risk tolerant than development instruments".[32]

Funding mechanisms are evolving. For example, while its funding is usually annual, Sida "has introduced multi-annual framework agreements with selected partners": eight multilaterals organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), and 11 civil society organisations (CSOs) including the Swedish Red Cross.[33] Norway's Section for Humanitarian Affairs has also implemented multi-year funding agreements to enable more predictable and flexible funding.[34] Most of DFID's funding in its early response to the Syria crisis was based on short-term humanitarian programmes. DFID's move to a more predictable two-year funding cycle has proved more efficient, enabling implementing partners to design and implement longer term programming that can address the issues of resilience which is taking centre stage as the crisis becomes protracted.[35] Many of the evaluations commissioned by DAC members, as well as other reports reviewed for this working paper, emphasised the benefits of multi-year funding that enables longer-term activities, allows employee retention and helps prevent funding gaps. The 2015 OECD working paper on financing in crisis found that, in 2015, 16 OECD DAC members provided multi-annual funding to select UN, NGO and Red Cross Movement partners and suggested that multi-annual funding is an emerging good practice.[36]

Finally, several evaluations discussed the impact of partnership arrangements on programing outcomes. The evaluation of Australia's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis found that funding had been "spread across too many partners, reducing its potential effectiveness and limiting the ability of the department to engage meaningfully".[37] The 2015 evaluation of Denmark's DANIDA, on the other hand, found that its engagement with a smaller number of organisations "has enabled DANIDA to be a partner, not simply a donor", and added that "the predictability of the partnership framework agreement should enable partners to plan their interventions better and take a longer-term approach in protracted crises".[38] By focusing on crises rather than countries, the evaluation said, DANIDA aims to give its partners flexibility to respond to conflict-related displacement in neighbouring countries.[39] In general, it seems that there is a strong recognition of the need for development providers to move towards multi-year funding, enhancing predictability and strengthening partnerships with implementing organisations. Two-way communication between implementing partners on the ground and development providers is essential to ensure that funding responds adequately to needs and can be adapted to rapid evolutions during ongoing crises.

There is a strong recognition of the need for development providers to move towards multi-year funding, enhancing predictability and strengthening partnerships with implementing organisations.

Funding channels in response to the Syria crisis

Donors have employed various mechanisms to distribute funding in the context of the Syria crisis including through direct allocation to partners operating within the frameworks of the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plans (3RPs)[40] and the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plans, and through the Syria response pooled funding mechanism, which includes the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Funding for refugees in host countries is not always channelled through host country governments. For example, Australia has not provided any funding to governments of countries hosting refugees, but has funded other actors to support refugees in these countries.[41] The 2015 evaluation of DANIDA's humanitarian strategy noted that at the time of the evaluation, DANIDA was not undertaking development programming in Jordan and Lebanon, despite the host countries' requests, because they are both middle income countries.[42] A 2015 evaluation of Norway's assistance related to the Syria regional crisis said the international response has "been complicated by its unfolding across middle-income countries, where agencies have less experience, where traditional modalities are less appropriate, and where some costs are higher".[43] A 2016 evaluation of ECHO's response to the Syrian crisis made similar points, noting that humanitarian donors have had to simultaneously address short-term and long-term needs in the context of the added challenge that "the crisis concerns middle-income countries, with notably a different type of host government interaction".[44]

A majority of the DAC members whose evaluations were reviewed are directing their support through UN agencies and UN-managed pooled funds. Netherlands provided the highest share of humanitarian assistance through the UN (representing 80% of its total expenditure from 2009-14, with UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) receiving the biggest share). Its rationale for this emphasis is "the importance placed on strong leadership, central coordination role in humanitarian emergencies and the assumed efficiency of operating through the UN-led system".[45] Some evaluations, however, questioned the rigour of the decision-making processes for allocations to multilateral agencies and the effectiveness of the UN. DANIDA and Sida highlighted some of the operational limitations inherent with UN responses. While Netherlands "places large confidence in the UN system to deliver in terms of adequate needs assessments, coordination and aid effectiveness, through UN-OCHA in Syria and UNHCR in the neighbouring countries", an evaluation noted that it "has become increasingly concerned that multilateral assistance failed to reach all areas in Syria".[46] According to that evaluation, "the UN's mixed record in terms of access inside Syria" has led Syrian National Coalition officials to call "on the Netherlands government to stop prioritizing UN agencies in receiving financial contributions and look for alternative ways to deliver aid".[47] Norway has also channelled a large amount of its support through the UN system. The 2015 evaluation of Norway's efforts in Syria, however, found that "a growing body of evidence" since 2014 suggests that the UN response to the Syria crisis in "areas such as speed of response, approaches to protection, and contingency planning, have all been found wanting".[48]

A 2015 review of the Netherlands' humanitarian assistance recognises that "a lack of funding to national and southern international NGOs is a problem shared with other donors".[49] However, it noted, INGOs and national NGO partners predominantly implement this assistance, which may leave the UN in the position of becoming "more coordinators than implementers".[50] Less humanitarian funding is channelled through NGOs than through the UN: the DAC average is 19%.[51] As pointed out in the 2015 evaluation of Norwegian assistance, some donors nevertheless channel a significant amount of humanitarian funding to NGOs, and especially to their own national NGOs.[52] Some evaluations questioned this. The DANIDA evaluation highlighted the "risk of working only with the 'usual suspects' and excluding NGOs that may add value in specific

contexts, for example, because of their access or established relationship with affected communities".[53] To respond to the risk, DANIDA was able to fund non-framework NGOs in Afghanistan including the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and in the Syria crisis the DanMission and Development and Regeneration Association.[54] The evaluation of its humanitarian assistance strategy found that such partners tend to have mechanisms in place to ensure accountability to affected populations. In Afghanistan, "DACAAR have worked closely with Community Development Councils (established under the National Solidarity Programme) to organise consultation meetings with community members and to provide accountability to local communities".[55] Likewise, Sweden, through Sida's participation on the Advisory Board of the Emergency Response Fund (ERF), has explicitly called for more funding to local NGOs in Syria and neighbouring countries.[56]



Syrian refugees cooking in a restaurant in Beirut, Lebanon.
© UNHCR

The 2015 review of Netherlands' humanitarian assistance acknowledged the lack of direct funding to national or local actors, despite the commitment in its 2011 Policy Framework for Humanitarian Aid to "wherever possible, make more use of local structures and capacities".[57] The Framework also recalls the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles, and in particular the eighth principle that speaks to the overall commitment of donors to "strengthen the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, with the goal of ensuring that governments and local communities are better able to meet their responsibilities and coordinate effectively with humanitarian partners".[58] The 2015 evaluation of Netherlands' 2010-15 humanitarian strategy noted its attempt to "shift towards more direct government involvement and development", and the recommendation made in Jordan to UNHCR to "develop a strategy to transition funding and activities that can be addressed effectively by the Government and other actors that are more in line with the Government's National Resilience".[59] There is evidence from evaluations to suggest that some DAC countries are taking the Good Humanitarian Donorship principles seriously, recognising that their response to the Syria crisis should aim to support host governments' abilities to assume responsibility for meeting the needs of displaced populations.

In Jordan and Lebanon, the World Bank has directed its support to mitigate the impact of the refugee inflow on country systems and communities whose livelihoods were affected by the crisis.[60] The World Bank prioritised "budget support": as one of the few significant sources of budget relief to address fiscal pressures from the large refugee influx. However, there are some concerns as this "further exacerbates the already high level of debt that is now approaching 100 percent of GDP in Jordan and is close to 140 percent in Lebanon".[61]

The 2016 evaluation by the Independent Evaluation Group of World Bank engagement in situations of fragility, conflict and violence found that "one of the main challenges for the Bank in Jordan and Lebanon was finding appropriate financing instruments".[62] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) loans – the Bank's traditional financial instruments applicable in the context of middle income countries such as Jordan and Lebanon – were not well-suited to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis.[63] IBRD loans are known to disburse slowly and to be relatively expensive, making them unsuitable for countries like Jordan and Lebanon that are highly indebted. Further, the evaluation found, "both Jordan and Lebanon have been reluctant to borrow on IBRD terms for addressing a crisis they did not cause in the first place".[64] The Bank's main instruments of additional emergency assistance to Jordan and Lebanon were a USD 150 million emergency loan, a USD 54.3 million grant in Jordan and a multi-donor trust fund (MDTF) in Lebanon that attracted pledges for USD 74.5 million.[65] The Bank evaluation concluded that "financial response to the crisis was inadequately small" and that "its effectiveness (if measured by amounts attracted and compared to the needs) was quite low".[66] The evaluation also referred to the New Financing Initiative to Support the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA), which plans to provide concessional financing to Lebanon and Jordan, as a positive albeit "much delayed" step to address needs of countries affected by large population displacement.[67] In September 2016, at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees, the MENA facility was expanded to the global level, which will allow it to provide concessional financing to all middle income countries hosting large numbers of refugees.

A 2011 assessment commissioned by DFID of the track record of multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs) in improving aid effectiveness noted that "the paradox of MDTFs is that the most effective trust funds require a strong recipient government, but that strong recipient governments are, by and large, absent in the contexts in which MDTFs are most often employed".[68] The assessment concluded that the success or limitations of MDTF operations are closely linked to the political, security and operating contexts and expectations. It cited South Sudan as an example, saying that effectiveness of the MDTF was limited by a variety of factors including the difficult operating conditions; the lack of capacity in both fund administration staff and the newly formed recipient government; and unrealistic expectations results.[69]

"Blended" responses combining humanitarian and development resources

As described in the first section above, some donors do not have an "integrated strategic framework" and have deliberately chosen to retain the distinction between development assistance and humanitarian assistance in their responses to the Syria crisis. This appears to be the case for Netherlands, although its approach aims to promote complementarity and sequencing rather than "blending". The 2015 evaluation of its response to the Syria crisis predicted "continued and increased humanitarian relief and development assistance including to host government institutions and host communities in Lebanon and Jordan", and envisaged that "humanitarian agencies will need to continue to focus on providing humanitarian assistance to people in need in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan whereas resilience and other development agendas should be financed from non-humanitarian facilities such as the World Bank and UNDP programmes".[70]

As the Syria regional crisis evolved, some bilateral actors including Denmark and Sweden have moved to further align humanitarian and development resources.[71] DANIDA, for example, has specifically "attempted to create linkages between its humanitarian and development funding by encouraging humanitarian partners to think about how their work links to longer-term development".[72] DANIDA is focusing its humanitarian and development assistance in fragile states, where the "issue is less one of phasing out humanitarian funding as development assistance takes over and more that of being able to work with both instruments simultaneously and flexibly".[73] The 2015 evaluation of its strategy also found that DANIDA's longer-term support has enabled its partners "to link humanitarian and development activities from an early stage and work towards longer-term goals and durable solutions".[74] The evaluation of DFID's Syria Crisis Unit humanitarian programme acknowledged the struggle of managing "a blended crisis of this scale i.e. a regional conflict in middle income countries that does not fit within in its standard delivery models of either a) traditional development, b) working in fragile states or, c) sudden onset disaster".[75] Similarly, the evaluation of Australia's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis highlighted the complex decisions donors face in balancing the goals of donors supporting longer-term development (including on areas such as resilience and stabilisation) and meeting immediate and urgent humanitarian needs. In the context of limited funding levels (with UN appeals only partially met), these different approaches and objectives compete. Recognising this, the Australian evaluation called on DFAT to "re-consider how best to balance a focus on both resilience building and lifesaving aid delivery".[76]

There have been similar challenges in responding to crises in other refugee contexts. For example, in relation to the South Sudan crisis, the 2015 Netherlands evaluation noted the case of INGO partners receiving both development and humanitarian funding, but often without specific linkages between the funds.[77] Overall, it suggested that "the relationship between humanitarian and development funding streams and institutions could be considerably improved" through a "conscious effort to align humanitarian and development investments".[78]

The same evaluation noted ongoing discussions on the role of the UN as a co-ordinator that does not necessarily implement on the ground, and the general lack of evidence upon which to base funding decisions. "Whether the balance of funding channels between the UN, Red Cross movement and NGOs is right or wrong and whether these arguments are correct or not are difficult judgement: the evidence just doesn't exist".[79] The evaluation also said that "in the absence of clear criteria or a good evidence base on which to judge comparative effectiveness and performance, these sorts of decisions risk becoming arbitrary, politicised or based on the perceptions of individual staff members".[80] Further, it found that donors with a strong field presence such as ECHO, DFID, USAID and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) were able to rely on their in-field staff in addition to other tools such as the Multilateral Aid Reviews

(in the case of DFID), but that "stronger evidence comparing the efficiency and effectiveness of different funding channels and modalities" largely remains "missing".[81] Finally, the evaluation raised concerns about the practice of sub-contracting and related transaction costs, suggesting that since this issue is not unique to Netherlands "there is clear scope for more coordinated and joint donor action to tackle this problem".[82]

Evaluations of donor responses to the Syria crisis clearly show that existing funding modalities have met various obstacles and limitations. While the international community has increasingly committed to long-term solutions at a policy level, many donors have continued to provide financing with short project cycles, with some donors citing flexibility as an advantage of this form of finance. Evaluations suggest that establishing partnership agreements and providing predictable levels of funding, even when using short funding cycles, may help ensure continuity and better allow partners to plan and better address long-term challenges. The Syrian crisis has also confirmed that channelling the bulk of the funding to UN agencies and UN-managed pooled funds without considering complementary and alternative channels may potentially limit local ownership and responsibility. Donors without experienced humanitarian staff or experience working in the region and donors who traditionally tend to rely on implementing partners' needs assessments have faced particular difficulties in adapting funding to needs and finding the right mix of partners. Traditional funding instruments used by the World Bank also encountered limits, but the development of new concessional financing has offered new modalities for assistance in middle income countries.



Syrian refugees arrive and are registered at the Rabaa al Sarhan, Jordan joint registration centre and receive clothing funded by ECHO.
© UNHCR/Jared Kohler

Key messages from evaluations

Evaluations have emphasised the value of flexible funding mechanisms in allowing for adjustments to funding in order to meet evolving needs of refugees.

A mismatch between strategic plans and the actual sequence of events (as in the case of the Syria crisis) can have a negative impact on the availability of funds.

- The effects and implications of significant funding shortfalls, budget cuts and delays in securing funding have limited implementation of longer-term strategies in some cases.
- Limited funding leads to competing priorities, with donors forced to find a balance between providing direct humanitarian assistance to refugees and providing more development-oriented support for host communities and governments to adapt to sizeable refugee inflows and protracted displacement.
- The provision of flexible funding, including at a regional level (e.g. focusing on crises rather than countries), enables donors to adapt to changing circumstances, shifting priorities to keep pace with evolving and growing needs.
- Donors may wish to include provisions for reserve humanitarian funding or contingency funds that could be dispersed rapidly and allow for a more timely and flexible response to evolving needs.
- The Independent Evaluation Group at the World Bank has recommended the development of new financial mechanisms or fast-response facilities to be used in middle income countries when external threats, such as a massive refugee presence, jeopardise resilience, and in order to improve strategic alignment and use of global Fragility, Conflict, and Violence thematic trust funds.

Evaluations highlight the shortcomings of short-term funding and the added value of long-term predictable funding, which is better suited in cases of chronic crises and protracted displacement.

Multi-year programme funding helps to improve the predictability of funding for partners, and supports longer-term planning and better alignment of humanitarian response with development objectives.

- Donor countries are making efforts to provide more predictable, durable financing solutions to support livelihood opportunities and build resilience for refugees and host communities.
- Several donors continue to provide funding on an annual basis, but have established partnership agreements with selected actors that allow them to have a more predictable level of funding and thereby better plan for longer-term response.

Key messages from evaluations

Evaluations suggest the need to build an evidence base to compare the efficiency, effectiveness and adequacy of different funding channels and modalities and to strengthen criteria which can then be used to make future decisions about appropriate funding channels.

Evaluations have recognised opportunities and challenges associated with the provision of assistance through the multilateral system, while identifying benefits and potential risks of alternative and complementary delivery channels including bilateral support to national and local structures and actors.

- While a number of development effectiveness reviews of multilateral organisations exist, several evaluations note the lack of studies on the efficiency of the overall funding architecture for the Syria crisis (including comparisons of funding delivered through multilateral and other channels).
- Building a stronger evidence base may include more in-depth analysis of the impacts of channelling significant volumes of aid through the UN and other multilateral channels, as well as more analysis of the risks and opportunities to directly fund local actors.
- Providers of development assistance may wish to consider planning a study or evaluation comparing the relative effectiveness and efficiency of various funding channels in response to the Syria crisis, from a multi-donor perspective.

Development providers have increasingly adopted funding models that promote greater alignment between humanitarian and development funding in response to the Syria crisis.

Development providers should continue to assess the impacts (including shortfalls and hurdles for implementation) of responses that aim to align humanitarian and development resources. Further research on how to best align incentives and encourage productive collaboration may still be needed.

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1 Center on International Cooperation, 2015: 6

2 For the Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations – or Fragile States Principles (FSPs), see www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/docs/38368714.pdf.

3 See OECD (2010), "Transition financing: Building a better response" OECD Publishing, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264083981-en

4 The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, www.pbsdialogue.org/documentupload/49151944.pdf.

5 Mowjee, Garassi and Poole, 2015: 34

6 For instance, in common with other major bilateral actors, Norway has increased funding significantly since 2011. Its support for the Syria regional crisis doubled between 2014 and 2015, making Norway the eighth biggest bilateral donor to the crisis in 2015. See Betts et al., 2015: 21. For the UK, the Syria crisis has been the largest humanitarian response that DFID has ever committed to and 50% of DFID's portfolio supports humanitarian assistance delivered in Syria. See Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 19 and 25.

7 See www.supportingsyria2016.com/news/co-hosts-declaration-of-the-supporting-syria-and-the-region-conference-london-2016/.

8 Center on International Cooperation, 2015: 6

9 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 10

10 In March 2013, Jordan and Lebanon reportedly hosted similar percentages of Syrian refugees (31% and 32%, respectively). By one year later Lebanon's share of refugees was 38% and Jordan's 22%, while Turkey was hosting 25% of the total number of Syrian refugees. DFID has shifted funding from Jordan to Lebanon in response to this change. See Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 18 and 19

11 Mowjee et al., 2016: 23 and 24

12 Mowjee et al., 2015b: 23

13 ADE/URD, 2016: 84

14 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 16

15 Shortfalls of around 40%-50% have been characteristic of both the RRP/3RP and Syria appeals since 2014, necessitating quite drastic cuts in some programmes – either in terms of scale/coverage or in terms of whole programme elements or technical and management support structures. See Darcy, 2016: 56

16 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 32

17 Ibid.: 32

18 Darcy, 2016: 60

19 ADE/URD, 2016: iii

20 World Bank, 2016: 79

21 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 11

22 Ibid.: 19

23 Although the number of refugees in Egypt is stable, their needs are dramatically increasing. See Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 11 and 19

24 ADE/URD, 2016: 93

25 Ibid.: 94

26 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 12

27 Betts et al, 2015: 39

28 Ibid.

29 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 50-51

30 Mowjee et al., 2016: 8

31 Scott, 2015: 5

32 Mowjee, Garassi and Poole, 2015: 38

33 Mowjee et al., 2016: 4

34 Betts et al., 2015: 36

35 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 22

36 Scott, 2015: 5

37 DFAT, 2014: 24

38 Mowjee et al., 2015a: 36

39 Ibid.: 39

40 In 2014, the Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP) replaced the Refugee Response Plan. The current 3RP covers the period 2017-18. See Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan, 2017, at www.3rpsyriacrisis.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/3RP-Regional-Strategic-Overview-2017-2018.pdf.

41 DFAT, 2014: 15

42 Jordan and Lebanon, which are hosting the largest numbers of refugees, are deemed to be middle income countries and therefore not eligible for development assistance. See Mowjee et al., 2015a: 70

43 Betts et al., 2015: 13

44 Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey are all middle income countries with a GNI per capita of over USD 1 045. Of these five countries, Syria has the lowest income levels and remains the only lower middle income country among them. See ADE/URD, 2016: v

45 The Red Cross Movement received 14% of expenditure and NGOs 4.5%. See Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 32-33

46 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 12

47 Ibid.: 15

48 Betts et al., 2015: 31

49 In 2012, less than 0.1% of total humanitarian assistance flowed directly to local and national-level NGOs in crisis-affected countries, and just 0.3% went directly to crisis-affected governments. See Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 45 (Quoting Gingerich, T. (2015). 8 Trends to Watch in Humanitarian policy and Practice in 2015. January 5. Retrieved from Oxfam America: https://politicsofpoverty.oxfamamerica.org/2015/01/8-trends-to-watch-in-humanitarian-policy-and-practice-in-2015/).

50 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 36

51 Ibid.: 32

52 The percentage going to NGOs is 30% from Ireland, 26% from Denmark and 26% from Germany. In Norway, just over 45% of the funding dedicated to the Syria crisis for 2011-15 was implemented through agreement with UN agencies, and just over 36% through agreements with Norwegian NGOs. International and local NGOs, the private sector and the Norwegian public sector also fund small amounts of the assistance. See Betts, 2015: 21

53 Danida is aware of the risk of excluding NGOs that may add value in specific contexts (e.g. because of their access or established relationship with affected communities – e.g. local and national NGOs are usually the first to respond to a crisis and can often provide assistance in areas inaccessible to international organisations); international organisations have had to work through local partners in contexts such as Somalia and Syria in order to access those affected (and finding ways to monitor the work of partners

remotely and ensure accountability).

54 Mowjee et al., 2015a: 54

55 Ibid.: 57

56 Mowjee et al., 2016: 20

57 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 45 (Quoting Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. (2011). Aid for People in Need. Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

58 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 46 (Quoting GHD. (2003). Principles and Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship. GHD)

59 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015: 79

60 World Bank, 2016: 74

61 Ibid.: 82

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.: 79

64 Ibid.: 82

65 Ibid.: 77

66 Ibid.: 82

67 The new financing initiative was launched jointly by the World Bank Group, the United Nations and the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB) in October 2015. See World Bank, 2016: 83.

68 Barakat, Rzeszut and Martin, 2011: 10

69 Ibid.: 43-44

70 Giesen and Leenders, 2015: 80

71 Denmark has commissioned a paper to inform its thinking on the need for "blended" humanitarian and development responses in the Syria crisis, with reference to other emergencies globally. Sweden's five-year strategy for the Syria crisis, while referencing development rather than humanitarian financing, seeks to connect the two through the framework of resilience.

72 Mowjee et al., 2015a: 72

73 Ibid.: 71

74 Ibid.: 72

75 Agulhas Applied Knowledge, 2015: 16

76 DFAT, 2014: 4

77 Taylor, Harvey and Couture, 2015, 80

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.: 36

80 Ibid.: 37

81 Ibid.: 39

82 Ibid.



Improving water supply for towns hosting refugees in Lebanon.
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Working towards better responses in refugee contexts: Lessons from evaluations can help light the way

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has recognised that international co-operation and development assistance strategies in relation to forced displacement, refugees, and migration need greater attention. The Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration brings together the 30 DAC members and was formed with the purpose of examining ODA reporting and working towards better programming guidance. This working paper aims to provide evidence from evaluations to feed into the guidance on better programming that is being developed through the DAC Temporary Working Group. This paper covers the key areas and priority topics identified by the DAC Temporary Working Group, drawing from evaluation findings to highlight some of the key evaluation recommendations for positive change going forward.

Many of the topics being discussed in policy debates on refugees and development have been on the international and regional agenda for years, and have now been repackaged in relation to the unfolding crisis. Issues such as the coherence of humanitarian, development, diplomatic and foreign policy objectives have been discussed and evaluated for several decades. Attempts to address root causes of violence, fragility and displacement, as well as state building and peacekeeping efforts in fragile contexts, have been high on the agenda of OECD members over the last 15 years. Historically, international support and interventions in many refugee countries of origin have been undertaken for decades. International efforts aimed at promoting stability in countries such as Afghanistan, Libya, South Sudan and Somalia have often produced mixed or disappointing results. Learning from these past failures and also from past achievements can allow for a better response to what is, in many ways, a growing crisis, with more people now forcibly displaced than at any time since the end of the Second World War.

The current refugee crisis is not a sudden onset crisis, although coverage in the media and the interest of the public may have caught on rather recently. Unresolved protracted conflict and human rights abuses in major refugee countries of origin such as Afghanistan, South Sudan and Somalia have lasted decades and have resulted in an ever increasing number of refugees. The 2011 outbreak of violence in Syria and increasing levels of violence and conflict in Iraq have only added to total global figures of people forcibly displaced. Available evidence today suggests that displacement is often protracted, meaning that the international community must plan for longer-term approaches and solutions.

Findings from evaluations, based on evidence and lessons from past experience, can help the international community rise to the challenge. Evaluations of policies and programmes in a variety of contexts, however, caution that short-term political pressures and intense focus on immediate, visible results can undermine longer-term positive change. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities require long-term approaches and cannot be achieved within a short-term project cycle. Large “pushes for programming” have not automatically translated into better longer-term outcomes. Unfortunately, in many places, there have been significant challenges to improving overall coherence for development efforts in response to forced displacement. In response to the Syrian crisis, evaluations have found that most international donors were slow to react. Too often political leaders and decisions makers have been forced to play catch-up in many respects, as the international refugee crisis has unfolded.

Encouragingly, there is evidence that OECD member countries intend to work towards long-term solutions that enhance linkages among humanitarian, diplomatic and development actors. The international community has increasingly recognised:

- the importance of predictable, flexible multi-year funding
- the need for co-ordination between donor efforts and for co-ordination with the policies and aspirations of host governments
- the necessity of overcoming practical barriers to coherence among approaches implemented by development, humanitarian, military and diplomatic actors
- the imperative to find innovative approaches to reach people fleeing violence including refugees living in urban areas, providing access to quality education and jobs and hope to those fleeing war and oppression.

Development and humanitarian needs and priorities have also shifted as a result of the unprecedented numbers of people forcibly displaced. New funding modalities for providing assistance in middle income countries affected by the Syrian crisis have recently been put in place and new strategies and policies for reaching refugees in urban areas are now required. In addition, greater support and financial contributions for host governments, to allow them to provide essential services such as education, healthcare and protection to refugees, are being rolled out.

Importantly, evaluations showed many positive examples. These include positive examples of cash-based interventions providing much needed assistance in urban settings; policies fostering positive enabling environments for refugees in countries such as Uganda; and new programmes and initiatives to help refugees access shelter and jobs in Lebanon and Jordan. There are new financing instruments for work in middle income countries. Compacts have been put in place in Jordan, Lebanon and now Ethiopia, and there are examples of previous programmes for assisted voluntary returns in South Sudan meeting with some success despite the many challenges. The international community is demonstrating increased resolve to put coherence at the centre of international efforts. There are positive examples and initiatives to build on. Better responses to assist refugees are needed and evaluations can help light the way.

> **Learning from past failures and from past achievements can allow for a better response to what is, in many ways, a growing crisis, with more people now forcibly displaced than at any time since the end of the Second World War.**

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South Sudanese refugees queue for core relief items at Imvepi settlement in Uganda.
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Responding to Refugee Crises in Developing Countries: What Can We Learn From Evaluations?

Working Paper

The OECD **DAC Network on Development Evaluation** is an international forum that brings together evaluation managers and specialists from development co-operation ministries and agencies in OECD DAC member countries and multilateral development insitutions. The network has been instrumental in developing key international norms and standards for evaluation.

Responding to Refugee Crises in Developing Countries: What Can We Learn From Evaluations? provides evidence from evaluations to feed into guidance on better programming that is being developed through the DAC Temporary Working Group on Refugees and Migration. The main working paper draws on evaluation findings to highlight key lessons and recommendations for positive change going forward. It is complemented by three case studies that look at how policy objectives have been implemented in specific country contexts. The working papers highlight the evaluation work of DAC members and aim to strengthen the evidence base to help improve responses to situations of displacement in developing countries.

Key topics covered in the working papers include: lessons on bridging the gap between humanitarian and development programming; efforts to strengthen international response to protracted crises; lessons on whole-of-government approaches in refugee contexts; learning from work in urban settings; improving access to employment and quality education; new financing mechanisms for refugee crises in middle income countries; and lessons on financing in response to the Syria crisis.

Working paper and case studies on Afghanistan, South Sudan and Ethiopia/Uganda can be found at: https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/evaluating-refugee-migration.htm.

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