



Evidence Brief

Key takeaways from HDP Nexus partnerships supporting displaced populations and host communities.



Since the adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have strengthened their strategic and operational partnership working across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus in contexts of forced displacement.

This evidence brief is based on a multi-year evaluation commissioned by the UNHCR Evaluation Office, as well as on emerging findings from a forthcoming Joint Study for the UNHCR, BMZ and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. This Joint Study examines the best practices and learnings from HDP Nexus cooperation in the context of forced displacement, through the GIZ-UNHCR Global Programme 'Support to UNHCR in Facilitating the Operationalisation of the GCR in the HDP Nexus' – a programme testing various HDP Nexus approaches in eleven countries worldwide.

While the evaluation and the joint study are broader in scope, the evidence brief zooms in on three aspects highlighted in the Global Compact on Refugees that contribute to its' objectives of reducing pressure on host communities and enhancing refugee self-reliance. The brief spotlights key policy take-aways - underscored with selected examples on:

1. lessons and good practices on programming across the HDP nexus,
2. self-reliance and employment of displaced populations and host communities,
3. access to public services and inclusion of refugees in national systems.

Programming Across the Nexus – Lessons and Good Practices from the Partnership between UNHCR and the German Development Cooperation¹

01

Sustainable inclusion and nexus approaches require sustainable funding.

Financial burden sharing, a key part of the GCR response model, remains below its potential – amid competing international priorities, insufficient overall funding levels, diverging views between host states and donors on funding modalities and on what constitutes fair distribution of burden.

02

Engagement and internal capacity at local level is often equally, or more important, than engagement at national level.

For HDP nexus approaches to be effective, they must be operationalised at a local level.

03

HDP approaches must engage with displaced and host populations.

Development and humanitarian actors must use existing or build appropriate standards such as Accountability to Affected Population, Do No Harm, and context sensitive monitoring.

04

Effective Partnerships take time and investment.

Developing a mutual understanding on best approaches to support inclusion and HDP cooperation more broadly is an ongoing and iterative process of (joint) reflection and recalibration.

¹Written by Dr. Julian Lehmann (jlehmann@gppi.net), based on a [multi-year evaluation](#) conducted by the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) and the International Security and Development Center (ISDC) for the UNHCR Evaluation Office, as well as on emerging findings from a forthcoming Joint Study for the UNHCR, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) conducted by IOD PARC in collaboration with GPPi. The Joint Study is led by Dr. Nur Abdelkhalig Zamora (nur@iodparc.com).

²SUN-GP features global-level cooperation and cooperation explored under the Joint Study in Ethiopia, Mauritania, Niger, Mexico, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Uganda.



What has worked well?

- Capitalise on ongoing investments/ efforts of national and other international actors.
- Strengthen national and local government capacities through dedicated advisors.
- Integrate peacebuilding approaches and community-based/ participatory approaches that include refugees, IDPs and host communities.



Good practice Mauritania: Complementing World Bank Actions.

The partnership between UNHCR and the German Development Cooperation builds on actions by the World Bank in Bassikounou, the main refugee hosting area in Mauritania. The World Bank provides infrastructure support in the Mbera camp that will eventually enable UNHCR to decrease in-kind assistance. The World Bank is also supporting the introduction of a user-fee model in the health sector, combined with a social protection system for those most in need. The Taazour Social Registry, which is funded by the World Bank and supported by GIZ and UNHCR, identifies the most vulnerable households across Mauritania and is accessible to national and international stakeholders including national ministries, civil society, and UN agencies. The register records include 14,000 in- and out-of-camp refugee households in Bassikounou, and it includes an overview of assistance received matched with geolocation data.



Good practice Uganda: Engaging with Affected Populations.

UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister co-chair the Refugee Engagement Forum (REF) and the District Engagement Forum (DEF), which are two innovative mechanisms to engage with refugees and host communities from the settlement areas and to facilitate two-way communication between the CRRF Secretariat and Steering Group, and the settlements. GIZ is on the taskforce of both fora and offers financial and technical support to the REF. The REF has 36 members representing all refugee-hosting districts with two elected representatives attending the CRRF Steering Group meetings, one male and one female. The DEF was established more recently and held its inaugural meeting in September 2022. There are plans to bring representatives from the REF and DEF together to discuss issues of common interest and concern.

What has worked in supporting refugee self-reliance and employment?¹

Key policy take-aways for host governments:

Remove legal and bureaucratic restrictions to foster refugees' access to the labour market. Allowing refugees to engage in the formal labour market has positive effects on refugees' lives.

Put in place policies that allow access to documentation, support the development and/or access to relevant services, in particular energy and financial services. Access to basic services and documentation enables refugees' self-reliance.

Key policy take-aways for donors:

Support services that are preconditions for self-reliance and employment.

Support national systems on job placement and TVET, support job creation and private sector.

“People fleeing conflict don't want aid they want work”

Björn Gillsäter,
Head of the World Bank-UNHCR Joint
Data Center on Forced Displacement

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01

Work permits can have positive socio-economic and protection effects.

Statistical analysis of a large dataset on refugee households in Jordan showed that work permits issued to Syrian refugees had a strong positive effect on their socio-economic situation and on protection indicators. **Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, refugees holding a permit...**

- ...were less at risk of living in a household below the absolute poverty line (minus 11 percent);
- ...were less like of having to buy food on credit (minus 6 percent);
- ...were less likely to have to accept a socially degrading, exploitative, high risk, or illegal temporary job (minus 30 percent).

02

For improved self-reliance and employment, access to services can be critical, too. Analysis of recent panel data from a World Bank Phone Survey allowed for comparing which factors enable refugees' self-reliance and employment in Kenya.

- For refugees and stateless people, the most important drivers were the availability of services. Refugees fared better when they had access to electricity and financial services.
- The biggest determinant of self-reliance and employment was resident status.

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Humanitarian and development actors have numerous opportunities to support refugee self-reliance and employment. Qualitative analysis on host states in Africa and Latin America demonstrates good practice examples and additional opportunities for doing so, including:

- Investing in creating additional employment opportunities, including with private sector engagement. Good practice has emerged, for example, in energy (combining the development of public infrastructure with environmental and protection gains) and agriculture (such as irrigation, the establishment of cooperatives, and the development of value chains).
- Investing in national systems on TVET and job placement, supporting their expansion in refugee-hosting areas and the inclusion of refugees.

What has worked in supporting refugees' access to public services and inclusion in national systems?¹

Key policy take-aways for host governments:

Support refugee documentation; remove legal and bureaucratic barriers to inclusion.

Prioritize services that are preconditions/ enablers for self-reliance; use refugee situations as opportunities to improve national service systems, such as health care, education, and social protection.

Key policy take-aways for donors:

Support the development of inclusive national services, technically and financially.

Support policies that mitigate differences in quality between humanitarian and national delivery of services.

“Including refugees [...] is the most effective way to help them restart their lives and contribute to the countries hosting them”

Filippo Grandi,
UN High Commissioner for Refugees

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01

Registration and documentation can have positive effects on access to basic services. Statistical analysis of UNHCR registration data reveals that in Ethiopia, the government's policy commitment to support the registration of vital events had positive effects on access to services.

- More refugee children received birth certificates.
- Children with birth certificates were around 20 per cent more likely to be enrolled in education than those without certificates.

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Service inclusion can negatively affect access to and quality of services. Statistical analysis on healthcare subsidies for Syrian refugees in Jordan showed that:

- While costs for running parallel service provision (in this case healthcare) can be prohibitive and unsustainable, in the short term they facilitated increased access and quality of service provision for refugees. Under the subsidized model introduced by the Jordanian government, in which Syrian refugees were included into the Jordanian health care systems with the support by a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, Syrian refugees were able to maintain a relatively high healthcare access at a much-reduced cost for UNHCR and donors.
- Non-Syrian refugees, however, suffered a sharp decline in access to services as a result of the reduction of humanitarian delivery of health care services.

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Humanitarian and development actors have numerous opportunities to support service inclusion and mitigate risks. Qualitative analysis on host states in Africa and Latin America demonstrates good practice examples, including:

- Donors and development actors can engage in advocacy, including at bilateral level and within national and regional policy dialogues.
- Host governments, donors, as well as humanitarian and development actors can pilot inclusion, and support inclusive development plans; donors can dedicate funding to cover costs of inclusion.

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