

31. A European partnership to mitigate the impact of forced displacement in the Middle East

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Protracted displacement makes individuals and groups more likely to be left behind

Protracted displacement can exacerbate the risk of being left behind - not only for the displaced, but also for vulnerable people in the host communities. Early in the Syrian displacement crisis it was evident that the local communities in the Syrian Arab Republic's ("Syria") neighbouring countries could not sustain the enormous socio-economic burden of offering protection to millions of Syrian refugees. The scale of displacement from Syria challenged already fragile systems to deliver basic services and equally fragile social contracts between state authorities and communities. International humanitarian interventions would therefore need to target not only the Syrian refugees, but also vulnerable Lebanese, Iraqis and Jordanians. Moreover, humanitarian interventions would have to be combined with a longer-term development response to address the negative socio-economic impact in neighbouring countries as well as the development needs of the displacement-affected communities.

A partnership to mitigate the impact of forced displacement on refugees and host communities through a humanitarian–development approach

In 2014, eight European donors joined forces to establish the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq) - see Box 31.1. The aim of the programme is to support host governments in understanding and mitigating the impact of forced displacement. Through partnerships with governments, civil society, non-government organisations and United Nations agencies, the programme seeks to enhance protection for displacement-affected communities and support their socio-economic development. It operates through a humanitarian–development nexus approach and aims to reach those at risk of being left behind, whether refugees or host populations. Three key features have defined the engagements of the RDPP: localisation, integrated approach to protection and livelihoods, and support for evidence-based advocacy.

The commitment to localisation - partnering at local level to reach and protect those at risk - has been core in addressing 'leave no one behind'. Establishing partnerships with local actors already engaged in the communities, and supporting their capacity to provide protection to marginalised host communities and refugees, has enabled projects to reach groups at particular risk, such as children engaged in the labour market or survivors of gender-based violence.

A key feature of the Regional Development and Protection Programme has also been its integrated approach to address the need for protection and for socio-economic development. Targeting vulnerable women, children and people with disabilities has also

revealed the challenges in supporting people at risk of being left behind to access sufficient and sustainable socio-economic opportunities. Achieving this requires significant time and dedicated resources to engage key actors, including host governments and private sector partners, in addressing the structural and market barriers preventing vulnerable and marginalised groups from being included in socio-economic development.

To address the need for policy dialogue, a central feature of the RDPP has been the earmarked funding for research and evidence-based advocacy to partners engaged in lobbying for policy change. This support has allowed partners to utilise the lessons learnt from their work to influence national policy change, address inequalities, and improve evidence-based practice. For example, targeted advocacy support to Abaad - a Lebanese civil society organisation working with victims of sexual and gender-based violence - has helped them to influence legal reform leading to the repeal of Lebanon's "rape law".

Box 31.1. The Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East

The Regional Development and Protection Programme for the Middle East is a European multi-donor initiative focusing on four thematic areas: protection; livelihoods; research; political dialogue and advocacy. During the first phase from 2014 to 2018, it was supported by the European Commission, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Denmark has been leading programme implementation on behalf of the eight donors.

Joint efforts, long-term investment and flexibility are key to sustainable change

With the purpose of extracting lessons learnt, the eight participating European donors conducted an evaluation of the RDPP from September to December 2017.¹

Three key lessons emerged from the evaluation:

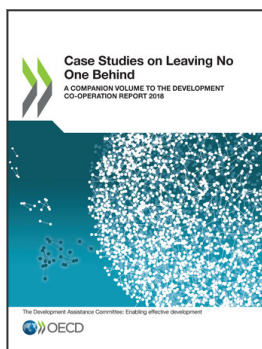
1. Longer, multi-year timeframes are required when developing programmes that span the humanitarian–development nexus and for building the capacity of partners and local institutions. Short timeframes are not conducive for sustainable change and building partnerships.
2. In order to adapt to a rapidly evolving context such as the Syrian displacement crisis, flexibility and the ability to learn from practice should be integrated already in the design of the programme.
3. A key driver of success has been the RDPP's efforts to get multiple stakeholders to join forces. By engaging a wide spectrum of actors including donors, host governments, the private sector and civil society, the partnership is able to cultivate a broader understanding of the efforts necessary to leave no one behind, leading to better outcomes. Delivering on the Grand Bargain commitment to localisation through the partnership approach has in turn proven essential in building sustained efforts towards leaving no one behind.

What next?

Based on the positive results and lessons learnt from the first phase of the RDPP, a second phase of the programme have been developed. This phase will operate from October 2018 until December 2021.

Notes

¹ The final report is available at: http://um.dk/en/danida-en/results/eval/Eval_reports/publicationdisplaypage/?publicationID=AAA865AA-7AD5-4733-9354-B60D8ED95A06&sc_mode=normal&sc_debug=0&sc_trace=0&sc_prof=0&sc_ri=0&sc_rb=0



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