

A stylized world map composed of a grid of dots in various shades of gray, with several dots highlighted in red. The map is centered behind the title text.

Development-Oriented Refugee Assistance

Learning from the Past to Plan for the Future

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- Globally, most refugees are in developing countries, where they often spend years in camps under restrictive conditions. Although humanitarian refugee aid provides fundamental assistance, the longer refugee situations persist, the more important are measures to support personal development.
- Especially in protracted situations, linking protection with development cooperation can contribute to structural improvements for refugees. Development-oriented refugee aid can offer a *triple-win* situation with opportunities for refugees themselves, as well as for donor countries in the North and host countries in the South.
- Central factors for implementing development-oriented refugee aid: political will on the part of states; a specific framing of support; and treatment of refugees as actors.



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Introduction

The rising numbers of asylum seekers arriving in Europe in 2015 sparked political debates and demands to tackle the »root causes« of forced migration in order to prevent large-scale displacement in the first place. German politicians emphasised the central role of development cooperation (BMZ 2016). This is based on the logic that development cooperation seeks to bring about lasting structural improvements in living conditions, which could in theory minimise or prevent forcible displacement. And the faster the causes are addressed, the sooner refugees can return to their countries of origin. However, this logic is confronted with the complexity of such causes, which rarely lend themselves to a quick fix. Violent conflicts often constitute the reason for flight but long-lasting conflicts furthermore contribute to protracted refugee situations.¹ Not only are the possibilities of development cooperation limited in war zones, but its achievements may be quickly destroyed due to the violence.

However, development cooperation can make an important contribution to refugee aid in host countries in the Global South.² 84 percent of all refugees worldwide are in developing countries, with 28 percent in least developed countries (UNHCR 2017: 2), where diverse development actors have already realised a range of projects – but mainly for nationals and not for refugees. While refugee protection is based on a humanitarian emergency approach to provide relief as quickly as possible, refugee situations become protracted, and the longer they last, the more important it is to create space for personal development in addition to meeting basic needs. In precisely this aspect, development cooperation can play a vital role, provided it is systematically linked with humanitarian refugee aid. Given that about two-thirds of all refugees are in protracted situations with an average duration of about seventeen years³ (UNHCR 2017: 22), this is more urgent than ever.

A development orientation in refugee protection can create a *triple-win* situation for donor states in the North and host countries in the South, as well as for refugees

themselves. Development-oriented refugee aid goes beyond a focus on short-term humanitarian measures by (1) sharing responsibilities between states, (2) supporting sustainable development of regions of refugee settlement, and in particular (3) promoting skills and abilities of refugees. The idea of development-oriented refugee aid is not new, and has been put into practice in various approaches since the 1960s. Lessons for future action can therefore be drawn from that store of experience.

This paper begins by outlining the concept of refugee aid and then explores the early approaches of development-oriented refugee aid, along with the reasons for their failure. Building on this historical perspective, the possibilities of development-oriented refugee aid as a *triple-win* situation are discussed with central factors for implementation.

1. The Underlying Concept of Refugee Protection

Refugee protection is fundamentally rooted in the idea of humanitarian emergency relief: the aim is to provide refugees with protection and assistance immediately after they arrive in a host country. Internationally, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated to protect refugees and support the process of finding durable solutions (UNGA 1950), for which it cooperates with states and operational and implementing organisations (UNHCR 2003: 28–34). The objective of humanitarian emergency aid is to meet basic needs until one of the three durable solutions can be realised: voluntary return to country of origin, local integration in the host country, and resettlement to a safe third country (Loescher et al. 2008: 115–118). Durable solutions are thus not about delivering protection for persons with a refugee status; they are rather about ending transitional conditions where people often have limited access to their human rights, and restoring permanent status as citizens with full human rights.

The focus on humanitarian aid and durable solutions underlines that refugee situations are ideally understood to be temporary and refugee protection to be short-term (Krause 2015a: 9f). While it is undeniable that humanitarian emergencies arise when people escape situations of danger subsequently in need of immediate support. The category of humanitarian aid is therefore certainly

1. For example, the wars in Afghanistan and ongoing insecurity have left about 2.6 million refugees in host countries for more than two decades (UNHCR 2015: 13; see also Krause 2016).

2. In this paper, the term »host countries« also includes countries of asylum.

3. Author's calculation based on UNHCR statistical data set on protracted refugee situations in 2016.

crucial. However, the transitional paradigm contradicts international developments as refugee situations are increasingly long-lasting.

Most refugees (and de facto internally displaced persons) are in countries in the Global South. In 2016, there were about 5.1 million refugees in Africa and 3.5 million in the Asia and Pacific region (UNHCR 2017: 14). Current crises such as those in South Sudan and Burundi demonstrate how, while conflict can force large numbers of people to flee, it is lasting conflicts that lead to protracted refugee situations. One reason for this is that voluntary repatriation to the country of origin constitutes the politically preferred durable solution – which cannot be realised under conditions of ongoing conflict and insecurity. States are hesitant to support the other two solutions of resettlement and local integration. As a result, out of 17.2 million refugees globally in 2016 (not counting Palestinian refugees), only 552,200 returned to their home country, 189,300 resettled in safe third states and 23,000 locally integrated (UNHCR 2017: 24–28). Thus, the international community effectively found durable solutions for only 4.4 percent of all refugees in 2016.

The lack of durable solutions in turn contributes to protracted refugee situations, which UNHCR (2017: 22) defines as those »in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given asylum country«. In 2016, 11.7 million refugees were stuck in such protracted situations. While the average duration had earlier been estimated at twenty years (Milner 2014: 153), in 2015 it reached twenty-six years – and about one-third had already lasted longer than thirty years (UNHCR 2016: 20). The average duration decreased to seventeen years in 2016; however, this was not because solutions were found for many refugees, but because Syrian refugees had stayed in neighbouring countries for more than five years and were thus included in the calculation (UNHCR 2017: 22). The change is further reflected in the number of refugees; in 2015, 41 percent were in protracted situations while in 2016, it was 67 percent (UNHCR 2016 20; 2017: 22).

The longer refugee situations last, the more important it is to go beyond providing for basic needs such as food, water and sanitation, and also support personal development. Especially in camps, refugees are often confronted with difficult living conditions, wide-ranging restrictions

and extensive security threats over a long period. They often rely on external aid, have restricted access to their rights, and face diverse forms of violence, women and girls in particular suffer sexual and gender-based violence (Deardorff 2009; Crisp 2003; Buckley-Zistel et al. 2014). These conditions undoubtedly affect refugees and their relationships, and again underline the necessity to improve conditions and the potential usefulness of a link with a more sustainable development orientation.

2. The History of Development-Oriented Refugee Aid

The idea of linking refugee protection with development is not new, but has been pursued in various forms since the 1960s (Krause 2013: 82–112). Previous approaches include *Integrated Zonal Development Approach*, *Refugee Aid and Development*, *Returnee Aid and Development*, *Targeted Development Assistance* and the current *Transition Solution Initiative*. These approaches are briefly summarised, along with lessons to be learned from failures and successes.

2.1 Integrated Zonal Development Approach

In the mid-1960s, 94 percent of all refugees were in Africa, with little prospect of durable solutions (Loescher 2001: 144). The *Integrated Zonal Development Approach* was developed to provide medium-term support. Under this concept, local rural refugee settlements, rather than camps, were used to shelter refugees in the hope that they would offer better living conditions. As well as the refugees, the population of the host country had access to refugee aid measures on, for example education, agriculture and livestock (Loescher 2001: 142–44; UNHCR 1969: 81). The approach was realised, among others, in Burundi and in the Kivu region of DR Congo (then Zaire), with the aim of promoting economic and social development among both the refugees and the population of the host country (T. F. Betts 1984: 10–13).

Jeff Crisp (2001: 169–170) criticises the generally small effort put into implementing the approach, and the lack of success of realised projects. Because cooperation between involved organisations, especially UNHCR and other UN agencies, was insufficient, and the funding

scarce, the approach was not pursued further (T.F. Betts 1984; Crisp 2001; Gorman 1986).

2.2 International Conferences in the 1980s

During the 1970s and especially the 1980s, the effects of the Cold War played a central role in exacerbating violent conflict. The numbers of refugees in the countries of the Global South grew, whereas countries in the Global North clamped down on asylum. Gil Loescher, Alexander Betts and James Milner describe the situation in the North as follows:

»From 1983 to 1989, some 60 percent of asylum seekers in Europe came from developing countries, driven by political crises and armed conflicts in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The influx included many people who, although they could not safely return to their home countries, did not meet the criteria of the 1951 Convention. [...] Governments came to believe that the most effective way to limit asylum seekers was to prevent them from arriving in the first place. Consequently, Western European governments began to build barriers, first by revising immigration laws and asylum regulations and procedures, and second by adopting restrictive practices and deterrent measures to curb new arrivals. Nearly all governments introduced legislation to make access to their asylum procedures more difficult and began to withdraw most social benefits and work permits from asylum seekers.« (Loescher et al. 2008: 34)

As a consequence of the polarisation of state position in the Cold War, regional conflicts and civil wars intensified and continued for a longer period, for example in Afghanistan, Central America, the Horn of Africa and southern Africa (Loescher et al. 2008: 35; Zolberg et al. 1989: 228–229, 269–270; Troeller 2003: 54). Developing countries were also confronted with the responsibilities of supporting refugees, whereas the chances of finding timely solutions decreased. International conferences were held in Latin America, Asia and Africa to discuss the political, economic and social challenges in these regions. Notable examples were the *International Conference on Central American Refugees* (CIREFCA) in May 1989, the *Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indochinese Refugees* (CPA) in June 1989 for Asia, and the *International Conferences on Assistance to Refugees in Africa* (ICARA) in

April 1981 and July 1984 (Loescher et al. 2008: 38–46). At these conferences, government representatives from North and South explored how responsibility could be shared between the states and within the international community (A. Betts 2005: 4).

While the conference on Asia (CIREFCA) concentrated primarily on finding durable solutions, it produced a declaration and a plan of action proposing thirty-six projects to be funded for three years to close the gap between emergency relief and development.⁴ These projects were conditional on the respective host countries meeting minimum standards of protection and legal norms. However, at the same time, the Italian government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supplied project funding without such conditions through the so-called *Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America* (PRODERE). Although a range of projects were implemented through CIREFCA and PRODERE, their collision meant that host countries did not raise standards of protection to the extent originally hoped (A. Betts 2006: 8–18).

Strengthening social and economic infrastructure in the host countries and sharing responsibility between states were central issues at the conferences on Africa (ICARA). The UN General Assembly stressed in a resolution:

»the economic and social burden imposed on African countries of asylum by the growing influx of refugees and its consequences for their development and of the heavy sacrifices made by them, despite their limited resources, to alleviate the plight of these refugees« (UNGA 1982).

Based on that, development-oriented priorities were set for refugee aid: to identify development initiatives in refugee situations, to deliver corresponding support, and to better share responsibilities between states (Loescher et al. 2008: 40–41; UNGA 1981; Gorman 1986). These priorities were to go beyond political statements of intent and also put them into practice, as underlined by the president of the second conference in his opening statement:

4. Project proposals from states were wide-ranging and included reintegration of returnees through health and education measures in Guatemala, labour market integration of refugees in Costa Rica, and agricultural initiatives in Mexico (A. Betts 2006: 10).

»The Conference should be the translation into reality of the new concept which consisted in linking refugee aid and development aid. To launch this new approach would lay the basis for a new form of co-operation for development [...]. An absolute priority had to be given by the world community to two objectives; the fight against hunger in the world and the future of those refugees who, against their will, had been chased away from the places where they had their roots.« (UNGA 1984: 35)

2.3 Refugee Aid and Development

Through ICARA, the *Refugee Aid and Development* approach was developed with the objective to fundamentally include a development orientation in refugee aid by supporting self-reliance among refugees as well as promoting social and economic structures in host countries. Measures were also to be aligned with national development plans (UNHCR 1994: 5).

Similar to the previous approach of *Integrated Zonal Development*, projects were to be delivered in refugee settlements accessible to both refugees and the population of the host country (UNHCR 1994; UNGA 1984: Annex I, G8). Social, ecological and economic sectors were to be strengthened, dependencies on humanitarian aid reduced, and self-reliance promoted. To this end, the 3Rs concept of Relief, Rehabilitation and Resettlement was developed (A. Betts 2004: 2; 2005: 23).

While *Refugee Aid and Development* was still being realised, Robert Gorman (1986: 284) observed critically:

»The idea of [integrated] zonal development, with a few exceptions, fizzled out only to be reborn a decade and a half later under the alias of refugee aid and development. The concept now appears, at least philosophically, to have gained wider attention and acceptance by the international community. Whether philosophical agreement can be turned into practical programs however is less certain.«

This criticism was to prove correct. Although *Refugee Aid and Development* received greater political visibility than its predecessor, and thus also more financial support, major divergences between the positions of donor states in the North and host countries in the South meant

that responsibilities were not shared adequately. The approach failed on account of insufficient planning and implementation of measures and a lack of state cooperation (A. Betts 2004: 12; UNHCR 1994).

However, in 1987 the United Nations General Assembly underlined the »vital importance of the complementarity between refugee aid and development assistance« and

»the collective responsibility of sharing the urgent and overwhelming burden of the problem of African refugees through effective mobilization of additional resources to meet the urgent and long-term needs of the refugees and to strengthen the capacity of countries of asylum to provide adequately for the refugees while they remain in those countries, as well as to assist the countries of origin in rehabilitating voluntary returnees« (UNGA 1987).

The General Assembly thus called for the idea of a development orientation in refugee aid to be retained.

2.4 Returnee Aid and Development

The debate over returning refugees and their lack of support in countries of origin gained traction at the end of the 1980s and contributed to the emergence of *Returnee Aid and Development* in the 1990s.⁵ Returnees were supported principally through a number of small-scale measures on livelihood, living conditions, and reintegration. A new concept, the so-called *quick impact projects*, was developed to target and quickly address needs of groups and regions to facilitate durable return and reintegration. Also in the context of the 3Rs concept, »short-term relief [was provided] such as food aid for a period of up to one year, as well as shelter materials, seeds, tools, cash grants and other agricultural inputs« (UNHCR 1994). In Somalia, for example, 120 quick impact projects in the sectors of water, health, agriculture, livestock and infrastructure development were realised to support returnees (UNHCR 1993: 98).

5. In the 1990s, about nine million refugees were repatriated to countries of origin, which is why it became known as the »decade of repatriation« and the *Returnee Aid and Development* approach gained great importance (UNHCR 2006: 130).

The switch of perspective to returnees and countries of origin was perceived by UNHCR as a satisfactory approach:

»Voluntary repatriation is not only a durable solution but is the preferred durable solution. Donors can therefore be expected to support a strategy which is specifically designed to promote and consolidate that outcome. With returnee aid and development, countries of origin have little reason to request additionality, because aid to returnees brings direct benefits to their citizens and society. Countries of origin also have an unambiguous responsibility for the welfare of their nationals.« (UNHCR 1994)

Although returnees still receive various forms of assistance from UNHCR today, *Returnee Aid and Development* was only realised in the 1990s and subsequently discontinued. In addition to challenges in project implementation and reintegration (UNHCR 1994), the approach failed due to insufficient cooperation between the refugee and development organisations, long-lasting transition processes and the inefficiency of quick impact projects (Crisp 2001). Bhupinder Chimni (2004: 70) rightly describes these projects as »emergency development« which takes adequate account of neither long-term challenges nor sustainability.

2.5 Targeted Development Assistance and the Transition Solution Initiative

Since the new millennium, two approaches have played a prominent role: *Targeted Development Assistance* and the *Transition Solution Initiative*. *Targeted Development Assistance* (TDA) was launched in 2003 in the context of the *Convention Plus*⁶ and aims primarily to use development measures to promote voluntary repatriation, local integration and self-reliance (Loescher et al. 2008: 63). TDA integrates the concepts of *Development Assistance for Refugee-hosting Areas*, *Development through Local Integration*, and the *4Rs* for Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. It was targeted to strengthen infrastructure and support local integration of refugees. Similar to earlier approaches, rural settlements

6. The *Convention Plus* was initiated and coordinated by UNHCR in 2003 in order to improve refugee protection globally and to facilitate multilateral agreements and cooperation (Loescher et al. 2008: 62–66).

were used and economic and social services made available to refugees and the local population (A. Betts 2009).

The *Transition Solution Initiative* (TSI) was conceptualised in 2010 by UNHCR with UNDP and the World Bank (2010). It aims to integrate refugee protection in sustainable development agendas.

»The aim of the Transitional Solutions Initiative is to work towards including displacement needs on the developmental agenda for sustainability of interventions for refugees and IDPs and local community members well into recovery and development programming. In essence helping prioritize displacement needs on the development agenda of governments and international development donors and other actors.« (UNHCR et al. 2010: 1)

This approach was piloted in Eastern Sudan and in Colombia, expanded to TSI+ in 2013, and is now promoted by the *Solution Alliance* (Solution Alliance 2014). The Alliance is led in rotation by UNHCR, UNDP, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey; its members are drawn from the fields of humanitarian relief, development cooperation, donors, academia, the private sector and civil society (Solution Alliance 2016a: 2).

2.6 Why did these Approaches Fail, and What is Happening Now?

Whereas TSI+ is currently in the implementation phase, reasons for failure of the earlier initiatives realised since the 1960s can be identified. The various approaches set out to supplement and expand humanitarian refugee assistance with a development orientation. However, they mainly failed due to polarised political positions between Northern donor states and Southern host countries, deficient cooperation between organisations involved in refugee protection and development, insufficient funding, and ineffective operational approaches (Krause 2013: 113–115). It should also be noted that gender-sensitive approaches were widely neglected in these early initiatives.

Current efforts in the context of TSI+ and the *Solution Alliance* appear to represent a fundamental turning point, with states as well as development and refugee

organisations demonstrating political interest in realising development-oriented refugee aid. This consortium of diverse relevant actors underlines a momentum that generates the urgently needed discussion about adequate approaches to protection and development considering that »11.6 million refugees, representing some two-thirds of all refugees« are stuck in protracted situations (UNHCR 2017: 22).

3. Development-Oriented Refugee Aid as Triple-Win

In a time of intensifying political debates about reducing forcible displacement by means of border control or tackling »root causes« through development, but also of more and longer protracted situations, development-oriented refugee aid can offer an important channel for shaping medium-term support for refugees. In addition to improving conditions of refugees, the approach may also be useful for donor and host countries.

3.1 From a State-Centred Win-Win Situation ...

From a state-centred perspective, it is argued that development-oriented refugee aid can create a win-win situation for Northern donor states and Southern host countries, and contribute to responsibility-sharing (cf. A. Betts 2009). It offers the possibility to both fulfil national security and development interests, as well as to promote protection and access to durable solutions for refugees (ibid.: 19). When donor states financially support development-oriented refugee aid, respective measures can be implemented in host countries, providing refugees with medium-term aid and enabling them to remain in their region of origin.⁷ In this context, refugees can be understood to be »agents of development« in the Southern host countries (ibid.: 5).

However, this line of argument assumes that the Northern donor states profit from regionalised refugee protection, with refugees staying in conflict-torn regions of origin. The incentive to fund thus consists not in promoting human rights or ensuring wellbeing of refugees, but in keeping refugees away from the Global North. Under this

logic, »keeping refugees away« is framed as a »security interest« of Northern states and at the same time – in a postcolonial manner – as a »development interest« of Southern states. This is because host countries in the Global South would profit from the presence of refugees as »agents of development« and consequently more development projects, whereas wellbeing and safety of refugees also appear secondary. Finally, it is argued that development-oriented refugee aid could contribute to durable solutions, but in fact it neither constitutes a durable solution nor paves the way for one; it is an expanded approach to refugees' protection.

Nonetheless, development-oriented refugee aid can represent an improved approach to protection especially in protracted situations in developing countries. But donor states can only hope – but not assume – that host countries permanently integrate refugees locally with a perspective of naturalisation.

3.2 ... To a Human Rights-Based Triple-Win

Understanding development-oriented refugee aid as a triple-win situation means going beyond geopolitical interests of states and centring the discussion on refugees' wellbeing. Although refugee protection is self-evidently focused on the protection of refugees, refugees are frequently settled in camps in host countries where they are confronted with restrictive, limiting and violence-prone conditions (Crisp 2003; Turner 2016). They often remain dependent on external aid and women and girls in particular can become victims of sexual and gender-based violence (Buckley-Zistel et al. 2014; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014; Krause 2015b). Refugee protection measures are thus often inadequate, underfunded or fulfil only basic needs.

A development orientation can help to improve conditions for refugees; taking into account structural, contextual, group-specific as well as gender-sensitive aspects. As such, development-oriented refugee aid is important above all for the refugees – the individuals. Under a human rights-based approach, refugees are understood not as vulnerable recipients but as rights-holders, thus entitled to their human rights (for example to security, participation and work) and to the provision of protection by state institutions as duty-bearers. Development-

7. Taking a broad perspective on migration and development, Steffen Angenendt (2014) emphasises the relevance of remittances for developing countries through which migrants contribute to development.

oriented refugee aid can therefore serve to promote human rights principles for and together with refugees.

Donor and host countries can share responsibilities in delivering refugee protection more fairly through the approach and promote their cooperation based on sustainable development, human rights and good governance. Northern donor states can support human rights principles, including protection, participation and development, and facilitate economic integration of refugees. Southern states can use infrastructural measures, but also adjust aid structures developed for refugees to national systems. In lieu of creating parallel systems for social services, for example for education and health, they can be adapted to national structures, provided to both refugees and the local population, and used long-term (i.e., also after refugees have returned to their home countries). Development-oriented refugee aid can therefore serve to structurally improve regional circumstances.

4. Central Factors for Development-Oriented Refugee Aid

Although the early approaches failed primarily due to polarised state interests, deficient cooperation between organisations and inadequate project structures, the criticism that subsequent initiatives took inadequate account of the experience gathered in these initiatives is also valid. Instead, development orientation in refugee aid regularly reappears on the international agenda claiming to address the challenges of extensive and protracted situations in developing countries. In recurring cycles, new project prototypes were conceptualised, so to speak repeatedly seeking to reinvent the wheel.

On the contrary, it is possible to draw lessons from the earlier initiatives and put them into practice for the future. Three central factors are necessary for development-oriented refugee aid: (1) political will of states, (2) framing of support and (3) recognition of refugees as actors.

4.1 The Foundation: Political Will

Refugee protection is generally state-centred as it falls under state responsibilities. States decide who may enter their territory, and whether (for whom and for what) they

fund refugee protection in other countries. But most refugees are in developing countries in the Global South, creating an international imbalance and a North-South divide.

Political will to realise development-oriented refugee aid applies equally to Northern and Southern countries, but all protection measures ultimately depend on funding. According to the statute of UNHCR, the United Nations Secretariat covers only administrative costs, while operational measures are funded by »voluntary contributions« from states and other institutions (UNGA 1950: chap. III, art. 20). This means that UNHCR has to raise these voluntary funds, or in other words, go begging for support every year. Due to earmarking of funds, states obtain great power to channel resources to particular regions, target groups and sectors (Loescher et al. 2008: 73–97). This has far-reaching consequences: refugee protection suffers chronic underfunding, refugees do not receive the protection they require, and states can use contributions according to their geopolitical interests. It also means that UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies lack flexibility to respond to different circumstances and developments.

Flexible and sustainable mechanisms and structures consequently form the basis for implementing development-oriented refugee aid and would partly embody the political will of donor states.⁸ In order to share responsibilities fairly, Northern donor states should make firm commitments for support and refrain from earmarking to allow their use as required according to need and context. As a basic principle, adequate sustainable funding can contribute to more efficient cooperation between refugee and development actors, because competition on funds can be reduced as well as services and resources supplied more flexibly.

Political will goes further than the sphere of finances, and also touches on commitment to sustainable, human rights-based frameworks. Host countries in the Global South should include components of refugee protection in their national development and poverty reduction

8. This is currently discussed in a broader context than refugee protection, as demonstrated internationally by the report of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing published in January 2016, and in Germany by the expert discussion before the parliamentary human rights committee in February 2016 (Bundestag 2016). Debates included flexible multi-year funding, new donors (for example from the private sector), the necessity to improve coordination of humanitarian and development actors, and innovation.

plans in order to anchor the linkage structurally. This can identify specific challenges and needs that may serve as an operational guide for refugee and development organisations. Moreover, host countries should avoid dual service structures, and instead adjust structures of refugee protection to their national models, and enable participation of all individuals. Finally, development-oriented refugee aid enables donor states to tie their support to human rights principles, so that it means not only »more« development projects, but ensures that these are realised in line with the standards of sustainability and human rights.

4.2 From Theory to Practice: Framing Support

Project structures in refugee protection are mainly short-term. In refugee camps, UNHCR, together with operational and implementation partners, realise assistance in so-called *care and maintenance programmes* which comprise diverse sectors such as education, health, water, and sanitation (UNHCR 2003: 38–39). Early initiatives in development-oriented refugee aid were essentially about closing the gap between short-term humanitarian relief and sustainable development created by different project concepts, priorities and timeframes of different organisations. To connect them, a continuum needs to be created, in the sense of two interconnected processes Joanna Macrae already described in 1999: a political continuum from war (through peace-keeping etc.) to peace, and an aid continuum from relief (through rehabilitation) to development (Macrae 1999: 5–9). These ideal-typical and apparently fixed processes, however, constitute constructed concepts that are in reality rarely precisely distinguishable. Political processes from conflict to peace are seldom one-dimensional and rigid. Political and social development processes are also more complex, project approaches and transitions (for example, structure-building transitional assistance) are handled more diversely, and organisations are sometimes involved in both humanitarian aid and development. Instead of adhering rigidly to these concepts⁹, flexible approaches tailored to target groups and contexts are needed, to be developed jointly with refugees and the local population of the host country.

For refugee protection to be development-oriented, projects need to be medium-term, comprising several years. They should be planned and implemented jointly by refugee and development organisations together with refugees and local communities, in order to include diverse and complementary fields of expertise as well as needs and abilities of people. Cooperation can allow the different organisations to draw on a range of project concepts and experiences and to adapt these to specific target groups and contexts. Given the diversity of contexts and target groups, there is little point in holding on to predefined project concepts globally but rather a need for contextualised procedures. One pertinent example would be the conditions experienced by Syrian refugees in Lebanon and South Sudanese refugees in Uganda. Both groups have fled from ongoing conflicts and the prospect of returning any time soon is out of the question. As such, an early application of development-oriented refugee aid is an obvious option. However, conditions, needs and abilities of the respective countries and groups differ greatly, making it necessary to explore the relevant measures on the ground together with the people involved.

Although specific needs and abilities of target groups are crucial when designing projects, they should always be human rights-based. In lieu of merely focussing on specific, single needs through stand-alone measures by which overarching challenges can be overseen, the human rights-based approach lays the foundation for »a redefinition of the nature of the problem and the aims of the development enterprise into claims, duties, and mechanisms that can promote respect and adjudicate the violation of rights« (Uvin 2007: 602–603). It creates an understanding of international aid as an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights; using this approach therefore means integrating the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the refugee aid (UNHCR 2008a: 26), with measures extending well beyond basic needs. The below comparison of the needs-based and human rights-based approaches reveals the significant differences (see Table).

9. At the 2016 Roundtable of the *Solution Alliance* (2016b) in Brussels, representatives of states and organisations again discussed how the gap between humanitarian aid and development can be bridged.

Table: Needs-based and Human Rights-based Approaches

Needs-based Approach	Rights-based Approach
Deserving	Claim and entitlement
No one has definite obligations	Clear obligations
Receiving – beneficiaries	Active participation – partners
Some are left out	Equal rights for all
Charitable and voluntary	Mandatory, legal obligation and accountability
Addresses symptoms	Addresses causes

Source: UNHCR 2008b: 17

The application of a human rights-based approach ensures that protection systematically bolsters refugees’ human rights. This counteracts hierarchised exclusion processes, a reduction of people to passive recipients of aid, and an understanding of refugee aid as charitable satisfaction of basic human needs (Krause 2015a: 18–19). This is because human rights are not voluntary privileges; refugees are rights-holders with legal entitlements, for example to work, freedom of movement, education and participation.

This is associated with the necessity for gender-sensitive approaches. Due to flight and arrival in refugee camps, social contexts of those displaced alter, and they often find themselves unable to practice their accustomed patterns of relationships. Gender relations therefore have to be renegotiated in exile (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014: 395–400). Especially women frequently have to take on new responsibilities in refugee situations, which they may find challenging or even overwhelming. But these changes may also present windows for empowerment for women, as they are now able to make their own decisions and grasp opportunities for participation (UNHCR 2008a: 39–40; Buckley-Zistel et al. 2014). In general, however, refugee organisations regard women and girls as especially vulnerable, and as such they receive preferential access to services (UNHCR 2008a: 65 ff.).

Although it is unmistakably clear that women can be vulnerable due to violence and hardships, by categorizing them as vulnerable humanitarian actors not only portray women generally as victims (Turner 2010: 43–64) but they also create a new imbalance between the sexes and neglect that men too are exposed to dangers in conflict, during flight and in refugee situations. They often experience loss of status, with far-reaching consequences for

their well-being (Turner 1999). Since people in refugee situations remain dependent on and restricted by humanitarian structures and decisions of organisations, these organisations assume the role of the patriarch. In this vein, Simon Turner (1999: 2) quotes a refugee saying: »UNHCR is a better husband«. In development-oriented refugee aid, gender-sensitive procedures for and involvement of refugees are key in order to contribute to processes of gender equality. Depending on contexts and groups, different measures may be relevant, but gender-sensitive work must not be understood as women’s support only, and thus »gender« not be equated with »women«. This would involve the risk of excluding and neglecting men, possibly causing harm or contributing to violence. Instead, the process should be inclusive of all individuals and various social dynamics.

Finally, projects should be in line with national development plans of host countries and place sustainable support and promotion of communities at their heart. Of course, refugees are central to refugee protection, but development-oriented refugee aid also relates to the local population of the host country. As in the earlier approaches, both groups therefore need to be taken into account but it is not enough to simply grant them access to services. From the human rights perspective, instead, both groups should be actively involved and thus also promoted in project planning and implementation, providing them spaces for participation and development. Involving both groups and creating platforms for interaction can furthermore contribute to preventing possible tensions.

4.3 Focus on the Individual: Refugees as Actors

Placing project approaches at the centre of refugee protection holds the danger of treating refugees as passive objects in the system. However, refugees are people, not objects, and as active actors in the system they should not only receive protection but also be actively involved in protection measures. At the moment, approaches with a focus on resilience and coping strategies are increasingly realised in refugee aid, but treating refugees as actors means more than supporting them to better cope with hardships.¹⁰ Alongside the human rights-based approach, it is crucial to create opportunities and spaces in which refugees can use and further skills and abilities, go about their interests, and create a meaningful life. Participatory approaches can be important, and should generally be applied in refugee protection according to UNHCR (2003: 52ff; 1992) to realise appropriate measures for and together with groups. As well as different status groups, above all groups with diverse age, gender and backgrounds need to be included. Participatory approaches can help to integrate not only needs but especially also the diverse capacities of the people.

Involving refugees in a gender-sensitive manner is connected with the aforementioned effects of flight and conditions in refugee situations. Women and men experience flight and refugee situations differently and need to be integrated appropriately in aid structures. In lieu of creating new forms of inequality, for example through preferential treatment of one group or by treating women exclusively as vulnerable victims of violence, agency of both women and men should be acknowledged and included. Whereas some often remain unheard, all refugees should have opportunities to voice their opinions and to participate – without being marginalised or excluded. A genuine *gender-sensitive* approach goes beyond a focus on women and ensures participatory involvement of all in addition to the fundamental provision of protection. Concretely this can mean informing people about their rights (and not just women about women's rights), providing awareness-building measures (and not just to women about personal safety), and introducing structural

processes for equal treatment so that, for example girls and boys receive access to education, women and men access to training. From the humanitarian perspective, the principle is to jointly design projects.

Capacities and abilities of refugees can be put to use in diverse ways in development-oriented refugee aid; as well as employing female and male refugees in refugee protection and collaboration on awareness-building measures (for example women's and children's rights), refugees themselves can contribute to their material protection and assistance. One such example is the MakaPads sanitary pads produced using local materials by refugees in Uganda and distributed as part of the refugee aid (Musaazi 2014). Other capacities and abilities can be promoted by means of education and vocational training initiatives. For example, at Rhino Camp in Uganda, vocational training of use in both countries of asylum and of origin was offered to a small number of refugees and Ugandans (Krause 2013). Moreover, Kenyatta University opened a campus in the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya to enable refugees to access university education (Duale 2013).

»Brain drain« is a keyword in connection with individual skills and forced migration. Although flight may create a shortage of skilled workers and gaps in the country of origin, this can also lead to a »brain gain« in the host country (Oltmer 2015: 9, 12). Whereas this remains neglected in refugee aid, the »brain gain« perspective can, on the one hand, contribute to harnessing the capacities and abilities of refugees in host countries, integrating refugees locally and thus reducing restrictive laws such as employment prohibitions. On the other hand, refugees can also receive training building on their pre-existing knowledge and interests, which is of value not only in the host country, but also after return and during reintegration in the country of origin.

Beyond the economic sphere, the use and promotion of refugees' skills and interests also relates to the social aspects. By means of conflict management and peace-building measures, refugees can learn about and receive tools for constructive and non-violent conflict resolution that are of great importance in the host country and after returning to the country of origin. Thus, treating refugees as actors with skills, interests and ambitions offers a multitude of opportunities and is helpful in the longer term for reintegration.

10. Correspondingly, for example, protection for Syrian refugees in the region is focused on resilience, with the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) (UNDP and UNHCR 2014). In the past there were similar approaches, such as the self-reliance strategy and empowerment (Krause 2013: 168–171).

5. Summary

»The problems facing African states which provide asylum for millions of refugees have over the last few years become part of the common currency of international debate. There has been an increasing realization of the risks of political tensions which may be incurred through special aid programs for tax-exempt refugees settled amongst rural, and sometimes urban, populations who are themselves almost equally impoverished. There has been a parallel realization and acceptance of the fact that the asylum countries cannot sustain the refugee burden without very considerable international assistance for the improvement of their infrastructures and services. It is thus becoming more clearly accepted that the direct and indirect consequences of refugee movement cannot be left as solely the responsibility of UNHCR and its backers.« (T. F. Betts 1984: 24)

This quote from an article by Tristram Betts published in 1984 has lost nothing of its relevance today. Global trends show that most refugees worldwide are in developing countries in the Global South and that the duration of refugee situations is increasing. Especially in camps, refugees are exposed to restrictive and insecure conditions.

As discussed in this paper, a development orientation in refugee protection offers a variety of opportunities to structurally improve living conditions of refugees, as well as opportunities for Northern donor states and Southern host countries (yet beyond purely geo-/political interests). Development-oriented refugee aid requires political will on the part of states, appropriate framing of projects over several years by refugee and development organisations, and consideration of refugees as actors.

Development-oriented refugee aid is more important than ever due to global trends: because more and more people are forced to flee their homes and also because the duration of refugee situations is becoming more prolonged. However, development-oriented refugee aid is condemned to failure if the existing structural impediments – such as underfunding, short-term projects and lack of opportunities for participation – are not addressed. When linking refugee protection with development, it is to be recognised that groups are heterogeneous and conditions complex, and that project prototypes rarely

offer final answers. Hence, there is no one-size-fits-all in development-oriented refugee aid. Instead we need to draw on the earlier approaches, systematically build on their experience, learn from failures, and adopt successful practices.

In other words, discussion itself is important in the discussion about development-oriented refugee aid. States and organisations involved in refugee protection and development cooperation need to discuss possibilities and limitations of the implementation of development-oriented refugee aid at the global, regional, national and local levels. And refugees and local communities need to be involved at least at the local level.



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