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## BRIDGING REFUGEE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

by Meagan Hendow

**In terms of global protracted displacement, it is major refugee-hosting countries within the region of conflict who shoulder the majority of the responsibility for responding to the needs of refugees. Such countries have development challenges of their own, and the international community should support them in maximising the potential benefits and mitigating the challenges associated with hosting refugees.**

In the context of the Syrian refugee crisis, now almost eight years long, millions of Syrian refugees are hosted within the region: approximately 3.6 million in Turkey, 1 million in Lebanon and 670,000 in Jordan – huge numbers both in real terms and in comparison to their populations and their economies. This has had important development impacts for each country – both in terms of new entrepreneurship opportunities and (small and medium) business growth, as well as deterioration of overburdened infrastructure.

With this in mind, the ICMPD policy report "[Bridging refugee protection and development](#)" provides guidance to policy makers, donors and development and humanitarian organisations on policy options for host countries that cater to their own development needs, as well as the needs of refugees in protracted situations. The report is the result of the project "[Study on Refugee Protection and Development: Assessing the Development-Displacement Nexus in Regional Protection Policies](#)", co-funded by the OPEC Fund for International Development.

This report builds on and is in line with previous policy guidance that outline strategies for implementing a development-displacement approach. However, it takes its lessons directly from current major middle-income refugee-hosting countries (Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey), and holds up their best practices in a context of limited resources and development challenges. Major refugee-hosting countries can best express their own challenges and successes in a complex environment, thus are best placed to provide lessons to other host countries and global actors.

Policy options focus on four main areas of work, all of which are considered equally important. However, it is national stakeholders who must define the prioritisation of their responses, based on an assessment of immediate, mid-term and longer-term needs, as well as available funding.

## **How can we implement a development perspective into refugee response? Policy Recommendations**

The first area of policy work for refugee-hosting countries and relevant organisations and donors is focused on analysing the situation and designing a tailored approach to it. Host countries (and donors) must ensure that all relevant information on refugees has been collected and assessed, in order to design and prioritise the most appropriate actions. Similarly, implementing a multi-stakeholder approach (across stakeholder groups and levels of national administration) can improve the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Secondly, countries must ensure effective communication and coordination. This involves streamlining and communicating one's approach both within and outside the national context to ensure a unified approach.

Thirdly, countries, donors and implementing organisations should implement policies and programmes that integrate development perspectives into service provision. Longer-term impacts require implementing sustainable structures in refugee-hosting countries.

Finally, countries, donors and implementing organisations should focus on programmes and policies aimed at boosting business and decent work – for both refugees and nationals.

### **The role of the international community**

In the context of protracted displacement and support to major refugee-hosting countries, particularly low- and middle-income countries, the focus of policy makers, donors and development and humanitarian organisations must shift towards a more development-oriented approach – for both refugees and for nationals. Implementing policies and programmes with the above principles would – according to those stakeholders in current refugee-hosting countries – improve the situation and better implement a coherent humanitarian and development strategy in host countries. Moreover, when implemented with the other two “durable solutions” of return (when feasible) and resettlement, the international community can ensure a comprehensive strategy for the benefit of host countries, countries of origin, and refugees themselves.

The ICMPD report "Bridging refugee protection and development" was published in February 2019. The policy options are available in English, Arabic and Turkish. Working Papers with background on the situation in Lebanon and Turkey are also available.

**Further Reading:**

*Bridging refugee protection and development, download the report in [EN](#), [AR](#), [TR](#)*

*Executive Summary: [Policy Options for Maximising the Development Potential for Refugee Hosting Countries](#)*

*[Assessing the Development-Displacement Nexus in Lebanon](#) (Working Paper)*

*[Assessing the Development-Displacement Nexus in Turkey](#) (Working Paper)*

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