

Peacebuilding and Forced Displacement

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Over 51 million persons worldwide are forcibly displaced due to conflict and persecution, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This number has increased exponentially in recent years as a result of multiplying crises that have challenged the limits of humanitarian response capacity. Recent emergencies from Syria to South Sudan to the Sahel have seen entire populations upended, with devastating consequences.

As the number of forcibly displaced persons has grown, host countries and communities are increasingly affected. The contribution they make to the protection of refugees and IDPs is fundamental, but as their capacities are often limited, this poses enormous challenges. Nearly nine out of ten refugees worldwide are hosted in developing countries, which are often already struggling to provide adequate services to their own populations. This highlights the importance of programs that not only address the humanitarian needs of the displaced but also foster self-reliance and peaceful co-existence between affected communities. It also underlines the need for peacebuilding, notably in countries and regions of origin that are affected by conflict, so as to lay the foundation for the sustainable voluntary return and reintegration of the displaced.

Since 1999, UNHCR and JICA have been addressing these challenges in partnership, utilizing their respective expertise to help build peace and enable durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons.

Afghanistan is a prime example. With returnees making up some 20% of the total Afghan population, including their needs in national plans is fundamental to achieving long-term peace and development. Since 2001, the government of Japan and JICA have invested some \$5.395 billion in Official Development Assistance for the reconstruction of socio-economic infrastructure and capacity building for tens of thousands of Afghans. JICA leveraged UNHCR's knowledge and experience in selecting the geographic locations for these funds, so as to ensure the inclusion of returnees and their communities and support sustainable reintegration.

Our partnership also brings tangible dividends in on-going

refugee emergencies. In Jordan, JICA provided ¥24.234 billion (approximately \$240 million) in ODA loans to the government, so as to alleviate the financial burden created by the massive influx of Syrian refugees. In addition, JICA invested ¥2.51 billion (some \$25 million) of grant aid for water facilities in host communities. These were selected in conjunction with UNHCR, complementing efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between host communities and refugees. JICA volunteers are also working actively with UNHCR partner NGOs to assist refugees and host communities across Jordan.

In another example in Uganda, JICA and UNHCR implemented a joint training program on rice promotion for hundreds of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, aimed at helping them to become self-sufficient. Projects like these recognize the crucial importance of fostering self-reliance from the very beginning of a refugee emergency.

At a time when growing displacement, multiplying crises, and the increasingly protracted nature of many refugee and IDP situations is straining the humanitarian system, close partnerships with development actors are crucially important in ensuring an adequate response. JICA's understanding of the need for early intervention, innovative burden sharing, and support for peacebuilding in displacement crises makes the agency a key partner for organizations like UNHCR. Its expertise, funding, and longer-term perspective as a development actor crucially contribute to the

success of our collective efforts to address the needs of refugees, internally displaced persons, and the communities hosting them.

Fifteen years after JICA and UNHCR began its collaboration, the experience and knowledge sharing that have grown out of our long-standing partnership make it a catalyst in bringing development and humanitarian actors closer together. It is my sincere hope that our organizations will continue to benefit and learn from each other, and that we can further expand our shared commitment to building peace and achieving durable solutions for the people we care for.

