

# RECOMMENDATIONS ON WORKING TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF REFUGEES IN NATIONAL EDUCATION AND TVET SYSTEMS

## OBJECTIVE

- ➔ **Building on its pledge at the Global Refugee Forum 2019 to support an inclusive education approach**, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) presents **recommendations for improved refugee education inclusion based on the experience of the Special Initiative on Displacement**. BMZ aims to contribute to the policy and technical exchange among humanitarian and development actors to close policy implementation gaps and inform country-specific inclusion processes. The recommendations were developed with project representatives in a Lessons Learned Workshop of the Special Initiative on Displacement in October 2021. BMZ considers this set of recommendations as a living document and is looking forward to discussing them with interested partners.

## CONTEXT

- ➔ In its commitment to refugee education, **Germany supports an inclusive approach**: Education needs of both refugees and host communities are addressed along the entire education continuum (early childhood development, primary, secondary and tertiary education including vocational training). Where possible, the aim is to support host governments to include refugees in their national systems and to improve the capacity to deliver quality education and vocational training to all.
- ➔ In 2014, BMZ launched the *Special Initiative “Tackling the Root Causes of Displacement – Reintegrating Refugees”* (in short: SI Displacement). It **complements traditional development cooperation** through responding flexibly to the volatile situations and challenges that displaced people and host countries face.
- ➔ **The SI Displacement supports the inclusion of refugees in national education and technical vocational education and training (TVET) systems**. It further supports refugees with their transition into employment in various contexts. Since 2014, education has been a priority of the SI Displacement, with 150 projects – more than half of all projects funded – addressing education and vocational training. So far, it has improved access to education for over 2 million children and young people and reached 500,000 people with vocational qualification measures.
- ➔ **Collaborative learning and knowledge management is imperative** for the SI Displacement considering its scope, reach and diversity of implementing organisations and approaches. Inclusion processes and opportunities vary from country to country. Understanding these differences is key to work in dynamic, fast-changing and politically sensitive contexts towards better outcomes for displaced people and host communities. On a regular basis, the BMZ solicits experiences, lessons learned and good practices to inform its support through Lessons Learned Workshops with projects of the SI Displacement. The workshops ensure a vital exchange between those involved in local implementation and those engaged in global processes and discussions concerning the operationalisation of the Global Compact on Refugees.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

BMZ presents **recommendations on inclusion of refugees in national education and TVET systems based on the experience of German Development Cooperation discussed in a Lessons Learned workshop of the SI Displacement in October 2021**. BMZ aims to contribute to the policy and technical exchange among humanitarian and development actors to close policy implementation gaps and inform country-specific inclusion processes.

### A. Ensure effective and transparent coordination mechanisms

#### 1. **Use existing coordination mechanisms for joint action towards refugee education inclusion**

**Governments, humanitarian and development actors should further invest resources to ensure existing coordination bodies and mechanisms work effectively.** This is relevant within and across (humanitarian-development-peace nexus) the humanitarian and development sectors at the local and national level. It is necessary to discuss and communicate transparently the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the process. Potentially this can leverage the ownership of the host government over the inclusion process and increase coordinated and complementary financial and technical support from international partners.

### B. Strengthen national capacities, plans and policies

#### 2. **Support refugee inclusive education and TVET sector plans**

**Development actors and where possible, humanitarian actors, should engage in government-led processes concerning the development, financing, implementation and monitoring of evidence-informed national, regional or provincial education and TVET-sector plans to ensure refugee populations are considered fully.** Under the umbrella of the SDG 4 agenda, they should work with and advise host governments to respond to the education needs of refugees and expand their national systems accordingly. Humanitarian and development actors should engage with initiatives such as the *Global Partnership for Education* and *Education Cannot Wait* to promote and support refugee inclusion. Simultaneously, humanitarian and development partners should further build on and strengthen national capacities as well as the working relationships with the Ministry of Education, other relevant line ministries responsible for education and TVET, local authorities, local NGOs, private actors and schools to enable refugee inclusion in the national system.

#### 3. **Invest in the country-led coordination of the inclusion process**

**UN agencies and donor countries should provide technical advisory services to host governments on how to manage and coordinate a process that gradually allows for the inclusion of refugees** in the national systems while developing the necessary national refugee inclusive education and TVET policy framework over time. Humanitarian and development actors should leverage and support the development of national and local ownership. They should further solicit clear national counterpart structures from the partner government to enable the government-led management and coordination of the refugee inclusion process across all stakeholders over time. In this regard, partners should consider the experience and evidence of host countries that have enabled refugee education inclusion.

#### 4. **Link development or humanitarian cooperation with the political dialogue**

**Donor countries should approach refugee inclusion with partner governments comprehensively both with technical and financial cooperation as well as high-level political dialogues.** They should relay information from the project implementation level to partner governments in the political dialogue to discuss policy (implementation) gaps and challenges. This can help to agree on specific commitments such as recognition of prior learning and improving refugees' access to work permits which in turn can leverage programme results, for example, regarding self-reliance.

## 5. **Strengthen refugee participation in school and community-based approaches**

Humanitarian and development actors should support context-specific education programmes, aim to build and strengthen inclusive school plans, school management committees and parent-teacher councils. These interventions should specifically facilitate the participation of refugee parents based on evidence from the education development sector.

## 6. **Support refugee learners to integrate into the national system**

From the outset of a displacement situation, humanitarian and development actors should consider the long-term consequences, perspectives and external support needs of the refugee population and the education system of the host country. Refugee-specific education activities on all levels, such as language courses or the introduction of local curricula to refugee learners are pivotal in supporting refugees to be included in the national system, and learn within the given conditions and requirements with their national peers.

## C. **Design TVET projects that enable self-reliance options**

### 7. **Support the framework conditions towards an inclusive national TVET system**

Humanitarian and development actors are recommended to design and support TVET projects with a specific component that supports the development of framework conditions towards an inclusive national TVET system. The approach for developing such conditions should be rooted in the community, actively engaging with relevant local and national stakeholders especially with the local economy, including refugees, to build on existing and emerging local expertise, networks and initiatives. TVET projects should be designed in a way that they support the development of platforms for local stakeholders, including TVET institutions, local governments, the private sector, as well as refugees and representatives of the host communities, to create mutual benefits through collaboration and exchange.

### 8. **Design TVET projects that foster work experiences**

In general, humanitarian and development actors and host governments should design TVET projects that have a relevant and direct link to the local labour market and support the transition to employment. The engagement of the private sector to ensure employment-oriented vocational training offers is pivotal. It is recommended to incorporate internship programmes or longer-term work placements to effectively build competences, qualifications and work experience that support pathways for self-reliance for national youth and refugees with the perspective to stay or return (i.e., regional mobility).

## D. **Expand and invest in inclusive digital solutions**

### 9. **Support coordinated, government-led and evidence-informed digitalisation strategies**

Host governments, humanitarian and development actors should commission and design projects that expand digital solutions in the education and vocational training sectors to enhance access to and preparedness for learning. They should be context-specific, based on (joint) needs assessments and consider existing and emerging evidence on remote, blended and hybrid education.

They should support coordinated, government-led digitalisation strategies that (a) support equitable, quality and inclusive education, (b) fully equip teachers as central actors to deliver on digital teaching, (c) respond to barriers such as lack of internet connection, lack of devices or digital illiteracy, (d) offer recognised degrees and certificates, and (e) complement efforts to build strong, resilient and crisis-responsive education systems. They should consider the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups in the refugee and host community to ensure they are not left behind.