

# Refugee Livelihoods Network (RLN)

## October 2005

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### Donor Approaches

In this RLN issue, donor approaches towards refugee livelihoods will be examined. As earlier issues pointed out, refugee livelihoods have started to play a greater role in current debates; within the UNHCR through Convention Plus and amongst other organizations especially through the US Committee's Anti-Warehousing campaign. In both cases, this is related to an interest in bridging the gap between relief and development. In order for these initiatives to be successful, it is of course vital that donors are willing to integrate relief and development programming as well. As the current RLN issue shows, there is indeed interest amongst the larger donors such as USAID, the European Union, the World Bank and DFID, to experiment with new ways of financing projects for refugees that are geared toward development. At the same time, there is often still a strict division of fields; as is shown, for example, by the exclusion of refugees in the debates on Millennium Development Goals. Interestingly, the U.S. Senate has recently called for funds to be allocated to more integrative, livelihood-friendly modes of assistance for refugees in protracted situations; and for refugees to be included in the U.S. Millennium Challenge account. At the UNHCR's Executive Committee meeting, similar issues were stressed by member governments. More information on these developments can be found through the link below.

Forthcoming issues will focus on IDP livelihoods and transnational refugee livelihoods. Livelihoods projects and research focusing on the internally displaced are in many ways similar to those focusing on refugees. At the same time, the situation of IDPs is unique and requires an approach that deals with the specific challenges they face. The RLN November issue will provide key publications and lessons learned that address such similarities and differences. The December issue will analyse the transnational livelihoods of refugees, looking at the processes by which refugees develop and sustain relations that link

[Management and Mitigation: Economic Growth and Conflict](#)

- [Warehousing refugees: A denial of rights, a waste of humanity](#)
- [Forced Migration Review Thematic Resources: Refugee Livelihoods](#)
- [Refugee Works: Quarterly of the National Center for Refugee Employment and Self-Sufficiency](#)

together their societies of origin and settlement. By engaging in such relations through remittance sending, migration, social networks and political processes, they build livelihoods that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. The RLN moderator invites subscribers to submit papers, reports, descriptions of projects and relevant website links on these and related topics. You can send your contributions to Cindy Horst at [REF.NET@inter.NL.net](mailto:REF.NET@inter.NL.net); for the issue on IDPs before 28th of November and for the 'Transnationalism' issue before 22nd of December.

[For more information on the efforts mentioned in the first section of this introduction, click here](#)

### **Key publications and reports:**

Livelihoods and Conflict. A toolkit for intervention 2005

US AID has adopted a new policy by which it will expand its development and implementation of programs mitigating the causes and consequences of conflict, instability, fragility and extremism. Since development and humanitarian assistance programs are increasingly implemented in situations of open or latent violence, USAID must explicitly incorporate sensitivity to the dynamics of conflict and instability in their design or execution. This toolkit on livelihoods and conflict identifies the key issues and methods for understanding the common impact of conflict on livelihoods and some of the creative ways that USAID can respond to address the most vital needs of those affected by conflict. USAID is looking more closely at how to focus on strengthening or rebuilding livelihoods and preventing destitution. The document is intended to provide readers with: 1) an examination of the relationship between conflict and people's livelihoods; 2) lessons in developing livelihoods programs--including an introduction to livelihood analysis; 3) a range of program options designed to reduce livelihood vulnerability, strengthen resiliency, and help people manage conflict-related shocks; and 4) listings of relevant USAID mechanisms, implementing partners, and contact information.

[Click here to access this USAID toolkit](#)

## **Developing DFID's policy approach towards refugees and IDPs**

This research consultancy, conducted by the Refugee Studies Centre, discusses current patterns of forced migration, and examines responses by humanitarian actors. The purpose of the study is to provide the Department For International Development - UK (DFID) with recommendations of how to develop a policy approach towards refugees and IDPs. In relation to refugee livelihoods, the report stresses that refugees and IDPs who have been able to lead a productive life, receive an education, develop skills and accumulate resources are better prepared to integrate themselves or return home than those who have been confined for long periods in camps or who eke out an existence on the margins of society. The report recommends that livelihood support projects be based on strong situation and market analysis so as to achieve sustainability, avoid adverse impacts on the local political economy, and avoid the development of exploitative employment or commercial relationships. It further recommends that DFID support refugee and IDP education and vocational and life skills training in camps and settlements. It also stresses that DFID should take account of forced migrants' transnational strategies and build them into their interventions. These interventions should complement and not compete with refugees' own livelihood strategies and options, which stretch beyond refugee camps and settlements. The report also advises DFID to support further investigation of the significance of remittances among displaced and other vulnerable conflict-affected populations so as to help design policies to maximise their positive impacts for livelihoods.

[Click here to open part I and II of this RSC publication](#)

## **Within and Beyond Borders. Independent review of post- conflict fund support to refugees and IDPs**

This independent review by Swarna Rajagopalan assesses the performance of seventeen Post-Conflict Fund (PCF) grants relating to IDPs and refugees. These seventeen PCF grants represent a new area of work for the World Bank, as refugees and IDPs are not usually the focus of development programs. As such, these grants represent a valuable source of information. First, the review assesses existing operational literature on the topic, and compiles a set of 'best practices' . Second, it analyzes the seventeen PCF grants assessing their performance as per the 'best practices' and per their initial objectives. Third, it recommends ways in which IDP and refugee needs can be better addressed by PCF grants. The PCF does reasonably well vis-a-vis the 'best practices' list. On balance, PCF's strength stems from its flexibility and openness to fund innovative approaches in different situations with a variety of beneficiaries, and its willingness to work in partnership with others. PCF however, performs less well in other areas. The report includes a number of recommendations: political and security assessments should be part of the needs assessment, and project proposals should be accompanied by skills assessments, while short-term funding should be accompanied by fund-raising assistance. Moreover, gender equity issues should inform post-conflict project processes and objectives, and PCF's position on rights advocacy and the question of return should be articulated. Other recommendations stipulate that PCF should prioritize information management; that analytical end products be made available in the public domain; applicants should articulate a clear conflict rationale as opposed to a purely developmental one; and skilled project partners should be used as resources for training others.

[Click here to access this World Bank paper](#)

**Towards a new model for post-**

## **emergency refugee assistance**

This article by Jeremy Konyndyk argues that in many settings around the world, refugee assistance organisations working in situations of protracted displacement continue to provide emergency-level services long after the refugee population stabilises. These services are often far beyond what is available to the host population, and better than what the refugees will enjoy at home when they eventually repatriate.

Meanwhile, few efforts are made to enable refugees to support themselves and develop self-sustaining livelihoods. This undermines the refugees' livelihood skills, makes repatriation more difficult, and increases tensions with the host communities. Drawing on Guinea as an example, this article argues that humanitarian actors should develop a better transitional model for refugee assistance in situations that move from an emergency phase into protracted displacement. It provides a number of recommendations, including: increasing attention to self-reliance, advocating with the government and host populations with regard to economic opportunities for refugees, decreasing assistance levels as the population stabilises and building cost-recovery into the remaining activities, and balancing levels of assistance for refugees and the host population.

[This Humanitarian Policy Network article can be accessed here](#)

## **Prospects and Opportunities for Achieving the MDGs in Post-conflict Countries: A Case Study of Sierra Leone and Liberia**

In this paper, Macartan Humphreys and Paul Richards examine the strategies being employed by post-conflict countries in Africa to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They argue that to attain these goals, these countries will need to alter the way they undertake development planning. Rather than design strategies to achieve best outcomes with limited resources, reaching the MDGs will require that governments identify what resources are needed in order to

meet the agreed ambitious objectives. In post conflict circumstances, as evident in Liberia and Sierra Leone, three particular challenges to achieving the goals stand out: a history of economic reversals, extremely weak institutional capacity, and popular distrust of government. The authors argue that rather than treat these features as a limiting factor on development, they should be integrated within development strategies, by including them among the needs to be met as part of an MDG strategy and by adopting strategies that draw on considerably more ambitious models of consultation, information dissemination and transparency than are presently being employed.

[Click here to read this CGSD working paper](#)

### **Learning and Good Practice:**

International Relief and Development – Livelihood Security Approach

IRD's Livelihood Security programs strengthen the capacity and resiliency of individuals and communities to protect lives and livelihoods, to respond to and deal with recurring shocks, and to strengthen human capital investment. IRD utilizes a number of methodologies to ensure that target populations not only receive the assistance they require to survive but also the tools, skills and knowledge necessary to ensure that future shocks are less severe or averted all together. IRD works with vulnerable populations and the broader community, whether a refugee detention center, village, or municipality, to design interventions that assist communities to cope more effectively with and prevent reoccurrences of periods of excessive vulnerability.

[Click here to access the International Relief and Development website](#)

### **Project Proposals Strengthening Protection Capacity in Kenya**

Within the UNHCR Strengthening Protection Capacity project, co-funded by the European

Commission and the governments of Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK, project proposals have been developed for refugees in Dadaab and Kakuma camps and urban areas within Kenya. These proposals match recent UNHCR initiatives in light of Convention Plus and the Framework for Durable Solutions, concerned with bridging the relief-development gap, elaborated on in the RLN March 2005 issue. They also match EU policy initiatives along similar lines. The proposals include many initiatives to improve the ability of refugees in the camps and in town to obtain a living independently. A focus lies on skills training for eg documentalists and librarians, cooking and catering, enterprise-based vocational training and improved educational opportunities from secondary school level. Then, there are projects to support income generating activities, with capacity building exercises in microfinance, veterinary assistance and communications and media projects. A number of projects specifically focus on youth and minority groups.

[To read these project proposals, click here](#)

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The Refugee Livelihoods Network is an initiative of UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit. (EPAU) The views expressed by contributors to the Network and in documents electronically linked to the Network are not those of UNHCR. For issues other than refugee livelihoods, EPAU can be contacted by e-mail at [hqep00@unhcr.org](mailto:hqep00@unhcr.org)