



Special Initiative

Displaced Persons and Host Countries

More than 120 million people around the world are forcibly displaced as a result of war, crises, oppression and persecution.¹ During the last decade, the number of forcibly displaced people has more than doubled.

The overwhelming majority of them remain internally displaced in their own country or seek refuge in a neighbouring state. 87% of the forcibly displaced are living in low- or middle-income countries. These countries are making enormous efforts to host the large number of displaced people – despite major challenges in their own countries. However, the host communities often reach their capacity limits due to limited resources and conditions such as: lack of accommodation and work opportunities, schools being unable to accommodate all the children, water and food being scarce. These conditions can result in social tensions.

WHAT IS THE SPECIAL INITIATIVE DISPLACED PERSONS AND HOST COUNTRIES?

With the launch of the Special Initiative "Displaced Persons and Host Countries" in 2014, we can respond rapidly and in a targeted manner to the challenges of displacement situations and support the host countries simultaneously. The aim is to improve the living conditions of people on the ground in both acute and protracted crises, thereby creating prospects for living, staying, and returning in host regions. To achieve this aim, funds are made available in addition to regular development cooperation to strengthen countries in their willingness to host displaced persons and to support them in mitigating the associated challenges. Our aim is to provide support in various aspects of life with focus on infrastructure, employment, education, health, psychosocial support, climate and resource protection, gender equality and peacebuilding as well as social protection and the inclusion of displaced persons in national systems. In the context of feminist development policy, particular attention is given to the political and economic participation of displaced women and girls. All projects are guided by the principle of 'Do no

harm': they support displaced persons and the local population in the host regions to prevent subsequent conflicts.

The regional focus is on the Middle East and Africa. However, projects under the Special Initiative also provide support in other regions of the world, such as in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, and Ukraine.

Since March 2016, the **Partnership for Prospects (P4P)** initiative has been a key part of the Special Initiative. We create employment opportunities within the local labour market that enable both refugees and the population of the host communities to earn their own income and, at the same time, reduce the pressure on local infrastructure, natural resources, and communal services. Examples include the (re)construction of schools and housing, reforestation, agricultural cultivation, waste disposal and recycling, as well as the maintenance of drinking water/sanitation infrastructure. Additionally, it covers the funding of salaries for additional teachers and healthcare staff. Through training and skill development, P4P also lays the foundations for longer-term employment prospects.

ACHIEVEMENTS

From 2014 to the end of 2023, the Special Initiative funded approximately 339 projects with a total investment of 4.6 billion Euros. These projects have already reached around 38.5 million people across 78 countries.



Education:

The Special Initiative is committed to improving access to education and creating a better learning environment for displaced children and those from host communities. Improvements such as the rehabilitation of schools, the provision of teaching materials and non-formal education programmes have benefited over 5 million children. By financing the salaries of teachers, for example, an average of 460,000 Syrian children are able to attend school in the Middle East every year.

¹ [Mid-Year Trends](#), UNHCR, October 2024

**Training:**

A total of around 550,000 people have benefited from participating in training and skill development programmes, courses on setting up businesses and the strengthening of national education systems – primarily in the Middle East, but also in East Africa.

**Employment promotion/
Income-generating activities:**

Through the Partnership for Prospects (P4P) initiative, we have created over 658,000 short-term employment opportunities for refugees, internally displaced persons, and people in host communities in the Middle East since 2016.

**Psychosocial support:**

Projects of the Special Initiative have contributed to the expansion and improvement of psychosocial support for over 2 million people worldwide. For instance, by supporting local initiatives that provide psychosocial first aid, around 275,000 internally displaced persons and members of host communities in Ukraine have been supported.

**Health:**

Projects under the Special Initiative, among others in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, and Iraq, have improved health care for almost 5.4 million people.

**Gender:**

The “**Action Network on Forced Displacement – Women as Agents of Change**”, founded in 2020, brings together people and organisations that are committed to the political and economic participation of displaced women. The network is equipped with a fund that promotes local civil society projects by women for women. In its projects, the Special Initiative focuses on the promotion of gender equality and the implementation of feminist development policy.

**Water supply and sanitation:**

Through the Special Initiative, water supply and sanitation for over 15.5 million people was improved by the end of 2023. In East Africa, for example, we are working to expand water supply systems in refugee camps and neighbouring host communities to create a more sustainable and cost-effective alternative to water supplies from tanker trucks.

**Energy:**

In total, more than 830,000 people have so far benefited from better access to energy through the Special Initiative. For example, the Special Initiative supports UNHCR in search for suitable, reliable, and affordable energy solutions for refugees and host communities in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. This project alone has benefited more than 400,000 people.

Partnerships with UN organisations amplify the impact of the Special Initiative:

In partnership with **UNHCR**, we are strengthening the connection between humanitarian assistance, development cooperation, and peacebuilding efforts.

For employment in displacement contexts, we have a key strategic partnership with the International Labour Organization (**ILO**). Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**), projects are being implemented in areas such as education and water supply for both refugees and host communities.

In cooperation with the **Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)**, we also support local, refugee-led organisations working with women and girls on the ground, for example in Colombia, Yemen, and Nigeria.

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