

# Lessons from World Bank Group Support in Situations Involving Conflict-Induced Displacement



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The world is currently witnessing the largest forced displacement crisis on record. Lessons from the Independent Evaluation Group's recent evaluation, *World Bank Group Support in Situations Involving Conflict-Induced Displacement*, can help the Bank Group improve outcomes to achieve its two goals and assist countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Targeted lessons can help leverage the comparative advantages of the International Development Association (IDA) and inform future support in IDA countries. Lessons learned can help direct finance toward productive investments that generate growth, improve people's well-being, and promote resilience.

The Bank Group's new approach to situations of forced displacement is aligned with the overarching objective of the 19th Replenishment of IDA.

## 2018

**41 IDA**  
countries

**37 IBRD**  
countries

**HAD LARGE FORCIBLY  
DISPLACED POPULATIONS**  
(at least 0.1% of the country's  
total population)

**28.7 Million**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERNALLY-  
DISPLACED PEOPLE**

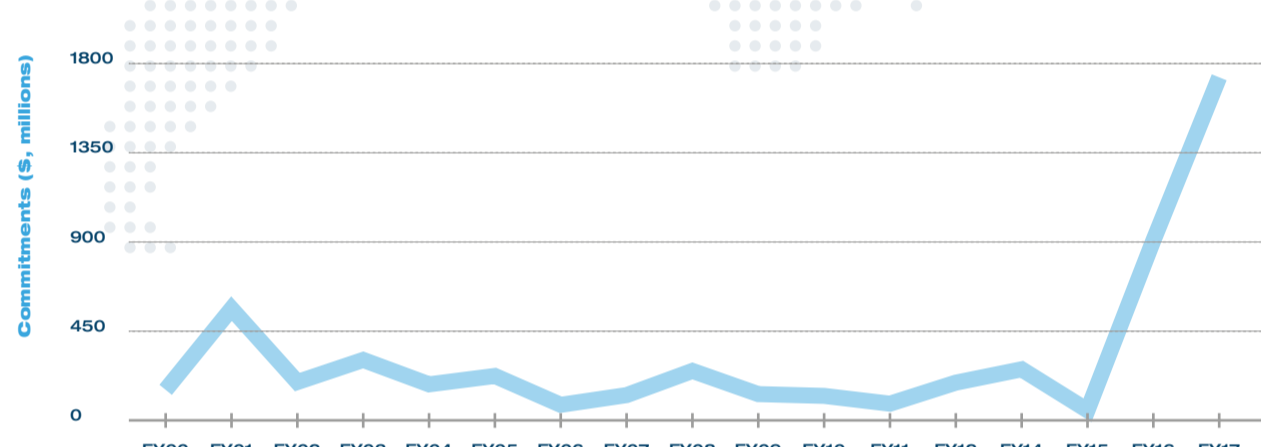
**7.2 Million**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF  
REFUGEES**

## Selection of key findings and lessons from the evaluation

**The scale of IDA's support along with its ability to link financing to reforms has helped improve refugee policies.** Innovative financing mechanisms, predictable multiyear support, and financing combined with analytical work and technical expertise are some of IDA's comparative advantages in supporting situations of conflict-induced forced displacement. For example, the Window for Refugees and Host Communities (formerly the Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Countries) provides concessional, incentivized financing and an intrinsic coordination mechanism that has been leveraged in some IDA countries.

### IDA Commitments for Situations of Conflict-Induced Displacement by Approval Year, FY00-17



**Note:** Between FY00 and FY17, IDA financial support for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and their host communities increased from \$159.8 million to \$1,630.8 million (in real terms). IDA financing over the period totaled \$4.4 billion. The increase in financial support reflects the Bank Group's new approach to forced displacement.

**Early evidence from the design of projects financed through the Window for Refugees and Host Communities built on lessons from prior engagements.** Although it is too early to know whether the intentions of the Window will fully materialize, financed projects are designed to target refugees and host communities and support medium-term solutions. For example, in Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Uganda projects support a balanced approach to secure livelihoods, promote socioeconomic inclusion, and ensure access to services and basic infrastructure. Lessons from experiences in Jordan and Lebanon may explain the increased attention to specific vulnerabilities associated with female and child refugees in the Ethiopia and Cameroon projects.

**IDA financing through the Window for Refugees and Host Communities has leveraged policy dialogue and pushed for policy reforms.** Financing from the Window for Refugees and Host Communities encouraged the government of Ethiopia to adopt a new Refugee Proclamation that aims to improve the lives and livelihoods of refugees and host communities. Among other pledges, the new law expanded the government's out-of-camp policy, increased refugees' freedom of movement, improved livelihood opportunities by providing work permits to refugees, and increase educational and social services available to refugees.

**Early implementation of the Window identified initial issues with the allocation processes.** The experience in Uganda suggests an area for improvement to fully leverage the Window. Responding to forced displacement requires timeliness and flexibility given the associated dynamic, unpredictable, and rapid changes. For example, Uganda's refugee population increased by 50 percent in one year—from 940,835 to 1,395,146—making its allocation insufficient for the changed conditions.

**Project design can improve by understanding that there are common implementation challenges, even in highly context-specific situations of forced displacement.** For example, it is important to understand the barriers to creating economic opportunities and to incorporate solutions, especially for women. The Ethiopia Economic Opportunities Program-for-Results learned from a similar project in Jordan that had difficulty improving economic opportunities for Syrian women due, in part, to the lack of childcare arrangements. The Ethiopia project is piloting an employment scheme that requires adequate childcare arrangements, among other services, to improve the likelihood of female labor force participation.

**IDA countries hosting large forcibly displaced populations have weak capacity and require more relative to non-hosting IDA countries, presenting a challenge.** The displaced settle in countries and areas that have significant development challenges, which are exacerbated by displacement. These challenges include fiscal stress, low employment rates, and poor service delivery. The development approach is capacity intensive. At the local level, governments' capacity to provide basic services to their own citizens is constrained. To address situations of forced displacement, IDA countries need capacity building to target populations, deliver services, and monitor results. In situations of active conflict, IDA's partnerships have helped maintain national institutions and human capital in countries in active conflict. For example, as a result of ongoing conflict in the Republic of Yemen, IDA is partnering with humanitarian organizations to provide basic services and social protection to IDPs.

**Development agencies—including IDA—need to better integrate IDPs into development planning and to better target IDPs in programming.** The majority of IDPs live in IDA countries. During the 18th Replenishment of IDA, delegates expressed concern for IDPs, whom they acknowledge are among the most vulnerable of the poor. However, IDP issues do not reach the same level of global attention that refugee issues do. Even the Bank Group has not elevated its IDP involvement in step with its engagement in refugee issues. One reason could be the moral hazard created if concessional finance incentivizes a government to displace its own people. In these cases, the World Bank's government-centered approach may not be ideally positioned to lead policy dialogue. Evidence suggests that humanitarian actors might be better placed to create entry points to engage in dialogue related to IDPs.

**Development agencies—including IDA—require a strong gender-sensitive approach to forced displacement.** During the 18th Replenishment of IDA, delegates expressed concern for displaced women, who face gender-based violence and other specific challenges in forced displacement situations. In South Sudan, 86 percent of refugees are women and children, but the link between gender and displacement programming is weak. In Kenya, where public works and livelihood interventions have quotas for women, underlying constraints, such as elder or child care responsibilities, social structures, or cultural norms need to be further addressed for women to participate. Other IDA countries, like Ethiopia and Uganda, have heavily gender-oriented operations or country strategies. In Cameroon, the projects financed through the Window for Refugees and Host Communities focus on gender-sensitive interventions. Overall, evidence suggests the need for greater synergies between the Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Global Theme and the Gender Global Theme.

**The development approach requires sensitive political dialogue.** Providing a coordinated, comprehensive, and coherent response to forced displacement requires strong country ownership and political commitment to reform. It also requires buy-in and proactivity from IDA country team members, which often determines the nature and extent of engagement in forced displacement issues. Some countries have progressive refugee policies, and dialogue is less sensitive than in other countries. For example, the government of Uganda has committed to including a refugee response in its national development planning. The government's Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy is fully aligned with and preceded the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, which helped Uganda secure multiyear financing—including through the Window for Refugees and Host Communities.

**Innovative entry points encourage private sector development.** The International Finance Corporation's initiative to set up the Kakuma Kalobeyi Challenge Fund (a business competition) in Kenya is an innovative and context-specific approach to encourage business development for refugees (including women) and host communities and to attract potential businesses, such as financial institutions, agricultural producers, and social service providers. The IDA18 Private Sector Window may provide an entry point to be used to mobilize private capital for situations involving the long-term displaced. For example, discussion in Kenya is addressing whether this window could be leveraged in Garissa County where health services are needed because of the closure of the camp hospital.

**Situations of forced displacement are regional in nature, and stronger regional approaches are needed to improve results.** IDA supports one of the few regional approaches to forced displacement: the Regional Secretariat on Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa. However, the secretariat has not been able to leverage its political mandate and lead policy dialogue that would result in options for durable solutions for refugees and IDPs in the subregion or in reforms to policies and practices in member countries that would lead to transitional solutions. Recent efforts to develop transitional solutions have focused on how to integrate refugees into national education programs. The secretariat needs to support cross-country learning from member states to transition to more progressive policies and support more consistent data on refugee camp populations and self-settled refugees in rural and urban host communities. The secretariat will also need increased responsibility to monitor implementation because it is currently unclear how member states subsequently implement policy frameworks.



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