



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

Helping refugees build a future

The Special Initiative on Displacement



Dear readers,

People who become displaced from their homes lose everything that defined their lives up to that point: their homes, their families and friends, their familiar surroundings, their jobs and their possessions.



Worldwide, there are currently 79.5 million displaced persons. They have been displaced by war, violence, persecution, or human rights violations. Most of them have risked their lives and experienced great suffering in their efforts to escape these threats. About half of all displaced people are children. They are particularly important to me. We must not allow wars and conflicts to deprive them of any kind of opportunity for the future.

Many of us do not realize that most displaced people are internally displaced persons and remain in their home countries. Around 85 per cent of displaced persons are hosted by developing countries. Most of those who do leave their own countries remain within the region, seeking refuge in neighboring countries. These countries are doing a tremendous job and yet they are in many instances reaching the limits of their capacity: often food and water begin to run low, and there is a lack of housing, employment opportunities and places at schools. Often, the host countries become unable to provide public services at a sufficient level. We cannot just stand idly by. That is why the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) launched a special initiative entitled “Tackling the root causes of displacement, (re-)integrating refugees.” Since its start in early 2014, we have been able to assist some 11.3 million people – among other things, in the Middle East and Africa, but also in regions affected by displacement in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Southeastern

Europe. And in the COVID-19 pandemic, we can see again just how important our support in situations of displacement is. Displaced people suffer particularly under the current health problems and the economic consequences of the virus. We are providing quick and flexible assistance to host countries to help them strengthen their health systems and ensure that displaced people have access to medical care.

“ *In the COVID-19 pandemic, we can see again just how important our support in situations of displacement is.*”

In addition to these immediate impacts, the pandemic also has far-reaching social and economic consequences: in camps for displaced persons, for instance in Iraq, food prices have been rising while income opportunities have been dwindling. We are protecting people's livelihoods through short-term financial assistance. In addition, we have adjusted our income-generating activities. In many of our projects, displaced people and people from host communities are now producing face masks or face shields, thus helping with the response to the pandemic.

We assist all people affected by acute displacement – refugees, internally displaced persons and people in host countries. Our goal is to give people on the ground, in the host region, new opportunities and to make it easier for them to return to their home region where possible.

Dr Gerd Müller

Member of the German Parliament

Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development



Syrian boy at a
refugee camp in the
Beqaa Valley, Lebanon

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Refugees with donkey cart at Zaatari refugee camp, Jordan

Life as a refugee

Displaced people leave everything behind: family members, friends, neighbors, their jobs – everything that has lent stability to their lives. The story of Yasmin and her escape from Aleppo to Turkey leaves us shaken. At the same time, it gives us courage, because it is also a story of successful integration.

Yasmin Holoubi lived with her family in the city of Aleppo, Syria, when the war came to her city. Her father, Ahmed Holoubi, was working as a hospital doctor. Under extremely difficult conditions, he and his colleagues continued their work as surgeons amidst falling bombs in order to save lives.

“In 2013, the war came to my city. It was horrible. You couldn’t walk the streets anymore. There was shooting everywhere. Bombers would fly low over the city. There was hardly any water supply anymore, and power was only available infrequently. One afternoon I was studying at the university library while my sister was doing Red Cross work in the neighboring building. Suddenly, I heard a loud noise and looked out of the window. I saw a bomber fly toward the building next to us and then drop a bomb right in front of my eyes. That was a horrific sight – a moment during which the world stood still for me. I ran out and went where there had been a building until moments before. I was searching and crying but I couldn’t find my sister. To this day, I feel this panic and this fear that our lives may end at any moment.”



“I saw a bomber fly toward the building next to us and then drop a bomb right in front of my eyes.”

After her escape from Syria to Turkey, **Yasmin Holoubi** found a job with a nongovernmental organization.

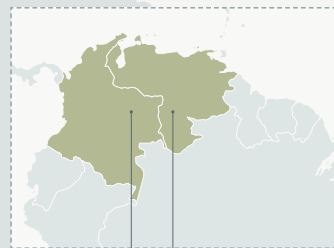
Yasmin's sister was lucky. She was injured but survived. But she was severely traumatized, unable to forget the images of the dead and wounded.

The two sisters decided to leave Syria to escape from the war. They fled across the Turkish border, which was still open at the time. Their father remained behind. He continues to help people in his country. The two young women have been living in Antakya, Turkey, for several years now, not far from the Syrian-Turkish border. They have rebuilt their lives there. Yasmin is the head of several community centers that are funded by the BMZ. At the centers, people from Syria and Turkey can get to know each other and start joint neighborhood projects.

The two sisters regularly talk to their father over the phone. They have not seen him since they left Syria.

→ Figures at a glance

- Worldwide, 79.5 million people have been displaced by violence, war, political persecution and crises (as at the end of 2019).
- More than 33.8 million of them are refugees who have left their home countries.
- Over 45.7 million of them are internally displaced persons.
- Half of all displaced people are children and young people below the age of 18.
- 85 per cent of all displaced persons are hosted by developing countries.
- 73 per cent of all refugees remain within their region, seeking refuge in a neighboring country.



Colombia

5.8 million

Ref.: 0.2 million
IDPs: 5.6 million

Venezuela

3.7 million

Ref.: 0.1 million, plus
3.6 million who have
not been recognized by
UNHCR as refugees and
asylum seekers

➔ How does the Special Initiative on Displacement help people?

We focus on the following areas of intervention:

- Assisting refugees, internally displaced persons and returnees
- Stabilizing host regions
- Tackling the triggers of displacement

Triggers of displacement such as war, oppression and persecution are usually rooted in underlying structural causes: failing government institutions, poverty, inequality, a lack of prospects and also, increasingly, the consequences of climate change. Tackling these long-term root causes of displacement is a key concern of Germany's development policy.



The provision of drinking water for displaced people and host communities is one of the priorities of the support provided as part of the Special Initiative on Displacement.



Syrian schoolchildren in Jordan – lessons during an extra afternoon shift

The special initiative “Tackling the root causes of displacement, (re-)integrating refugees” (“Special Initiative on Displacement” for short) was launched in 2014. It complements our traditional long-term development cooperation and enables us to respond flexibly and in a targeted manner to the challenges of global displacement flows. We attach particular importance to improving people’s living conditions on the ground, both in short-term and in protracted crises, thus enabling them to stay in, or return to, their home areas.

In practical terms, we provide support in various areas: water and power supply, health, education, income and employment opportunities, and psychosocial support for traumatized people, but also reconciliation and peacebuilding.

All our projects support displaced persons and host regions' local people and authorities alike. It is vital that our activities benefit all groups in host regions that are affected by the situation – in order to maintain social peace and strengthen institutions in host regions so they can deliver on their comprehensive tasks.

The regional focus of the activities is on the Middle East and on East and Central Africa. There are also projects in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Colombia, Ecuador and Ukraine.



In Jordan, Syrian refugees and people from host communities can train to become carpenters. This project is funded from the Special Initiative on Displacement.

→ Achievements to date

Since 2014, we have been able to fund about **245 projects** in **65 countries**, supporting more than **11.3 million people** in situations of displacement.



Our activities have included

- school education for **1.8 million children**,
- safe drinking water and sanitation facilities for **4.5 million people**,
- improved health services for more than **1.1 million people**,
- vocational training, courses on how to start a business and measures to strengthen national education systems for more than **340,000 people**,
- an additional **325,000 jobs** created through the Partnership for Prospects, and
- psychosocial support for about **130,000 people**.

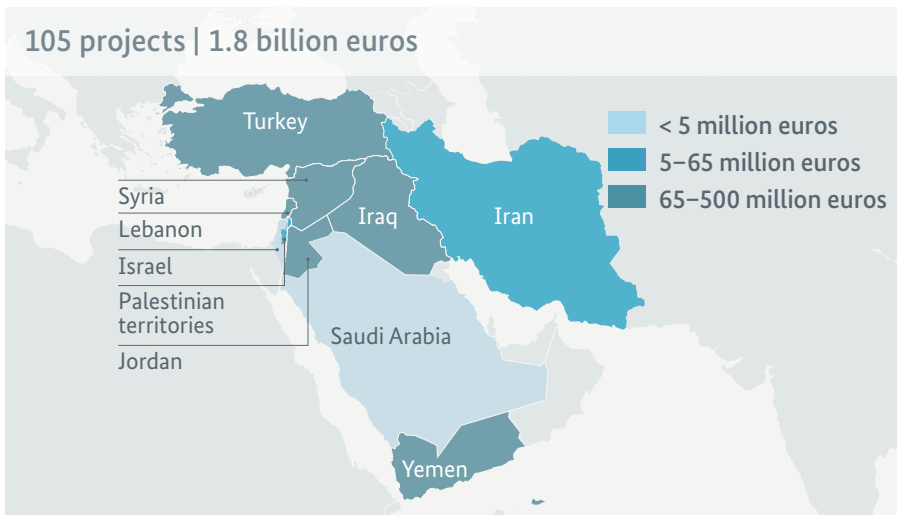


Syrian refugees at
Zaatari refugee camp, Jordan

Middle East

The war in Syria has lasted nearly a decade now. It has displaced 6.6 million Syrians from their home country. Most of them have sought refuge in a neighboring country: 3.6 million in Turkey, 900,000 in Lebanon and about 655,000 in Jordan. In Iraq and Yemen, hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced by violence and terrorism.

Often, local infrastructure and housing capacities are not sufficient for all refugees and host community people. Many countries in the region have high unemployment rates. In many cases, their political systems have been weakened by wars and conflict. Yet these countries are doing a tremendous job in the protracted crisis situation to help displaced people. The Special Initiative on Displacement has provided 1.8 billion euros to support the region through 105 projects.



Special Initiative project countries in the Middle East



A huge photovoltaic system provides power for more than 80,000 people at Zaatari refugee camp.

→ Green energy for Zaatari

Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan is one of the biggest refugee camps in the world, housing nearly 80,000 people. Just like a city, it has schools, community centers and a street of shops. Providing services for the people at the huge camp is a challenge. They need water, food and electricity for their daily lives.

*“Now my children
can read,
study and play
after dark.”*

Ilham from Syria lives at the camp with her three children. She is delighted to have electricity, which she uses to care for her children and enable them to do their schoolwork.

The BMZ has funded a solar installation in Zaatari on an area the size of 33 soccer fields. It provides power for up to 14 hours a day. Any extra solar power that is not needed for the camp goes to the regional grid. This enables host communities to save on the generation of power from fossil sources. And the installation reduces Jordan’s carbon emissions by up to 15,000 tons a year.

→ A safe learning environment for children in Lebanon

No country in the world is hosting as many refugees per capita as Lebanon. Refugees account for about one-sixth of the current total population. The majority are Syrian and Palestinian refugees. The country's health system, which had already been fragile, and its labor and housing markets are now reaching their limits. The same goes for the education system. Moreover, many schools are located in places that are seeing many conflicts.

“Now our students know that their safety at school is guaranteed, and what to do in an emergency. Over the first year of the project, the number of students at our school nearly doubled.”

Raighda Shamsine, principal of a school in the Beqaa Valley, a region bordering Syria that is characterized by massive security problems



“Students’ safety at school is guaranteed.”

In order to enable children to continue their schooling even in areas with great security problems, the BMZ has been supporting the establishment of safe learning environments. To that end, shelter rooms are built at schools and teachers can take part in first-aid training. Regular evacuation drills teach the children to recognize danger early on and seek shelter. In this way, the schools ensure that the children can continue to attend despite the difficult setting.

→ The Partnership for Prospects

Having a job is key to being able to make one's own choices in life – and that goes for protracted refugee situations, too. However, unemployment rates in the Middle East are high. The situation has been exacerbated by the displacement of many people through the war in Syria. Many young, highly motivated people are looking for training and employment opportunities in the region.

That is why we launched an employment program for the Middle East, the Partnership for Prospects, in early 2016. The Partnership is part of the Special Initiative on Displacement. We are creating short-term to medium-term employment opportunities that enable both refugees and needy local people to generate an income (cash-for-work program). This gives them a chance to provide for themselves and their families, it eases people's financial stress, and it boosts the local economy.



“I am able to provide for my family again.”

“When I smell the soil, my heart rejoices. This plow has made a huge change in our lives after our escape to Turkey. Thanks to a BMZ grant, I was able to buy a plow that I am now using to generate a profit, thanks to my farming experience. Now I am able to provide for my family again.”

Ahmet, olive farmer from Syria

Between 2016 and 2019, the program has created some 325,000 jobs for people in the region, who have worked in the construction of roads, housing and schools, in municipal waste management, as



*“I wanted
to help
my family.”*

“I was hoping that, by taking up glass painting, I would be able to create new works of art and sell them to make some money,” said 42-year-old Manar shortly after she had fled Syria. When she and her family had settled in Hatay, Turkey, she received a grant from a BMZ-sponsored project. This enabled her to afford the glass painting materials. As she had hoped, she is now able to sell her handicrafts and make a small income from them.

Manar, glass painter from Syria

teachers, in nursing, and as doctors. The Partnership for Prospects also funds training and business start-ups. In this way, we are opening up new job opportunities for refugees and people from host communities while simultaneously making an important contribution to local infrastructure development.

→ Setting up a business for a successful new start

Turkey is hosting the largest number of refugees worldwide, 3.6 million people. Many displaced people are finding it hard to find a job. Even if some of them have been granted work permits, employment opportunities are very rare in Turkey, especially for refugees. Lack of language skills and lack of capital to start a business are further factors that are making it difficult for people to make a fresh start. Germany is assisting people in entering the local labor market in five provinces in Turkey, providing advice, language classes, training and support for people who want to start a business. Refugees who wish to become self-employed or set up a small business can receive grants, for example.

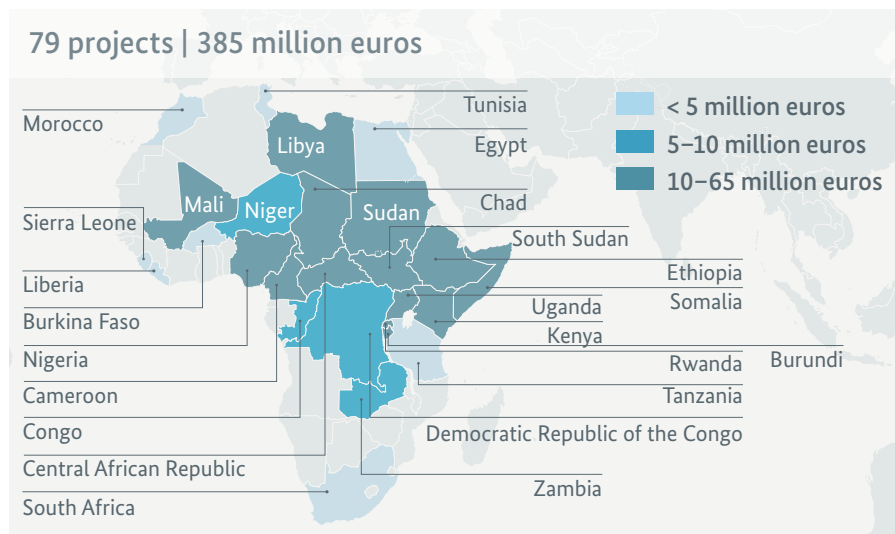


Farmers planting rice
in Suru, Nigeria

Africa

Africa is a very diverse continent, with great cultural and economic differences between countries. Many African countries have vast arable land and mineral resources and a dynamic, very young population – but value-add processes are usually taking place elsewhere.

The impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods, have been hitting rural people, who are often very poor, particularly hard, and hunger is far from having been overcome. Protracted wars and conflicts such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Somalia have displaced millions of people. More than 26 million people in Africa have been displaced – the majority of them within their own countries. The Special Initiative on Displacement has provided 385 million euros to support the region through 79 projects.



Special Initiative project countries in Africa

→ Safe water for displaced people and host communities

Ethiopia is hosting more than 345,000 refugees from South Sudan who have been displaced by the civil war in their country. Adequate and functioning water supply and sanitation systems in host communities and refugee camps are vital in order to protect people from diseases such as cholera and diarrhea.



“Having clean water has changed our lives.”

“Access to clean water has changed our lives. Thanks to the pipeline, we don’t have to worry anymore whether we will have enough water. The children don’t have to fetch water from remote wells anymore. Instead, they can concentrate on their schoolwork. They also haven’t been getting sick so much anymore, because the water doesn’t contain harmful germs now.”

Nymal fled South Sudan in 2015 and has since lived in a refugee camp in Ethiopia together with her children.

The Special Initiative on Displacement assists refugees and host communities by building and maintaining wells and pipelines and supporting local water utilities. This has given more than 230,000 people permanent access to safe water and improved sanitation.



Refugees at this Ethiopian refugee camp are benefiting from safe piped water.

➔ Better employment opportunities for young people in Darfur

Sudan is going through a period of transformation. Since December 2018, its people had engaged in peaceful demonstrations against the regime in the wake of a severe economic crisis. Following a military coup, power was handed to the Sovereign Council (which consists of equal numbers of military and civilian representatives) in August 2019, and a civilian transitional prime minister was appointed. The country is a region of transit, destination and origin for migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. Sudan currently has nearly 1.1 million refugees (most of them from neighboring South Sudan) and 2.1 million internally displaced people. One region that is particularly affected is Darfur.

“Now I have skills and am making enough money to help support my family.”

Batool, trainee in Nyala, South Darfur

“For several years, I have been repairing cell phones and smartphones. I taught myself how to do that. One day, the owner of a workshop approached me and asked me whether I wanted to train at his shop, to learn how to repair household appliances. He said that the association of small businesses and crafts and trades had a program that supported vocational training. Now I have skills that enable me to make enough money to contribute sufficiently to our family income.”

In Nyala, the capital of South Darfur, the BMZ supports the expansion of vocational training programs for displaced people and needy people from the region. The focus is on adapting training and skills programs to the needs of the local labor market. This is helping to create new jobs, which is especially important for the large share of young people in the population.



Naomi, a student at the soccer school in Bangui, Central African Republic

→ A soccer school for peace

Since 2013, Muslim and Christian militias have been fighting each other in the Central African Republic. 592,000 people have already become internally displaced, including many children.

At the BMZ-funded soccer school in the capital, Bangui, children and youth with different religious backgrounds get together. This fosters mutual exchange and understanding between the country's Christian and Muslim communities. Instead of fighting, the children play soccer and go to school. Regular sports activities and the safe environment of the school are protecting them from being recruited by militias or forced into prostitution. At the soccer school, they are getting support and learning to be tolerant and to play fair – values that are indispensable for peace within society.



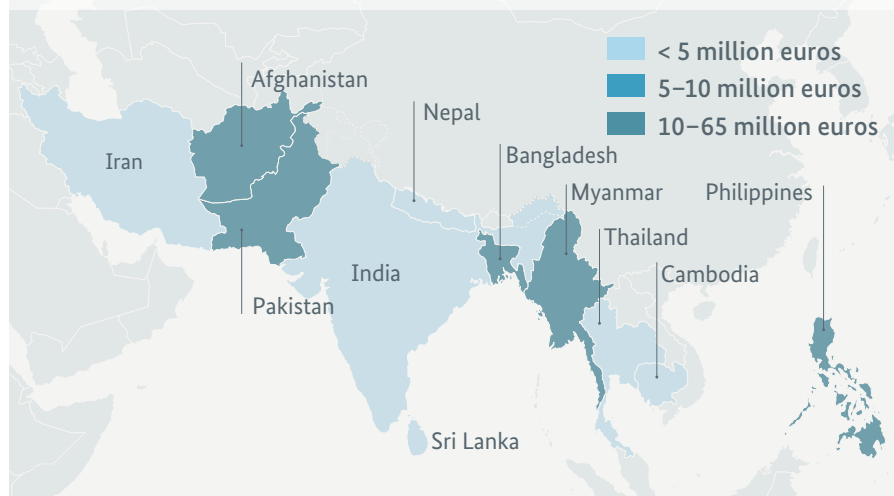
A boy waiting in line
for a bowl of food at
Kutupalong refugee camp

Asia

Asia has a population of more than 4.6 billion. In many Asian countries, people's standard of living has been rising constantly thanks to growing economies. At the same time, many people in Asia continue to suffer under conflict, persecution, poverty, or the consequences of natural disasters. Many are forced to leave their homes and find refuge elsewhere.

It is not uncommon for refugees and internally displaced persons in Asia to be living in displacement situations for decades. For example, many of the approximately 2.7 million refugees from Afghanistan left their country decades ago. To this day, the UN considers Afghanistan to be highly unsafe, especially for the civilian population.

28 projects | 108.2 million euros



Special Initiative project countries in Asia

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), there are a total of 10 million refugees, 15 million internally displaced persons and 2.7 million stateless people in Asia. Most of them come from Afghanistan and Myanmar. The Special Initiative on Displacement has provided about 108 million euros to support the region through 28 projects.

→ Assistance for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh

Since mid-2017, over 750,000 Rohingya people have been forcibly displaced across the border to Bangladesh. The situation in the host region, Cox's Bazar, is difficult. Within a few weeks and months, the world's biggest refugee camp was set up here, Kutupalong. Cox's Bazar was a poor region to begin with. Hosting the refugees has further worsened living conditions in host communities, which has increasingly led to tension and conflict.

The BMZ therefore provides assistance to host communities and refugees alike. People who start their own business and micro entrepreneurs within the communities receive advice and grants to set up or expand their own enterprises. By creating short-term jobs through cash-for-work activities, the BMZ supports community projects such as the construction of sewers, water pipes and paved roads.

Many of the refugees were severely traumatized by their forced displacement. Drug crime, conflict and violence are constantly increasing. Psychosocial support programs are intended to help people cope with trauma, emotional problems and the lack of opportunities in their current situation. Training on peaceful conflict resolution is provided in order to help reduce tensions between people from host communities and displaced Rohingyas.



In a village in the region of Cox's Bazar, community members have come together in order to jointly select particularly needy households that should receive support under the project in future.

Advice and training is provided for local governmental and nongovernmental players – for instance, village and municipal authorities, local civil society, the private sector, and chambers of trade – in order to help them expand their services to foster economic and social inclusion and familiarize them with inclusive disaster management and with strategies for local conflict transformation and psychosocial support.



With support from Germany,
Pablo Amaya from Colombia has set up
his own shoe repair business.

Latin America

Latin America has been pursuing a difficult process of political and social transformation. But the continent continues to go through a period of change and transition and also experiences situations of crisis.

Many Latin American countries are important exporters of extractive resources and agricultural products to the global market. But the continent is also marked by vast social inequality. Incomes and wealth are often distributed very unevenly. Social disparity requires more equitable distribution policies and less overexploitation of extractive resources and of the continent's vast biological diversity. Mining, industrial agriculture and deforestation – especially through slash-and-burn and through the cutting down of trees – are threatening the ecological balance in the region.

23 projects | 41.96 million euros



Special Initiative project countries in Latin America

And the continent is facing great challenges arising from displacement. The second-largest number of internally displaced persons worldwide, after Syria, can be found in Colombia, where decades of armed conflict have displaced many people. Then there are the recent developments in Venezuela. While this country used to be one of the richest in Latin America, the local situation is now characterized by hyperinflation, shortages of goods, and massive political unrest. The Special Initiative on Displacement has provided 41.96 million euros to support the region through 23 projects.



Carmen sells home-baked bread and is able to get medical care for her son.

Carmen from Maracaibo, Venezuela

Carmen from Maracaibo, Venezuela, is a single mother of three. Her youngest son, Sebastián, is suffering from a serious illness – severe cystic fibrosis. When medical care in Venezuela deteriorated more and more and Carmen was hardly able to find the money for his drugs anymore, she decided to go to Colombia with her children. In the border city of Cúcuta she has found a place to stay, and she is able to make a living thanks to a project under the Special Initiative on Displacement. She sells home-baked bread and is able to get medical care for her son. He receives drugs and supplemental food which he urgently needs because of his condition.

→ Creating opportunities in border regions

Armed conflict between guerrilla organizations, paramilitary groups and changing governments has dominated life in Colombia for more than 50 years. Colombia is one of the countries with the largest number of internally displaced persons, with

5.6 million IDPs living in the country. Moreover, the political and economic situation in Venezuela, which borders on Colombia, has caused more than four million Venezuelans to leave their country. Most of them have gone to Colombia and Ecuador. The border regions in particular are often unable to cope with such large numbers of new arrivals.

In Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, the BMZ assists host communities in providing shelter. Displaced persons are receiving legal advice and psychosocial care and are assisted in finding jobs.



Ada Espitia from Venezuela has found a job in Colombia's flower industry.

Getting involved: What can I do?

Individuals

Numerous civil society initiatives are working to assist refugees in Germany, for example by offering German classes and helping children with their homework. Ask your local authorities about activities in your area, and get involved! You can also turn to the volunteer help desk at Engagement Global – Service for Development Initiatives.

German municipalities

Through its “Municipal know-how for host communities in the Middle East” initiative, the BMZ supports knowledge partnerships between municipalities in Germany and in the Middle East through joint workshops for experts, short-term missions of experts to host communities, and municipal project partnerships.


If you have any questions, contact the

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For further information on the Special Initiative on Displacement, visit the BMZ website,



 <http://www.bmz.de/en/issues/Sonderinitiative-Fluchtursachen-bekaempfen-Fluechtlinge-reintegrieren/index.html>,
or go to our web app on displacement.

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