

# Chapter 1

## Development– Oriented Approaches to Humanitarian Responses

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### **ABSTRACT**

*As humanitarian crises have become increasingly protracted, strengthening the collaboration between development and humanitarian aid actors has been identified as a priority by the donor community, popularized in the concept of the humanitarian-development nexus (HDN). In recent years, aid practices based on the HDN approach have emerged increasingly in response to humanitarian crises. The remarkable thing about these aid practices is that donors try to address humanitarian crises by developing projects and programs aimed at equipping humanitarian victims with specific technical and vocational skills and integrating them into the labor market through value chains. Incorporating humanitarian crisis victims into labor markets according to the needs and demands of capital has recently been the main concern of the international donor community. This chapter aims to provide insights into the role and relevance of the development-oriented humanitarian responses in the attempts to incorporate humanitarian victims into the exploitative global capitalist relations at the global level.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Humanitarian aid is designed to save lives and relieve suffering following emergencies and natural disasters whereas development aid specifically targets long-term, systematic issues by promoting economic and social development in developing countries. Although humanitarian and development aid systems have historically been based on different institutions and mechanisms, discussions about the two complementing each other or even being handled simultaneously have been on the agenda for a long time.

The need for and cost of humanitarian interventions has grown dramatically in recent years, mainly due to the protracted and recurrent nature of humanitarian crises. Every year, millions of people around the world are forced to leave their homes due to conflict, violence, and natural disasters. The number of

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forcibly displaced people rose for the ninth year in a row to reach 82.4 million in 2020 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021). The massive increase in multiple and overlapping humanitarian and development needs has put enormous pressure on aid financing and forced donor countries to be more efficient and effective in addressing humanitarian crises. This trend has revitalized the long-standing discussion around better connectivity between humanitarian and development efforts. Especially in the aftermath of the recent global refugee crisis, the donor community has begun to prioritize the so-called development-oriented humanitarian interventions, allegedly aimed at empowering crisis victims and promoting self-reliance instead of being dependent on aid from outside. However, the empowerment and self-reliance of victims are narrowly and superficially defined in terms of their participation in the labor market as productive labor. This chapter critically examines these attempts to integrate humanitarian and development aid. The aim here is to provide insights into the role and relevance of the so-called development-oriented humanitarian aid strategies in efforts to deliver humanitarian victims into the hands of capital as cheap and flexible labor at the global level.

In the UN (United Nations) Secretary General's Report on the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), which was held in Istanbul in 2016, the UN Secretary-General proposed a fundamental shift in donor community's approach to the issue of forced displacement: "one that goes from meeting immediate humanitarian needs to one that preserves the dignity and improves the lives and self-reliance of displaced persons" (United Nations General Assembly, 2016a). Strengthening the collaboration between development and humanitarian actors was identified as a top priority at the Summit. In line with this priority, the UN Secretary-General outlined a "New Way of Working," which calls on humanitarian and development actors to work together towards "collective outcomes" that reduce needs, risk, and vulnerability (United Nations General Assembly, 2016b)<sup>1</sup>. The Secretary-General, who views the displaced victims as "development opportunities" for countries of arrival, also urged national and community leaders to adopt social and labor policies to prevent long-term aid dependency and to treat the displaced people as "future assets" rather than burdens (United Nations General Assembly, 2016a).

Enabling forcibly displaced people to support themselves by acquiring skills to maintain their lives and eventually not being dependent on aid from outside is commonly referred to as a "development-oriented approach" to humanitarian crises (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2016). The so-called "development-oriented" responses to humanitarian crises, which have been popularized around the concept of Humanitarian Development Nexus (HDN), claim that development assistance can be used in responding to humanitarian crises and emergencies in a way that creates long-term "win-win" economic outcomes for both victims and donors (Betts *et al.*, 2017, p.14). It is argued that development-oriented approaches to humanitarian crises go beyond a focus on short-term temporary measures and provide sustainable solutions. In simplest terms, these approaches offer to empower the victims of humanitarian crises by building self-reliance, instead of being dependent on donors- an offer that sounds attractive at the first glance from a humanitarian and development point of view.

In the context of the recent global refugee crisis, for example, the leading donors have adopted development-based approaches, which considered the refugee crisis as an 'opportunity' for both refugees and host countries by promoting the skills and capabilities of the refugees and integrating them into labor markets. The discussions on addressing humanitarian crises by using long-term solutions rather than simply providing emergency relief are not new. We have been repeatedly reminded by the leading donors, especially the World Bank and the UN agencies, that long-term protracted humanitarian crises require development-based approaches that attack the roots causes of these crises rather than simply providing short-term emergency relief with limited humanitarian aid resources<sup>2</sup>. What is new is that aid

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