

**DFID-World Bank-UNHCR**  
**Building the Evidence on Protracted Forced Displacement: A Multi-Stakeholder Partnership**

**Call for Research Proposals (Papers)**

*“Preventing social conflict and promoting social cohesion in forced displacement contexts”*

Submission deadline: July 30, 2020

Apply on-line at:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/social\\_cohesion](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/social_cohesion)

### Background

In 2016, the UK government’s Department for International Development, the World Bank, and the UNHCR established a joint research program, Building the Evidence on Protracted Forced Displacement: A Multi-Stakeholder Partnership, with the objective of improving global knowledge on forced displacement. The program has been instrumental in expanding the knowledge base on forced displacement by financing global sector studies, policy studies, impact evaluations, fellowships for young researchers, and the generation of new data.<sup>1</sup> In 2020, it was decided to extend the research program to two other broad areas: 1) *Preventing social conflict and promoting social cohesion* and 2) *Preventing food insecurity and price volatility and promoting self-reliance*. The program extension also includes developing a *data platform* to serve the various components of the research program.

The program is now launching a **call for research proposals (papers)** under the first new research component: **Preventing social conflict and promoting social cohesion in forced displacement contexts**. The goal is to better understand how policy measures and development investments, and their interaction with local contexts, can help reduce inequalities, alleviate social tensions, and promote social cohesion between and within displaced populations and host communities. The papers generated from this call will be used as background papers to prepare a report on this topic. The evidence generated through this research program will inform World Bank programming and UNHCR protection programs in forced displacement contexts.

Research proposals are encouraged in three areas. Some proposals may cover more than one theme.

### Themes and questions

1) ***The role of people’s views and perceptions of social justice in generating grievances that can lead to conflict and violence.*** Examples of research questions are: What are the most common conflict-related factors that lead to forced displacement within and across countries? How important are countries’ institutional and policy factors relative to individual-level factors?<sup>2</sup> How does variation in these factors minimize or increase the risks of conflict? Are perceptions of inequality and social justice more or less important than actual inequalities in explaining grievances and violence? How and why have refugees and host communities avoided conflicts in various contexts? How and why does the presence of displaced

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the program, visit:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/building-the-evidence-on-forced-displacement-a-multi-stakeholder-partnership>

<sup>2</sup> Institutional factors could include whether the government system is decentralized or centralized, whether it has a welfare system, and informal institutions such as local norms. Individual-level factors could include the characteristics of local social networks (including identity), grievances, coping mechanisms, and social and economic differences between refugees and host community members.

persons reduce the likelihood of conflict, improve community trust, and/or improve government accountability? In contexts where violence occurs, what are the major triggers of conflicts between refugees and members of host communities, and within these respective communities? What is the relationship between perceptions of exclusion from aid, service delivery, and employment opportunities and conflict? How can different modalities of delivering aid (e.g., cash transfers and/or community-driven development) impact perceptions of fairness, inclusion, and the likelihood of conflict? How do individual-level and institutional factors shape the effects of these different modalities of aid? How can various forms of technology and media either facilitate or mitigate conflict? How can innovative methodologies for measuring and monitoring social conflict be applied in forced displacement contexts?

2) ***The role of forced displacement in transforming social inequalities and the social fabric.*** Example research questions include: How does forced displacement affect the equality of opportunities for displaced people and their hosts? How are gender inequalities (taking into account preexisting gender norms) altered in the course of a forced displacement crisis, and under what conditions? How do the demographic characteristics of refugee households, including whether they are female headed, affect the equality of opportunities and outcomes? How do shared characteristics or norms between host communities and refugees affect whether they compete or cooperate? How does income inequality between refugees and host communities change in the aftermath of a population displacement shock? How do inter-group inequalities change as compared to intra-group inequalities? Does the intra-household allocation of resources change during a forced displacement crisis? What interventions help to reduce inequalities between and within displaced populations and host communities? How do changes in inequalities relate to social cohesion, conflict, and violence? Which social norms/institutions are most affected by an influx of displaced persons in a community, and what are the effects of these changed norms? How does forced displacement affect the equality of opportunities for displaced people and their hosts? How do differences in identity—such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and nationality (both between and within displaced populations and host communities)—affect social cohesion?

3) ***The role of distributional policies in promoting social cohesion.*** Examples of questions are: Can distributional policies such as aid or public spending address social inequalities and perceptions of social justice? How do monetary transfers alter social inequalities and social cohesion? How can distributional policies foster social cohesion? How can policies or development programs be designed to help mitigate the adverse effects of inequalities in displacement contexts? What is the role of dispersal policies (i.e., out-of-camp or integration policies) as opposed to managing refugees in camps in changing social cohesion? Who benefits the most from aid and public spending across social groups in forced displacement contexts? How do government and media narratives related to forced displacement and refugees impact the distribution of aid? What interventions at the level of schools, associations, communities, households, and individuals promote social cohesion (or generate social conflict) among host communities and refugee settlements? Do the same policies or interventions that impact inequality also affect social cohesion, and vice versa? How do understandings of social cohesion vary between refugees and members of host communities and resettlement countries? How do shared experiences of shocks (e.g., environmental, economic, pandemic, and conflict originating outside the refugee/host communities) impact social cohesion between refugees and host communities? How does the media (i.e., new and traditional) influence social norms and cohesion between refugees and host communities? How can innovative methodologies be used to measure and monitor social cohesion in refugees/host communities?

## Application

Applicants should submit the research proposal, alongside the CV of the lead author, via the following link: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/social\\_cohesion](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/social_cohesion). The deadline for applications is July 30th, 2020. Successful applicants will be notified by September 30th, 2020.

## Requirements

Submissions by both individuals and research teams will be considered. A maximum of two papers per author can be submitted; applicants are limited to serving as the lead author on one proposal. Lead authors are expected to be external to the World Bank or the UNHCR, but research teams can include World Bank and/or UNHCR staff.

Proposals should be limited to two pages and include the following information:

- Theoretical framework and key literature
- Research question(s)
- Hypotheses, assumptions
- Empirical and identification strategy
- Data sources
- Policy relevance

Proposals are expected to meet the following selection criteria:

1. **Papers should consist of original empirical analysis.** Papers that draw on data analysis that has already been published or that appears in papers under review will not be considered.
2. **Papers are required to be completed within 6 months of the signature of the contract.**
3. **Papers should rely on existing and available data.** Given the time frame and the COVID-19 crisis, papers that propose new data collection will not be selected. The World Bank and the UNHCR will give authors access to their respective data stores in compliance with existing security and privacy requirements. Proposals that include data sets at the World Bank or UNHCR that have not yet been made available to researchers will be considered.
4. **Proposals should focus on “displacement settings,”** which may include the origins of displaced persons and/or host communities. “Displaced persons” is defined to include refugees and internally displaced persons. “Social conflict” includes conflict that leads to displacement as well as clashes within and between displaced populations and host communities. Social conflict is not limited to overt violence, and may include forms of implicit and explicit exclusion.

Researchers are encouraged to look explicitly at the issue of social cohesion and social conflict at different points during the displacement cycle from the initial demographic shock of the emergency phase (when social cohesion is often most fragile) through consolidation (when a different equilibrium emerges) to return and reintegration (when relations with host populations generate different kinds of social cohesion challenges). It is also important to differentiate between the forced displacement of refugees and that of internally displaced persons in view of the states' responsibilities for the latter to tease out the differences and similarities between the contexts and responses to IDP and refugee situations as they relate to social cohesion with local communities. Scholars are also expected to discuss the implications/relevance of their work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The selection committee will prioritize papers that are likely to inform World Bank and UNHCR programs and operations and that will include diverse contributing authors. All papers are expected to be of high

quality suitable for publication in refereed journals. The publication of individual papers will be strongly encouraged and supported, including publication in the World Bank Policy Research Working Paper series.

#### Budget

The program will finance up to 25 papers. Each paper will be awarded a grant of \$25,000 regardless of the number of authors. Grants will be paid in the form of Short-Term Consultancy contracts with the World Bank. The terms of the contracts will be agreed with each contracted scholar, with the total amount of contracts per paper limited to \$25,000.

#### Indicative Timeline

- **July 30, 2020** – Submission deadline
- **September 30, 2020** – Completion of selection
- **September–December 2020** – Contracts awarded