



Photo: IRC/Tara Todras-Whitehill

Things Funders Can Do

To Address The Global Refugee Crisis



Center for Disaster Philanthropy
The when, where and how of informed disaster giving

Record Refugee Crisis Needs Innovative Funders

As the world faces one of the largest refugee crises since World War II, understanding how to fund effective solutions has proven to be a difficult, complex task. When the sources of the political turmoil and conflict causing this flow of people change daily, it's challenging to address unmet humanitarian needs.

UN appeals are never fully funded by governments, making private funders vital to helping in this crisis.

One thing that has not changed is that the funding for the global refugee crisis has been woefully lacking. While the [United Nations Refugee Agency](#) (UNHCR) always operates with the assumption that they will never receive 100 percent funding when they issue an emergency appeal, the global refugee crisis has been funded to just 40 percent. The gap in funding, while frustrating to those responding to the crisis, leaves private donors a wide array of options to act quickly and thoughtfully.

If you are a donor interesting in funding solutions, here are five possible actions you can take to address the global refugee crisis:



The Center for Disaster Philanthropy grant to Mercy Corps supports two No Lost Generation Community Centers that address the critical needs of more than 360 adolescents, their families, and communities in Syria.

1 Support long-term recovery rather than quick fixes.

According to UNHCR, the average length of displacement for a refugee is close to twenty years. Solutions to this long-term displacement are neither easy nor quick. Increasingly, funders should think long-term about issues such as education, jobs, life skills, sustainable energy sources, and most of all restoring hope and dignity to refugees.

The Center for Disaster Philanthropy's [Global Refugee Crisis Fund](#) gave grants to Mercy Corps

and Concern Worldwide to support teen and community centers for internally displaced persons inside Syria. The teen centers allow adolescents access to psychosocial support services, education opportunities, and recreational outlets. The community center provides a safe place of protection for women and girls and allows them to access additional programs for livelihoods and education.



The IRC and partners need flexible funding to meet the ever-changing needs of refugees who continue to face uncertain futures.

2

Provide flexible funding.

The constantly changing nature of the crisis requires that international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) maintain programmatic flexibility. INGOs need to be able to adjust efforts to be responsive to the ongoing situation on the ground. With that in mind, funders must vet the potential grantee organizations and their programs thoroughly, but then trust those organizations and their leadership to do their jobs.

For example, [International Rescue Committee](#) (IRC) responded quickly when refugees surged into Europe, both via routes across the Mediterranean

Sea and on foot over the Balkan Peninsula. But frequent border closings and thousands of people on the move forced them to adjust to differing needs.

As one aid worker put it, “There is no way to prepare for waves of people that one day might be families, the next day might be single men or women, and another day might be mostly adolescents who are then gone in a day or two. They all have different concerns and physical needs.” Flexible funding allowed IRC to develop a nimble response to chaotic needs.

5 Things Funders Can Do To Address The Global Refugee Crisis

DisasterPhilanthropy.org 1201 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 300 Washington, DC 20036
Phone 202-595-1026 CDP 24/7 Disaster Philanthropy Hotline 206-972-0187

3

Develop innovative partnerships.

Strategic collaborations are not only more efficient, they often lead to more innovative solutions. Xylem Watermark developed a long-term partnership with Mercy Corps that allowed them to respond to disasters and crises, including Syria refugee relief, on several levels.

Along with an employee match program that provides a portion of the company's funding to Mercy Corps, Xylem provides company resources to Mercy Corps. For example, the company provided [a custom pump to support Mercy Corps' water provision](#) and protection at a refugee camp in Jordan.



Advocacy about the history of refugees in the United States is key to their transition and acceptance during resettlement.

4

Strengthen assistance to refugees within the U.S.

Each year the U.S. admits tens of thousands of refugees escaping conflict. Donors can play an important role in helping them integrate into local communities. Public information and education could be strengthened to build support for more effective refugee policies. [Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees](#) (GCIR) has recommended that U.S.-based advocacy be focused on access to services. Integration programs would help refugees with transportation, cultural awareness, education, health, and single-gender transition.



Photo: International Development/Russel Watkins

When funders help wage-earning refugees find jobs, they provide opportunities for refugees to work, contribute to society, and save for the future.

5 Explore funding opportunities.

Productive, wage-earning refugees want opportunities to work and contribute to society. Funders can help these individuals—whether they are in the U.S. or in countries around the world—achieve self-sufficiency by providing jobs, training, and mentoring programs.

Achieving self-sufficiency also means paying close attention to the needs of adolescents, particularly

in the areas of language, education, and livelihoods/skills training. Research from Protect the People has found that small, local organizations are able to help refugees obtain skills and connect with small businesses. For example, in Turkey, a small organization called [Rizk has helped to place](#) several thousand Syrians into jobs.

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How Will You Address The Crisis?

The Center for Disaster Philanthropy launched the [Global Refugee Crisis Fund](#) to provide funders the opportunity to collectively and more effectively help refugees and internally displaced persons. Gifts to the fund allow you to address both critical, immediate needs as well as the long-term challenges of the ongoing crisis. Leverage your impact on the crisis with a donation to the [Global Refugee Crisis Fund](#).

We can also help you make thoughtful investment decisions in this crisis. Our staff, board, and advisory council bring more than one hundred years of combined experience in disaster management, philanthropy, and nonprofit leadership to you through strategic, one-on-one guidance.

Find out how the Center for Disaster Philanthropy can meet your organization's values and disaster philanthropy objectives.

Schedule a one-on-one consultation with:

Regine Webster, Vice President

Regine.Webster@disasterphilanthropy.org

(206) 972-0187



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