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Development, Refugees Generation, Resettlement and Repatriation: A Conceptual Review

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Introduction

Discourse in refugee studies throughout the 1980s and 1990s has increasingly focused on "development" as a category inseparable from the refugee phenomenon itself. In earlier studies devoted to determining root causes of refugee flows, the idea that there was a causal link between underdevelopment and the generation of refugees gained currency. Subsequently, literature on durable solutions to the refugee problem (resettlement in host countries and voluntary repatriation) placed "development" at the centre of either solution. Before long, academics, politicians and relief agencies joined hands in an advocacy campaign to make development assistance an integral part of of refugee/returnee aid. The targeted recipients of the "development" gains were the refugees themselves, the host countries bearing the refugee burden, and the local host communities—particularly

the poorest and most vulnerable members of those communities. The campaign that ensued enriched the language of refugee studies by additional entries like "Refugee Aid and Development" (RAD). The same acronym could also stand for "Returnee Aid and Development," an idea which

informs some of the work being done on repatriation of refugees.

This paper revisits the discourse as it has unfolded over the last several years in order to find out whether there exists a fundamental relationship between development and the various concerns of refugee studies, such as

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