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Research on protracted displacement situations \ First annual review of EU-funded Horizon 2020 research and innovation project TRAFIG

People living in protracted displacement situations are a highly vulnerable—this is not only visible during the Covid-19-pandemic. The EU-funded research project TRAFIG (Transnational Figurations of Displacement) aims at generating new knowledge to help develop solutions for protracted displacement that are tailored to the needs and capacities of persons affected by displacement. The evaluation of the TRAFIG project’s first year in the European Commission’s first review of the project was positive

Millions of refugees and internally displaced people remain in exile for long periods of time without realistic prospects of return, resettlement or local integration. This phenomenon of protracted displacement not only creates immense suffering among those who had to flee, it also poses major political and operational challenges for EU member states, humanitarian and development actors and donors. Instead of offering “durable solutions” as a top-down-approach, research partners from Europe, Africa and Asia designed the innovative project TRAFIG to develop a better understanding of protracted displacement through the experiences and the agency of displaced people themselves. **“Starting in January 2019, the project aimed to show how the creation and maintenance of mobility and connectivity across translocal links can enable or assist displaced populations to better cope with protracted displacement”**, Benjamin Etzold, the project’s scientific coordinator at BICC, explains the project’s theoretical framework and its intended policy implications.

The recent first annual review by the European Commission welcomes this approach. It can help to generate policies which can provide more sustainable responses—better protection, more secure livelihoods, secondary mobility through family reunification, etc.—to displacement which the triad of so-called durable solutions has manifestly failed to do. In this sense, the project’s theoretical framework and its policy implications are very well articulated, the review highlights. According to the review, the [project publications](#) provide ‘lively, fresh and nuanced insights’ on the topic.

At the moment, the Covid-19 pandemic affects joint research on the ground in the project countries Ethiopia, Tanzania, the DR Congo, Jordan, Pakistan, Italy, Greece and Germany. All partner research institutes have to cope with the health crisis and with the lockdown. **“The positive evaluation by the EU is very encouraging for TRAFIG. We are eager to continue our research. The global coronavirus crisis reveals the centrality of social networks and mobility—two core themes in our project—in all people’s lives. In the coming months, we will also include an analysis of the impacts of both the pandemic and the mobility restrictions on people in protracted displacement situations”**, Benjamin Etzold underlines.

You will find a comprehensive overview over TRAFIG’s [output](#) and [events](#) on the project’s <https://trafig.eu/>

Further information

Susanne Heinke | Head of public relations | phone: +49 (0)228/911 96-44 / -0 | email: pr@bicc.de \ [contact@trafig.eu](mailto:pr@bicc.de)