



# Sustainable settlements

Designing green solutions for displaced people and their hosts



WAGENINGEN  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



*"We want to help refugees, host communities, and governments find ways to restore ecosystems and create mechanisms where displaced people can earn an income through sustainable natural resource management, thus linking environmental and energy issues with livelihoods and community resilience."*

*Andrew Harper, Head UNHCR Innovation, 2016*

Today global displacement due to (natural) disasters, crises and slow on-set events, has reached record levels. Many people find their way into urban areas, and the number and size of refugee camps is rising sharply too. Refugee camps are considered and designed as temporary settlements, but often evolve and subsist for a number of years. Very often these settlements are unsustainable in many ways. An integrated approach with nature based solutions and environmental measures -not only protective, but enabling- will add long-term value and improve the quality of life for refugees and their hosting communities.

### Our approach: nature based solutions

WUR aims to contribute to a positive impact of any temporary settlement in its social and environmental context. Our solutions contribute to improved living conditions for the displaced people, lower management costs for camp management organisations and have a lasting positive impact for host countries and communities.

Our green solutions focus on creating mutual benefits and cooperation between the refugee community and the host communities within the fields of natural resource management and livelihood opportunities. We use environmental, sustainable design principles and techniques that are based on shared understanding, co-creation and co-ownership.

### Examples

In Lebanon, where more than 1.5 million people found refuge, we apply our solutions to increase water use efficiency & increase production levels in the Bekaa Valley. This project contributes to a more sustainable food supply and jobs for the many Syrian refugees in Lebanon and their hosting communities.

In the project 'Design principles for refugee camps', we explored in which way sustainable strategies and measures on water, soil, and food can contribute to strengthening the livability of people in refugee camps. At present we work with various partners on a plan to implement the strategies and measures.

Every year, around the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, World Refugee Day, we organize the event "Changing Routes". We meet with partners from business, NGO's, public and research organization to find solutions for migration.

We invite you to contact and join us:

<https://www.wur.nl/en/Dossiers/file/Migration-and-refugees.htm>

### Services

- Nature based solutions for soil, water and food.
- Data, tools and (integrated) planning and governance approaches.
- Metropolitan solutions for adaptation to climate change.

### Research Programme

Metropolitan Solutions



### Contact

For more information, please contact:  
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