

The perspective of forced migrants:

One focal point of BICC's research



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About BICC

BICC (Bonn International Center for Conversion) addresses global topics in peace and conflict research. Its topics range from the (de)mobilisation of violent actors to arms exports and small arms control to the importance of organised violence in the use of natural resources.

Forced migration, and forced immobility in connection with organised violence and civil wars, is one focal point of BICC's research. Here, BICC puts the perspectives of those who have been forcibly displaced and those of the receiving communities in the centre of attention.

Our topics are

- \ Mobility and livelihood strategies of displaced people and their transnational networks;
- \ (Re)integration processes and the role of displaced people and returnees in peace processes;
- \ Economic policy effects of humanitarian aid and development cooperation as well as of security policy and border security on forced migration dynamics;
- \ Historical preconditions and consequences of protracted displacement.



Posters with COVID-hygiene regulations at the fence of the refugee camp Kara Tepe, Lesvos, Greece

Core competencies

BICC

- \ conducts policy-relevant research with academic excellence;
- \ produces comparative analyses based on qualitative empirical research along (forced) displacement and -migration routes;
- \ identifies risks and good practices and develops policy approaches geared to the local context and practice;
- \ in its collaborations, qualifies young, local researchers;
- \ builds and maintains networks of researchers on the local, national and international level with research institutes, universities, state- and non-state organisations, as well as political decision-makers;
- \ ensures direct and coherent transfer to politicians, practitioners and the interested public.

BICC advises, among others, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Foreign Office, the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia as well as the European Commission and engages in intensive dialogue with local authorities, civil society and the media.

Methodological approach

- \ **Our research is empirical**, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods in conflict and receiving regions in Asia, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, as well as in countries of transit and receiving countries.
- \ Our **translocal research designs** take into account the mobility of the displaced and regional dynamics of forced migration.
- \ We look at the **process of forced mobility, return and (re)integration** and consider them to be non-linear and dynamic processes. We overcome the rigid categorisation of refugees in favour of a holistic understanding of forced migration.
- \ **We give those who had to flee a voice.** Immediate and up-to-date, the very perspectives and practices of those affected are at the centre of our research.
- \ With our **multi- and transdisciplinary scientific expertise** from Social and Cultural Anthropology, Geography, Political Sciences, Area Studies and Sociology, we are in constant exchange with representatives of academia, policy and practice.

Market in Kibondo camp, Tanzania





Border fence of the Spanish exclave Mellila on the North African Mediterranean coast

SELECT RESEARCH AND ADVISORY PROJECTS

Trajectories of reintegration: The impacts of forced displacement, migration and return on social change

The qualitative research project (duration 2019 to 2022), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), examines the living conditions of returnees in West Africa, the Middle East and the Western Balkans on a long-term basis. We compare the situation of repatriated refugees and migrants in the context of reintegration programmes and that of people who have organised their return themselves. In doing so, we take into account the socio-political context in the countries of origin, transit and the receiving countries, demographic characteristics as well as different framework conditions for reintegration. The overall objective is to gain insights into the sustainability of measures supporting reintegration.

Select publications on this topic

- \ Mielke, K. (2016). Tracing change: On the positionality of traditionally mobile groups in Kabul's camps. *Internationales Asienforum / International Quarterly for Asian Studies*, 47(3-4), 245-271.
- \ Rudolf, M. (2019). Share the burden or pass it on?. *International Migration*, 57(6), 208-223.
- \ Şahin-Mencütek, Z. (2021). Governing practices and strategic narratives for the Syrian refugee returns. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaa121>.



This wristband by UNHCR shows the official status as recognised refugee.

Transnational Figurations of Displacement (TRAFIG)

The three-year research project funded by the European Union in the framework of Horizon 2020 (duration 2019 to 2021) analyses reasons for protracted refugee situations and displacement and seeks answers. The role of transnational connectivity and the mobility of displaced people is in the fore. Comparative empirical analysis focuses on the following regions, among others: Pakistan, Jordan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, DR Congo, Germany, Greece and Italy. BICC is leading and coordinating the interdisciplinary, international research consortium of eleven partners. Its website trafig.eu provides more information on the project.

Select publications on this topic

- Etzold, B. (2019). Violence, mobility and labour relations in Asia. *International Quarterly for Asian Studies*, 50(1-2), 5-18.
- Bohnet, H., & Rügger, S. (2018). The Ethnicity of Refugees (ER): A new dataset for understanding flight patterns. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 35.1, 65-88
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0738894215611865>.
- Christ, S. (2017). 'You are supposed to treat them like your mum and dad': Narratives about transnational family lives by middle-class Filipino children. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(6), 902-918.

Passport control in Mellila





Children in a refugee camp in Kachin state, Myanmar

Forced migration and refugee studies: Networks and transfer (FFVT)

This collaborative research project aims to establish Forced Migration and Refugee Studies as an interdisciplinary research field in Germany and promote networking in Germany and worldwide.

The project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), will run initially from 2020 to 2024. It is a collaboration of BICC, the Centre for Human Rights of the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (CHREN), the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) and the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) at the University of Erlangen. The project aims not only to achieve closer interlinkages of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies in Germany but also to increase its visibility in the international scientific landscape. The FFVT project aims to initiate international joint collaborative research projects and establish academic courses in this field of research. Finally, it is dedicated to the transfer of research findings to civil society, politics and the media. It documents the development of the research landscape in an interactive database and research map at flucht-forschung-transfer.de.

Between civil war and integration: Refugees and the challenges and opportunities of societal change in North Rhine-Westphalia

From 2016 to 2020, BICC, supported by the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), conducted research into four aspects of the situation of refugees in NRW. Based on interviews with more than 200 forced migrants in 33 locations all over NRW, the project looked into conflicts and conflict prevention in refugee shelters. It investigated conflict interactions between refugees and diaspora groups against the background of political developments in the country of origin. Another research module asked about the conditions of long-term integration as well as individual life histories and ideas of integration. By way of the examples of Afghanistan and Syria, the project finally looked into the participation of refugees in peace processes in their countries of origin.

Select publications on this topic

- \ Christ, S., Meininghaus, E., & Röing, T. (2019, March). *"All Day Waiting" – Causes of conflict in refugee shelters in Germany* (BICC Working Paper series No. 3/2019). Bonn: BICC.
- \ Bohnet, H., Cottier, F., & Hug, S. (2016). Conflict-induced IDPs and the spread of conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1-26.
- \ Meininghaus, E., & Mielke, K. (2019, December). *Beyond Doha and Geneva: Peacemaking engagement of Afghans and Syrians in North Rhine-Westphalia and Germany* (BICC Working Paper series No. 11/2019). Bonn: BICC.
- \ Etzold, B. (2017). Capitalising on asylum - The reconfiguration of refugees' access to local fields of labour in Germany. *Refugee Review*, 3, 82-102.

PUBLICATIONS

BICC's current publications on forced migration and displacement can be found on our [website](#) in the section **Focus of Work "Forced migration"** \ Related publications.



After the fire in the refugee camp Moria, refugees have to move to a different camp on Lesbos, Greece

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New refugee camp on Lesvos, Greece

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