

# POSITION PAPER

Commentary on White Paper Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation: 'Investing in a Perspective. Good for the World – Good for The Netherlands'



Photo: Health Clinic in Shire, Northern Ethiopia.  
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School of Humanities and Digital Science

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## About the Author

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## Chapter 1. Key Messages

This policy brief provides a commentary on White Paper, 'Investing in a Perspective. Good for the World – Good for The Netherlands', presented by the Dutch Government in May 2018.

Based in the research programme of the group ['Globalisation, Accessibility, Innovation and Care'](#), we welcome the White Paper, for the following reasons.

1. The essence of Development Cooperation is to provide perspective in a globalising world. New challenges emerge as a result of digitalisation and innovation and this leads to new forms of exclusion. Development Cooperation remains crucially important in a world where many cannot reap the benefit of technological advance and economic and social progress.
2. The European Union provides by law that Development Cooperation serves the objective of policy eradication. The White Paper provides the perspective of how the Government of The Netherlands will plan to make its contribution in this field.
3. The European Union enshrines the principle of 'coherence', which means that the objective of Development Cooperation, to eradicate poverty, may not be undermined by policies in other areas. The White Paper recognises specifically the need to ensure coherence between trade – an important economic motor, and development cooperation. This is essential to ensure the mutual benefits of different policy areas to a similar goal.
4. The International Community has adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. This ensures a worldwide approach to an inclusive and sustainable development. The White Paper underwrites these as its overall goals and underlines the need for all actors to participate towards these ambitious objectives. The White Paper emphasises the participation of government, private sector, financial institutions, civil society organisations and knowledge centres, a collaboration required as an approach to attain the goals. This approach is also known as the Dutch Diamond.
5. The White Paper identifies the importance of the EU to nurture and strengthen its allies, and the need for the EU to recognise its natural alliance with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) with which it shares a long history. The White Paper

identifies the negotiations of the EU and the ACP as a priority. This will allow for a balanced approach to trade and investment within an overarching comprehensive development approach as given in the acquis of the Cotonou Agreement, and fully in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. The White Paper identifies the relation between digital innovation and new challenges such as migration and human trafficking. The White Paper chooses specifically for a message of hope and perspective. The free will of all citizens, families and children worldwide must remain at the centre of our policies of mobility.
7. The White Paper presents an approach based on care. It will indeed be through care that alternatives will be realised, building resilience, belonging, identity and work. This White Paper correctly places care at the centre of its mission. Care (protection, water, sufficient food, education, income, work) are at the basis of a healthy policy of mobility, whereas the current policy of deterrence sows fear, hatred, anxiety, in which people restlessly keep on the move in search for a place where they may feel secure.
8. Human Trafficking is an evil that must not interfere with mobility and which needs to be combatted with conviction. This effort needs to focus on the apex of criminal organisations. The recent sanction initiated by the UN Security Council and the European Union on the initiative of The Netherlands are a very welcome first step to end impunity.
9. Innovation does not mean the same thing in different places. Africa has its own potential to innovate with greenfield and leapfrogging possibilities. Being at the core of the current global social-economic revolution, investments in innovation relevant to context is indeed crucially important.
10. International cooperation, trust in international organisations and exercise of soft power, based on the rule of law and strengthening of governance is a legacy that The Netherlands has to offer in a world that badly needs this. The Netherlands should build on this capacity and strengthen its role in the world based on this legacy.
11. Conflict results in large numbers of people suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress and related mental conditions. We have concluded from our research that – much needed – efforts of social protection and livelihood support in reconstruction and

rehabilitation efforts benefit greatly from investment in mental health. In fact the socio-economic resilience gained by persons living in such difficult circumstances grew significantly as a result of support to heal trauma. Such efforts appeared upscalable, especially by use of digital communication. Innovation and care can go hand in hand.

12. In our research 'Empowerment' correlated always with Socio-Economic Resilience, as did increased income. This confirms that a healthy economy requires people that are empowered, which have agency. The common-sense approach of the White Paper is a welcome message to help foster a cooperation based on mutual respect. Indeed, what is good for the world, is good for The Netherlands. The Netherlands can be proud to be a key player in the field of international cooperation.
13. Policy requires resources. The AIV has recommended that the Dutch Government should respect its commitment to allocate 0.7% of GNP to Development Cooperation. Allocations, equally based on international agreements, in the context of climate change mitigation, should be identified separately and in addition to the resources for development cooperation. The White Paper gives commitment to stop the downward trend and recommits to the target. An ambitious policy for international cooperation will need an ambitious financial envelope in line with international agreements.

## Chapter 2. Mixed Migration and Human Trafficking

In our studies of mixed migration and human trafficking we have explored its causes within dynamic information-sharing along the migration routes and across communities in locations where migrants or refugees are. This study was carried out in Sudan and Ethiopia, focusing on Refugees from Eritrea within host communities.

This study found that human trafficking dynamically moves across such locations and across communities. The lack of support to victims of human trafficking, especially stigmatisation of single mothers who have experienced sexual violence and their children, may keep them trapped in a Human Trafficking Cycle.

Social media are an important source of information. Minors, with little connectivity, demonstrated ingenuity in establishing contact with people close to them, across the globe, and this is their principle source of information. Livelihoods are a big challenge in transit communities, which lack access to basic needs such as water, food and shelter and have no access to income generating activities.

The high prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress leads to collective trauma amongst refugee populations. In this research a Self Help Low Cost Post Traumatic Stress (SHLCPTS- tool was tested. It proved to be highly effective on reducing trauma, increasing social capability and socio-economic resilience.

The policy implications point to the need to revisit the theory of 'push-and-pull', which is at the basis of current policies to reverse the migration crisis by fear-inducing obstacles to mobility. The findings suggest that these measures may be counterproductive and enhance a 'thinking-fast' mode which leads to be more prone to fleeing and risk-taking.

Alternatively, a policy of care for trauma, enhancing livelihoods and out-of-camp policies will help migrant and refugee youth to consider options based on resilience and positive appreciation of support available to them. Below follow detailed conclusions from our research.

## **1.1. Communication and Information**

Mixed Migration and Human Trafficking are dynamic, mediated by information which is shared across routes on which people move and between communities sharing the same locations. The concept of 'here and there' (Ong'ayo, 2018) explains the dynamic effect that something which happens in one location has an effect on another location. Digital communication has enhanced this effect in many ways, and there is great need to study the effects of digital communication on mixed migration and human trafficking.

In this explorative study, interesting dynamics emerged, from which initial conclusions for further research can be drawn.

### **1.1.1. In-camp and Out-of-Camp policies**

In-camp policies, in which refugees are restricted to staying in camp create drives for onwards movement as the youth experience little prospects in the camps. Activities set up during this study to connect youth in the camps with youth in the host communities were very well evaluated and could have positive effect on economic and social integration and lowering of stigmatization. It could economically benefit the recipient community. The advantages of out-of-camp policies need to be further explored.

### **1.1.2. Expansion of Human Trafficking**

- Human Trafficking travels across communities and across places; host communities become vulnerable as targets of human trafficking once routes have been established trafficking members of other communities.
- Returnees of Human Trafficking experience many challenges in reintegration, and these difficulties may result in ongoing human trafficking experiences (Nisrane, 2018). This can be referred to as the Human Trafficking Cycle (Reisen, van, et al, 2014). This problem is especially pertinent to women returnees (in this case, Ethiopian Tigray women returning from the Middle East) and particularly single mothers. Both mothers and children experienced serious stigmatization as a result of the experience of Human Trafficking and exploitation once they returned home.

### **1.1.3. Mobile Money transfers**

- The mobile money transfers (remittances) associated with Human Trafficking help form an economy of extortion.



- Mobile money transfers are potentially of great value as investment in the economy. Many refugees depend on support through remittances. A better integration with local economies could benefit both migrant/refugee communities as well as local host economies.

#### **1.1.4. Information and connectivity**

- Unaccompanied Minors in the camps derived their information from social media on smart phones, despite the lack of connectivity in the camps.
- The minors were skillful in organizing connectivity through a range of innovative techniques.
- The dependency on short moments of connectivity and the lack of resources in general meant that they had to prioritise from where they received information, what information to trust and with whom to share information.
- The minors depended on information with a circle of trusted people close to them, often spread around the world. Their information was dependent on facebook (and not on internet websites).

### **1.2. Livelihoods in the camps**

The of livelihood situation of camp refugees was studied Hitsats camp. This is located in Northern Ethiopia and the refugees are from Eritrea. The overall findings of the research have shown that access of Eritrean refugees to livelihood opportunities is very low within the refugee camp setting. The study was conducted through a survey. The following sub-sections summarize the main findings stemming from the research.

#### **1.2.1. Lack of access to Income Generating Activities**

Refugees have no possibility to enter formal labor market within Ethiopia. Despite the legal instruments that Ethiopia has adopted, many provisions regarding refugee's right to work are not applied in practice. Already the theoretical overview has drawn out that the camp refugees are facing challenges on a daily basis (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016; Samuel Hall, 2014). The data showed that lack of income generating activities, even in the informal sector, and irregularity of the existing ones leave the majority of Hitsats refugees highly dependent on humanitarian assistance provided by UNHCR. Searching for work alternative outside the camp, in urban areas, does not provide a visible option due to the restrictions of freedom of movement, limitations defined in the Out-of-camp policy, as well as the lack of resources of

refugees (Samuel Hall, 2014). According to the DAR framework access of refugees to socio-economic activities is one of the essential prerequisites leading to self-reliance. Given the fact that, according to the data, refugees cannot rely on regular income, the social and economic ability of refugees to fulfil their needs is unattainable.

### **1.2.2. Sources of livelihood are limited**

The data illustrates that there are several sectors available in the camp through which refugees have been able to access livelihoods and earn some income. Refugees may engage in petty trade, personal services or construction-related services, set up a small business or work for NGOs based in the camp. All these activities, however, are excessively limited and only minor part of the refugee population is accessing any of mentioned sources. It has also been observed that market within the camp become saturated with some of the small businesses, such as hairdressing services, shops or cafés. On the other hand, some sectors, such as agriculture, are omitted which shows lack of consistency and sustainability within the livelihood programming. According to the SLF framework of DFID, livelihood is sustainable when it does not depend on external assistance (DFID, 1999). High level of dependency of refugees on the humanitarian aid is characteristic for the case of Eritrean refugees of Hitstats.

### **1.2.3. Lack of basic needs**

It was observed that alongside the lack of work opportunities, young camp refugees strive to meet their basic human needs. Based on the interviews with refugees and NGO workers, monthly rations for food (10 kg of wheat per person) are not sufficient to sustain oneself. Location of the Hitsats camp contributes to lack of water for refugees. Results showed that refugees do not get 20 litres of water as the international standard prescribes. In addition, purchased water from the water wells is not purified and may lead to several health problems. Low access to energy brings complications to refugees as they depend entirely on coal and firewood to prepare their food. This causes the tensions between refugee and host communities since refugees often cut the trees for firewood in the act of desperation. Due to the poverty and hardships, young refugees have to repeatedly strive for complementing the food, water and coal supplies. However, it is impossible to do so without regular income or remittances from family members or friends.

#### **1.2.4. Access to livelihood is prevented by several obstacles**

The data revealed a wide range of obstacles that can explain the low access of Eritrean refugees to livelihood. Lack of job opportunities is considered by refugees as one of the most pressing issues. Qualitative interviews showed that even those refugees who have established micro-business in the camp are jeopardized as they don't have (paying) customers on a regular basis; thus, they cannot rely on regular income. Secondly, restriction of freedom of movement followed by the lack of working permits illustrates the difficulty of refugees to go and search for better life prospect outside the camp. Results from the analysis demonstrate that young Eritrean refugees happen to live in the vicious circle where one challenge leads to another. This often evokes very frustrating and hopeless feelings in refugees. Consequently, they often opt to move out from Hitsats camp and even from Ethiopia. They are willing to conduct dangerous journeys to developed countries in hope for better future.

#### **1.2.5. Good practice present in the camp**

It has been observed that camp-based NGOs are keen to focus on livelihood programs. Their focus is oriented mainly on providing vocational skill trainings as well as micro-loans and start-up materials for the business. Even though refugees are interested in participating in skill trainings, the linkage to the market is almost non-existent which prevents them from putting skills into practice. According to the ILO guidance, in cases when the environment is not sufficient enough to link refugees to the market and public services, neither the skills of refugees nor the rights are utilized to the full extent (ILO, 2017). Subsequently, this halts refugees from integration to the country of first asylum (Jacobsen & Fratzke, 2016), in this case into Ethiopian society.

A great need for better development of livelihood programs remains high. The concept of refugee livelihood shall not be, however, resolved on its own without stepping into the more complex picture. It is not the mere creation of job opportunity and providing skill training that may result in self-reliance and lead to resilience. Livelihood should be considered within the policy mechanism available in the host country (Samuel Hall, 2014). In addition to that, the comprehensive study carried out in Northern Uganda showed that improvement of livelihood is possible when the aspect of trauma relief is taken seriously

within the livelihood programming (van Reisen et al., 2018). This was also confirmed by the research conducted in Hitsats and Shimelba (see Kidane and Stokmans, 2018).

Overall, the conclusion is that the access of refugees to livelihood opportunities, income generating activities remain very low in the camp setting. Programming highly lacks the element of sustainability which is proved by the number of drop-outs of the livelihood program beneficiaries. Even though sustainability was not an explicit part of the present research, it has been observed that in order to bring long-term solutions, a holistic approach needs to be adopted together with the improvement of horizontal cooperation between NGOs. This finding needs further investigation and is included in a proposal for future research.

### **1.3. Treatment of Trauma: Effect on Social Capital and Socio-Economic Resilience**

Both the widespread nature of traumatisation and the fact that people not directly affected were also traumatised is indicative of the prevalence of not just PTSD but also collective trauma. A Self Help Low Cost Post Traumatic Stress (SHLCPTS) tool was developed. In this research this was tested in a delivery on ICT.

This research has demonstrated that the ICT-based Psycho-social programme SHLCPTS was effective to reduce trauma and to improve both the perception of Social Capital as well that of Socio-Economic Resilience. This was measured across the three tools and the results were consistent throughout.

The results of the study indicate that PTS as measured on the IES-short, all aspects of the SER and Social Capital improved following the SHLCPTS with significantly better results for those who received the full 7 video intervention as opposed to the 2 video education on trauma and its impacts.

Partial eta-square can be interpreted as the percentage of variance in change between the first and second measurement plus the associated error variance (Pierce, Block & Aguinis, 2004). From this perspective, it can be said that SHLCPTS has a strong effect on post-traumatic stress, capability (of the SER) and Social Capita Offline.

This means that through this kind of support refugees can reduce their trauma symptoms, enhance the perception of their capacity to improve their economic prospects and reduce the level of collective trauma by enhancing their social capital in the camp.

**Figure 2.1 Summary of Results of the Third Study**

		F value	Partial eta-square
IES-short		F(1,90) = 91,80, p < 0,01	0,505
SER	Income	F(1,91) = 15,084, p < 0,01	0,142
	Empowerment	F(1,91) = 42,344, p < 0,01	0,318
	Worry	F(1,91) = 13,438, p < 0,01	0,129
	System	F(1,91) = 38,632, p < 0,01	0,298
	Capability	F(1,91) = 69,565, p < 0,01	0,433
	Social	F(1,91) = 22,474, p < 0,01	0,198
Social capital	Offline	F(1,90) = 82,733, p < 0,01	0,479
	Online	F(1,90) = 32,203, p < 0,01	0,264

Bringing the levels of trauma down seems to have improved people’s perception of their socio-economic status/prospects as well as their social capital. This change occurred within a six-week period where nothing much by way of income levels or other opportunities had changed, meaning that all the improvement that was measured in social capital and socio-economic resilience are in fact improvements in perception following a reduction in the level of trauma as a result of SHLCPTS.

#### **1.4. Perception of Increased Life Control**

The main objective of the SHLPTC was to enable victims of trauma gain understanding of their symptoms and then regain some control over them through the use of simple self-help exercises that enabled them to experience better relationships in their day to day life within their community. Symptoms of PTSD (i.e., flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, increased arousal) are experienced as uncontrollable and unavoidable, thus possibly diminishing the victim’s cognitive and emotional control. Perceived life control is the cognitive appraisal that has been shown to be significantly associated with PTSD symptoms (Bolstad and Zinbarg, 1997; Regehr *et al.*, 2000), in fact the development of PTSD is strongly associated with the loss of control. Rothbaum, (1992) concludes that PTSD is most likely to develop when the stressful event is perceived as both dangerous and uncontrollable.

Perceptions of control felt during the trauma or controllability in the future is important in effecting on going functioning among trauma survivors (Kushner *et al.*, 1992). Regaining control over aspects of their symptoms and their reactions to them gave people options and potentials that weren't open to them, consequently enabling them to have a different outlook on their lives and their fate including perhaps their assessment of their protection and prospects in their current location.

Attaining a level of control could also have a ripple effect of healing, Arnkoff and Mahoney (1979) suggested the following four beliefs protected individuals against on-going pathology resulting from an extremely stressful event: having skills to control one's response, having skills for controlling the occurrence of reinforcement, being able to regulate one's mental activities and the ability to inhibit distressing mental activities, PTSD undermines these control-related beliefs the resultant reduction in locus of control renders the victim to on-going trauma. Inability to take control of one's life reduces one's belief in their ability to exert any control over their environment (Mikulincer *et al.*, 2009), overcoming the trauma induced learnt helplessness was significant to victims of trauma and their perception of their environment and others who share that environment. The skills learnt through the intervention gave people a significant level of control over their response and their responses to day-to-day challenges in their extremely difficult environment. These small victories in alleviating symptoms and controlling reactions resulted in an enhanced sense of capability to improve social and economic reality or self-efficacy.

A sense of personal efficacy is the foundation of human agency (Bandura 1997, 2001a), people who believe that potential threats are unmanageable view their entire environment as fraught with danger, they thus magnify the severity of possible threats and worry about potential perils that are unlikely to happen. This then starts a negative cycle of thoughts that ends up hampering functioning (Bandura, 1997; Jerusalem & Mittag, 1995; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). With little felt control over their sense of agitation and anxiety participants felt that there was very little going well for them and that there is only further hardship and danger in their current environment. However, once they regained control over their symptoms they were able to have a more realistic appraisal of their environment and their own capacity to influence it and their prospects there.

In studies in which perceived control is varied experimentally, people who are led to believe they can exercise some control over aversive events display lower physiological arousal and less performance impairment than do those who believe they lack personal control, even though both groups are subjected equally to the aversive events (Geer, Davison, & Gatchel, 1970; Glass, Singer, Leonard, Krantz, & Cummings, 1973; Litt, Nye, & Shafer, 1993; Sanderson, Rapee, & Barlow, 1989). Inevitably persistent posttraumatic stress has multiple and complexly interrelated determinants. Making the disentangling of the unique contribution of self-efficacy to the psychosocial in the aftermath of traumatic experiences complicated, however this research has demonstrated that giving people information about their PTSD symptoms and enabling them to learn techniques that allow them to take control of these symptoms results in reducing PTSD and enhancing their perceptions of their economic prospects as well as relationships with others around them.

Trauma and particularly the kind of trauma caused by a prolonged and devastating event such as political conflict and war, is not an isolated transient event, rather it entails a whole catalogue of losses: loss of life, physical injuries, and property destruction. Often victims suffer stress not only from the catastrophic event itself, but also from the strain of continuing adaptations in the wake of the devastation. In addition to personal physical and psychological injury as well as death and injury of family members there is often a wide spread loss of social connection, extensive damage or loss of property and in many instances the loss of one's very livelihood, the trauma is collective not just personal. Survivors find themselves in a community in severe shock, which can further accentuate the traumatic experience (Benight and Bandura, 2003). In the face of such daunting devastation and enduring hardship it requires a solid sense of self-efficacy to persevere with recovery efforts and even dealing with relief agencies that assist might prove a source of further strain (Bolin, 1982). Trauma support such as SHLCPTS can be a very good starting point to regaining control and self-efficacy and turning the vicious cycle around, both by unlocking personal and community resilience and also preparing the ground for better utilisation of social support initiatives such as the livelihood support provided in the refugee camps.

#### **1.4.1. An Alternative to the push-and-pull theory**

To the contrary of the popular push-and-pull migration theory that assumes refugees make a decision regarding migration based on the analysis of pluses and minuses it seems that

trauma leaves them little capacity to make such analysis. With their sense of self efficacy diminished and in a trauma-induced state of hyper vigilance that alleviates the threat entailed in their environment, they will see their environment fraught with insurmountable danger, livelihood support and refugee protection notwithstanding.

This can be explained with the theory of Kahneman (2011) of Thinking Slow and Fast. Thinking Fast is an important survival mechanism, which allows us to respond immediately to a potentially dangerous situation. Thinking Fast leads to a quick response of fleeing, freeze or fight. But in a traumatised and retraumatised mindset, thinking fast can become a 'standard-setting'. Fleeing becomes a dominant feature response to everything that is perceived as a threat.

In a negative mindset of trauma and related mental disorders such as depression, the information received will be negative. The brain treats the negative emotion as information (Schwarz, 2010). This explains the depressed scores on socio-economic resilience of people who suffer from PTS and are not receiving any care. In this negative emotional state, fleeing is a natural response emanating from the fear perceived in the information that reaches the person.

### **1.5. Policy Implications**

The theory of Push-and-Pull has informed the policy responses to the migration-crisis, a crisis perceived as such since the world has not seen a higher number of displaced persons since the Second World War.

Based on this theory it is thought that the magnetic working of the attraction of wealthier countries should be countered by severe obstacles. The obstacles should help balance the pull against the push, is the idea.

The implications of this research is that this theory may not be valid in explaining drivers of dynamic mixed migration. The research suggests that the lack of protection and safety, together with a traumatic state of mind, lead to negative information and induce a Thinking-Fast pattern, which provokes a response to flee.

Kahneman describes that Thinking Fast leads to errors and that the risk-taking behavior is much increased in persons who have suffered heavy loss. This is certainly the case for many



refugees and migrants who have endured many losses, experienced severe traumatic events and have paid heavily for facilitation of their journeys to smugglers and human trafficking networks. This provides a perfect set of conditions in which youth will be inclined to take high risks to overcome obstacles.

The policy recommendations emanating from this study are to reverse the policies based on creating obstacles and fear. Rather, a policy should be set out which is based on support, protection and care, which will help migrants and refugees to think slow, and identify the potential available within the context available to them and to actually understand and process the risks and opportunities associated with the decision to move on or to stay.

## Further Reading

### Research reports

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Kidane, S. (2018) Test intervention trauma. Human Trafficking and Mixed migration. *Presentation*. Tilburg University, Tilburg

