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A BRIDGE TO FIRMER GROUND: LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES TO SUPPORT PATHWAYS TO SOLUTIONS IN THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

FULL RESEARCH REPORT

MARCH 2021



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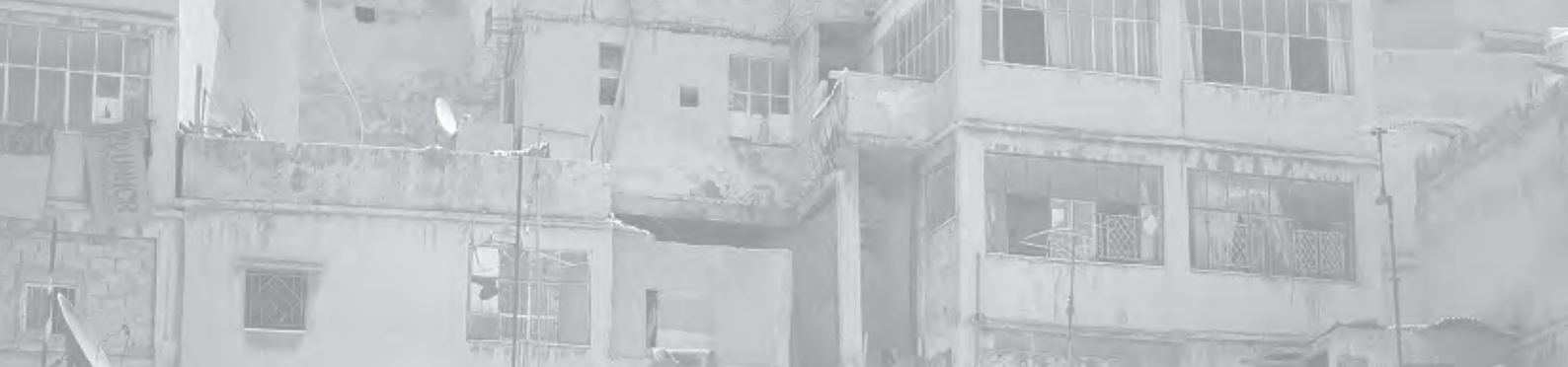


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	6
Introduction	14
1. Protection	16
1. Introduction.....	17
2. Providing Legal Residence to Refugees.....	19
3. Preventing and Reducing Statelessness.....	23
4. Provide Services and Referrals from a Single Access Point.....	28
5. Conclusions	33
2. Social Protection	34
1. Introduction.....	35
2. Using Cash to Provide Social Assistance Transfers.....	36
3. Promoting Financial Inclusion through Social Assistance.....	40
4. Transforming National Social Safety Nets to Allow for Refugees’ Inclusion	44
5. Conclusions	52
3. Education	54
1. Introduction.....	55
2. Designing and Implementing Inclusive Education Policies	57
3. Answering the Specific Educational Needs of Refugee Students.....	66
4. Higher Education and Vocational Training	70
5. Conclusion.....	74
4. Livelihoods	76
1. Introduction.....	77
2. Access to the Right to Work.....	80
3. Decent Work Conditions for Refugees.....	84
4. Investing in the Economic Resilience of Host Societies	88
5. Providing Targeted Support Activities for Refugees	92
6. Conclusions	96
5. Healthcare	98
1. Introduction.....	99
2. Health Policies and Measures Inclusive of Refugees.....	101
3. Investing in the Resilience of Health Systems in Host Societies	106
4. Support for Specialized Care for Refugees (Maternal and Neonatal Care).....	111
5. Conclusions	116
Conclusion	118
Annex. Methodology	119

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Ten years on from the start of the conflict in their country, Syrians remain the largest refugee population worldwide.¹ Countries hosting refugees from Syria continue to be among those with the largest numbers of refugees per capita globally. For example, Syrian refugees represent one in six people in Lebanon and 5 percent of total population in Jordan and Turkey. In total, these three countries, plus the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), had nearly 5.5 million Syrian refugees living within their borders as of 2021.² Accessing legal status, social protection, education, employment, and healthcare continues to be difficult for these refugees, and many face increased vulnerabilities because of their forced displacement.

As their prospects of resettlement to another country are very limited and conditions in Syria do not yet allow for a safe, dignified, and sustainable return, exploring ways to promote local solutions for refugees, as well as to improve social cohesion with host communities, is critical. Indeed, the need for policies and programs to effectively advance these aims has become even more urgent since the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has put health systems and local economies under immense strain and forced schools and other systems to radically change their operations. This study, developed by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), presents examples of promising practices for supporting the resilience and self-reliance of refugees and host communities from different displacement contexts around the world, and highlights how the lessons learned from these case studies can be applied in the Syrian refugee context.

1. PROTECTION

Across the countries hosting refugees from the Syrian conflict, protection gaps cause a cascade of unwelcome effects. Without access to full legal status, refugees are often unable to obtain basic identity documentation, which limits their access to vital services and makes them vulnerable to harassment, detention, and even deportation. Limited freedom of movement and the risk that refugees may become statelessness have also been identified as key concerns.

Case studies drawn from Peru, Colombia, and Ethiopia suggest approaches that could help overcome some of these obstacles. In Peru, the use of the Temporary Stay Permit (PTP) has shown how granting legal status and documentation to displaced people can play a critical role in facilitating their agency and increasing their self-reliance, when possible and not hindered by other factors. Colombia's initiative to prevent statelessness among children born in the country to Venezuelan parents, known as *Primero La Niñez*, has shown how a measure with limited documentation requirements and no cost to participants can benefit thousands of children and be implemented in a politically sensitive environment. While granting legal status to displaced people can be a controversial proposal, PTP and *Primero La Niñez* demonstrate how it can be feasible with strong political leadership and careful public messaging.

Meanwhile, the One-Stop Shop model employed in Ethiopia can address some of the practical challenges refugees and members of host communities in remote areas often face when seeking to access documentation and services. This case study also clearly demonstrates that many of the barriers faced by refugees also exist for vulnerable nationals, and that supporting refugees can provide be an opportunity to improve protection conditions for host communities and better connect them with a range of complementary services.

Key Recommendations

National governments:

- Communicate about regularization strategies to the public in a strategic way. Regularization efforts that can be tied to national values and identity are likely to resonate more and receive less pushback than those that are messaged based on humanitarian needs or international imperatives alone.
- If new permits or statuses are created, plan for the long-term implications of this from the beginning, even when they are temporary. In some cases, temporary legalization efforts may have the potential to be made permanent and this possibility should be considered from the start.
- When designing regularization policies, avoid setting overly complex qualification requirements in order to ensure policies are relatively easy to implement and do not impose an undue burden on applicants or the administration. Part of this effort should be to offer somewhat predictable options to refugees when it comes to their legal status.

Implementing partners and civil-society actors:

- Where possible, locate documentation services and providers of other services together and build connections between them to ease referrals and make them easy for refugees and members of host communities to access.
- Coordinate among implementing partners and with the national governments to ensure refugee and host communities are aware of their rights and the services available to them.

Donors:

- Identify areas where the vulnerabilities of refugee and other resident populations overlap, such as the need for improved access to civil documentation and financial services; inclusive efforts in such areas promise to both support refugees and strengthen national systems.

2. SOCIAL PROTECTION

Across Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and KRI, the inability or difficulties of refugees to access national social welfare systems—coupled with the broader limitations of these systems even for nationals—means that refugees are often reliant on separate and short-term support systems funded by international donors. Moreover, these separate systems are often insufficiently linked with other services and, thus, miss opportunities to identify vulnerabilities and provide appropriate referrals. These difficulties are likely to become even more acute in the coming months and years, as the full impact of the economic downturn associated with the COVID-19 pandemic sets in.

The case studies presented in this report suggest ways these barriers could be overcome, using different but complementary models. This could involve, for instance, expanding existing social protection mechanisms, working with host-country governments to ensure that parallel systems resemble and are coordinated with national ones, and testing whole new approaches to social protection but making sure to lay the ground to make these systems sustainable. Bamba Chakula in Kenya and the MyBucks Bank in Malawi demonstrate the value of aligning cash assistance with other humanitarian and development interventions and of ensuring that participants in cash assistance programs can access referrals to other appropriate services. The MyBucks Bank branch in Dzaleka Camp—a privately owned and self-sustaining entity that, in addition to distributing cash assistance, offers financial literacy training—also illustrates how the private sector can be engaged to facilitate refugee financial inclusion. Cameroon's Transitional Safety Net initiative shows how investments in social protection for refugees can be aligned with and support wider efforts to improve social safety

nets for a society as a whole. Finally, Germany's inclusion of refugees in its national contributory unemployment scheme illustrates how refugees can be integrated into large, well-established, and self-sustaining social safety net systems, even without special measures or international assistance.

Key Recommendations

National governments:

- Consider how parallel social assistance systems can be harmonized or aligned, and where possible national social assistance systems opened to refugees.
- Consider opening contributory social insurance systems to refugees and ensure any informal barriers to their use are removed.
- Collaborate with international partners and civil society to address technical and financial support needs, and address concerns and manage potential social tensions.

Implementing partners and civil-society actors:

- Ensure social assistance and financial inclusion initiatives are accountable and provide autonomy to refugees on how to use their cash benefits and what financial services they need.
- Explore letting untraditional partners, including the financial services sector, take ownership for designing and implementing interventions and services to ensure that programs are tailored to the market context (with oversight and coordination from the government and/ or refugee agencies).
- Educate refugees and employers about their rights and responsibilities with regard to contributory social insurance schemes.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation practices to build up the evidence base on what works, improve practices, and provide persuasive narratives to donors.

Donors:

- Identify areas where investments in social protection for refugees can be used to strengthen social protection systems on the national level.
- Work with implementing partners and national governments to make existing social safety net programs inclusive of refugees.

3. EDUCATION

While Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and KRI have been open to including Syrian refugees in their primary education systems, governments in these areas still face structural challenges that have hindered efforts to scale up educational infrastructure, hire and train enough teachers to address the needs of the expanding student population, or ensure learning outcomes are adequately tracked and improved. Across the region, this has led many refugee students to be unable to catch up with their studies or drop out of school. Difficulties accessing documentation and legal status have sometimes also contributed to these challenges.

Donors and their development partners have an essential role to play in assisting host governments with setting up and maintaining the necessary educational infrastructure to serve both refugees and students from their host communities. Examples from Peru and Uganda of inclusive education policies that benefit both groups of students demonstrate the importance of effective cooperation between host governments, development organizations, and humanitarian actors, as well as of strong political leadership.

At the same time, refugee students may face specific challenges due to their legal status and their experience with forced displacement. Community-based initiatives such as Learning Beyond the Bell in Australia provide some lessons learned on how to identify and respond to these challenges, and how these activities can help promote social cohesion between refugees and other community members. Finally, the higher education projects funded by the European Union in the Middle East show how each intervention can and should be tailored to the national context. They also demonstrate the value of aligning such programming with efforts to promote refugees' labor market integration, while also managing the expectations of program participants in economies where youth unemployment is high.

Key Recommendations

National and local governments:

- Spearhead the inclusion of refugees in the national education system, including provisions for improved infrastructure, staffing, and data collection and management.
- Encourage efforts to promote social cohesion between refugees and host-community members, including through efforts in the classroom (e.g., training of teachers) and civil-society initiatives (e.g., after-school projects).
- Enable refugees who graduate from university or vocational training to access formal employment, with support from donors and implementing partners to create livelihood opportunities that benefit entire communities.

Implementing partners and civil-society actors:

- Support efforts to promote better inclusion of refugees in schools and higher education institutions.
- Contribute to monitoring and research efforts to assess the progress of inclusive educational policies and projects and to identify new or unaddressed needs.

Donors:

- Commit to long-term support for host countries as they upgrade the capacity of their education systems, including higher education.
- Continue to provide targeted educational support to refugee students in light of their specific vulnerabilities.
- Ensure that interventions specifically targeting refugee education are coordinated with broader education projects and policies in host countries, so as to avoid redundancies and inconsistent approaches.
- When supporting the inclusion of refugees in higher education projects, link these interventions with livelihoods projects to create more job opportunities that benefit refugees and host communities and, ultimately, to help overcome the economic or barriers to refugees accessing formal employment.

4. LIVELIHOODS

Access to livelihood opportunities is critical if refugees are to move away from the effects of displacement, but it is also one of the most contentious policy areas for host governments. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, with its significant and likely long-lasting negative impact for economies around the world, questions around refugees' access to the labor market were often challenging. Now under increased pressure, tensions with host communities may become more pronounced and difficult to manage. Yet case-study examples illustrate opportunities to make progress, even in these difficult economic conditions.

A prerequisite for refugees to engage in livelihood activities is that they be granted the right to work; this helps them avoid becoming trapped in the informal sector, where abuse is both more common and more difficult to report. Ethiopia has sought to move in that direction in the past four years, and its experience provides lessons on how to maintain the political appetite for such measures while also illustrating the practical challenges refugees may face to gaining effective access to the right to work. Even refugees employed in the formal sector may, however, face prejudice and unfair treatment, and it is essential that host countries, donors, civil-society and development actors work together to ensure decent employment conditions for these workers. The Better Work program led by the International Labor Organization (ILO), which has sought to improve working conditions in a number of countries including Jordan, does not specifically focus on refugee workers but has conducted activities to raise awareness among key stakeholders and refugees themselves about their rights and complaint mechanisms.

All these efforts need to be accompanied by additional investments from development actors to support the economic resilience of host countries. The Migration Initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean, run by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), provides ideas on how to overcome some of the challenges associated with high unemployment within a society and to manage social tensions that can arise if refugees are perceived as competing with nationals for jobs. Finally, projects like Migraflex in Brazil seek to address the specific challenges refugees face when seeking to gain employment or create their own business, including those caused by refugees' lack of familiarity with the relevant legislation, limited proficiency in the local language, or limited access to financial services.

Key Recommendations

National governments:

- Facilitate refugees' access to labor markets, by allowing them freedom of movement and lowering or removing barriers they may face to getting a work permit or being hired. Such measure could ultimately benefit host countries, by making it possible for well-trained workers to put their skills and experience to use.
- Clarify the procedures refugees need to fulfil to access the labor market and work permits, and provide the relevant authorities with training to ensure these procedures are accurately and consistently applied (including on the labor laws refugees fall under).
- Ensure that refugee workers are covered by existing labor laws on decent work, and that regular monitoring of workers' conditions also covers their situation.

Implementing partners and civil-society actors:

- In partnership with national and local authorities, educate refugees, employers, and host communities on labor legislation and procedures, including by conducting awareness campaigns and training local and national administrative staff.
- Develop tailored projects to address the specific needs of refugee workers and entrepreneurs, in particular when it comes to job-matching and entrepreneurship programs. With regards to entrepreneurship, implementing partners should seek to develop activities adapted to the skills of refugees to increase their likelihood of success.

Donors:

- Mobilize resources to strengthen the economic resilience of host countries, through grant projects (e.g., capacity-building activities for authorities, or start-up packages) or through concessional loans (e.g., to support economic infrastructure altogether, or loans to financial institutions and other similar actors to stimulate the local economy), while insuring refugees' inclusion in the gains from these initiatives.
- Work with international partners and national authorities to make the most of funding for livelihoods projects to create more and better job opportunities for refugee and host communities. This can involve, among other things, vocational training, job-matching programs, or support to the private sector and entrepreneurship.
- Encourage policy changes to improve refugees' access to formal employment and prioritize decent working conditions for vulnerable host communities and refugees.

5. HEALTHCARE

In Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and KRI, Syrian refugees face significant barriers to accessing healthcare. In some cases, refugees are not included in national insurance schemes or are unable to afford primary as well as specialized care, while in other cases, local health systems may lack the capacity to care for refugees (or even nationals) or have insufficient data on refugees' health needs.

Policies and programs in Costa Rica, Kenya, Jordan or Lebanon offer lessons learned on how some of these challenges can be addressed.

A closer look at the situation in Costa Rica demonstrates that inclusive healthcare policies require comprehensive, holistic planning, including for how to ensure the policy is implemented smoothly and how to make healthcare accessible in the long term, such as through a national or employer-based system. And as in other policy areas, interventions may be most effective and receive the most buy-in if they improve services for host communities as well as refugees, ensuring adequate care for all members of a society. Similarly, a project by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) focusing on maternal and neonatal care demonstrates that local actors are often best suited as partners in effective service provision; relying on their know-how and field presence can yield significant positive results.

Key Recommendations

National governments:

- Ensure equity of care by providing subsidized healthcare to refugees and members of host communities on the basis of common vulnerability criteria.
- Explore integrating refugees into national insurance schemes to ensure they are able to access and afford primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare.
- Invest in local health facilities to improve quality of care for both nationals and refugees, for instance by integrating mental health services and support for persons with disabilities into primary healthcare, and improve management and monitoring tools.
- Coordinate with implementing partners to ensure complementarity, for example through the development of a coordination platform.

Implementing partners and civil-society actors:

- Conduct thorough baseline assessments to inform the design of interventions that accurately reflect the level of resources, technical knowledge, and cultural practices in the target communities.
- Work with national non-governmental organizations that have a local presence in target communities and with local health practitioners to benefit from their first-hand knowledge of the conditions and needs.

Donors:

- Work with host governments to coordinate funding and project implementation to ensure national ownership over the delivery of health services for all populations on the basis of their needs.
- Ensure that funding for public health projects include refugees as beneficiaries, with services designed to target displacement-affected needs as part of the results framework.
- Support host country efforts to fund access to healthcare for the most vulnerable refugees in the medium and long term.



INTRODUCTION

A. CONTEXT

Ten years on from the start of the conflict, Syrians remain the largest refugee population worldwide.³ Countries hosting Syrian refugees continue to be among those with the highest numbers of refugees per capita globally, representing one in six people in Lebanon and around 5 percent of the total population in Jordan and Turkey. In total, these three countries, along with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), hosted nearly 5.5 million Syrian refugees as of early 2021.⁴ Poverty is endemic for refugees in the region, and accessing legal status, social protection, education, employment, and healthcare continues to be difficult for many. Their prospects of resettlement to another country are extremely limited, even more so since the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to international travel, and few report planning to return to Syria in the near future.⁵

While formal legal integration into their host countries remains a controversial, and unlikely, durable solution for most refugees in the region, the reality is that many Syrians will continue to live, work, and study in displacement for the foreseeable future. Therefore, there is a need for policy and programmatic responses that support pathways towards durable solutions and include, for instance, improving refugees' access to resources and information so that they can thrive in the short and medium term and make informed decisions about their situation as conditions evolve. Ensuring that refugees have the opportunity to enjoy decent living conditions, support their families, and pursue an education is essential to mitigating the impact of protracted displacement on refugees and the communities where they reside. Advancing the inclusion of Syrians in core public services and local labor markets is complicated, however, by the difficult economic situation in the region, restrictive policy frameworks, and the limited availability of international assistance. Refugees, policymakers, and humanitarian assistance providers are thus confronted with a difficult puzzle: how to create opportunities for refugees in the face of such challenging conditions.

These questions have become even more urgent since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had drastic repercussions for public health and economies worldwide. As national budgets in many donor countries have been consumed with the response to domestic social welfare needs, international assistance from bilateral government donors has shrunk.⁶ At the same, the pandemic has taken a sharp toll on the economies of the countries hosting large refugee populations.⁷ Ensuring that precious aid budgets are spent to the greatest effect is therefore more critical than ever.

Fortunately, the humanitarian assistance and development fields have experienced a boom in creativity over the last decade, initially sparked by the Syrian crisis itself and catalyzed by the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration. Partnerships between humanitarian and development actors and the private sector, as well as technological innovations, have created opportunities to test new ways of delivering services and leveraging labor market opportunities, to the benefit of refugees and receiving communities alike. These programmatic innovations have been driven forward in part by monitoring and data on what works and under what conditions.

On the policy side, more recent displacement crises, such as the large-scale exodus from Venezuela, have demonstrated the potential of flexible policy responses that leverage existing legislative frameworks to provide refugees with legal protection. Meanwhile, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the Global Compact on Refugees catalyzed policy reform of the asylum systems in countries such as Ethiopia and Chad. Finally, progress in refugee scholarship has enabled service providers and policymakers to better understand the contexts in which they operate—including the economic impact of camps on surrounding communities⁸ and the specific challenges refugees face in urban settings—and begin to adjust their responses accordingly.⁹

Understanding whether and how these interventions have worked can help inform how policymakers, humanitarian and development actors, the private sector, and refugees can build resilience in the Syrian context, support displaced people in accessing pathways towards durable solutions even as conditions change, and enable them to make informed choices about their futures.

B. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study, developed by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), is driven by three research objectives: (1) identify policy measures and programmatic interventions that aim to support the resilience and self-reliance of refugees and host communities; (2) understand what dimensions of these interventions have led to their success or failure, under what conditions, and with what resources, as well as what challenges they have faced; and (3) how the lessons learned from these approaches can be applied and be of relevance in the Syrian refugee context.

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions have guided this study:

- What policies, programs, or other interventions have attempted to positively affect refugees' progress toward durable solutions, as well as support the resilience of displaced people, host communities, and national systems?
- Have these interventions helped improve self-reliance and support resilience, and if so, how have they done this? What factors were instrumental in supporting progress towards durable solutions? What resources were needed to make these approaches possible and how long did it take to see a positive impact? What limitations did these interventions face and how might they be overcome?
- What lessons can be learned from each policy or intervention, and how can they be applied in the Syrian refugee context?
- What practical recommendations can be drawn to support host country governments, international donors, and operational response actors to facilitate Syrian refugees' self-reliance and broader resilience in the countries where they live?

The case studies examined in this study fall into the following five thematic areas, chosen based on gaps identified in the Syrian refugee response: protection, social protection, education, livelihoods, and healthcare. Each case offers lessons learned that could help inform and strengthen programmatic and policy interventions in the Syrian context.



CHAPTER

1

PROTECTION

1. INTRODUCTION

Protection, including access to legal status and civil documentation, freedom of movement, and access to justice, is a core prerequisite of a durable solution to displacement. Yet the lack of comprehensive refugee protection or asylum systems and limited infrastructure to provide documentation or ensure fair access to the justice system across the main countries hosting Syrian refugees has placed these refugees at risk of abuse, exploitation, and statelessness. This chapter focuses on access to legal protection for refugees.

Box 1. About this Project

This chapter is part of a research project by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), titled “A Bridge To Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context”. As the protracted Syrian refugee crisis continues and refugee communities, host governments, and international donors and implementers attempt to move toward durable solutions, this project analyzes projects, policies, and approaches from around the world and draws global lessons learned for the Syrian context. This report provides recommendations for host-country policymakers, regional and international bodies, and nongovernmental actors.

Syrian refugees in neighboring countries (Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon) face three primary legal protection challenges. First, the legal status of Syrian refugees in the region is generally precarious and this affects various aspects of their daily life. Only Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, albeit with a geographical limitation, and has in place an asylum law that provides formal legal status to Syrians. Elsewhere, access to legal status is dependent on a combination of non-protection-specific immigration and residency laws, as well as registration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In Jordan, refugees are not able to receive any kind of formal status but are instead given an asylum-seeker registration card and a Ministry of the Interior service card following registration with UNHCR.¹⁰ These certificates allow them to access government services, but do not provide legal status or basic rights such as the right to work (unless in selected open sectors and professions), own property, or receive basic civil registration documentation.

In Iraq and Lebanon, refugees may receive a temporary residence permit based on their UNHCR registration, but other barriers prevent their access to legal status in practice. In Lebanon, the government barred UNHCR from registering any newly arrived refugees in early 2015, and as a result nearly 80 percent of Syrian refugees surveyed in Lebanon in 2019 lacked legal status.¹¹ High fees associated with renewing residence permits have also been a barrier. Renewing a residence permit in Lebanon costs USD 200, unless a fee waiver can be obtained.¹² In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), refugees reported relatively fewer barriers to receiving a residence permit, though the process requires documentation, such as a Syrian national ID card or passport, that many refugees have difficulty producing.¹³

Without legal residence permits, refugees may face difficulties moving within a country, obtaining work permits, and registering for essential services, like education and healthcare. Refugees without appropriate documentation are also vulnerable to detention and deportation, and police sweeps have been reported in the region. In Lebanon, a decision by the security service intended to prevent smuggling allows for law enforcement to deport any Syrian refugees who are apprehended without a valid residency permit. Raids by security services reportedly resulted in deportations to Syria in 2019.¹⁴ In Turkey, the government reportedly conducted a large-scale sweep of Syrian neighborhoods and public transit in Istanbul in July 2019, checking for individuals without documentation or who were residing outside their province of registration. Those without documentation were reportedly deported.¹⁵

Freedom of movement is restricted for Syrian refugees throughout the region, both formally and informally due to the lack of access to legal status. In Turkey, only Syrians with official registration documents and a special travel permit are allowed to move between provinces within the country.¹⁶ Since 2015, this permit is required for travel outside the province in which the refugees registered, and for a period no longer than 90 days. Controls over Syrian refugees’ mobility were reinforced



Photo By: DRC

by the governorates following the EU-Turkey 2016 agreement, at the same time the approval of travel permits became more difficult.¹⁷ In Jordan, those living in camps must obtain permission to leave, and permits (usually linked to work) must be renewed (in the camps themselves) every 30 days.¹⁸ Syrians are also prohibited from driving or owning a car.¹⁹ In Lebanon, because most Syrian refugees lack legal status, many report restricting their movements to avoid coming into contact with authorities or being subject to police raids.²⁰ In Iraq, Syrian refugees (in and outside camps) face restrictions moving out of KRI and into the rest of Iraq.²¹ In July, following a rise in the number of COVID-19 infections, the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government announced an extension of movement restrictions for Syrian refugees until further notice.

Second, access to civil documentation, particularly marriage and birth certificates, is limited for many Syrian refugees. A lack of documentation can have cascading consequences for families, as one missing document becomes a barrier to obtaining another, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities²² as well as fear of deportation.²³ Completing the registration of a birth or marriage that occurred outside Syria is often difficult. The Syrian Citizenship Law grants nationality to anyone born outside the country to a Syrian parent (father, with few exceptions), but birth registry in the foreign country is required as evidence for entitlement to Syrian nationality. In Lebanon, just 30 percent of Syrian children born in the country had their birth registered with the Foreigners' Registry in 2019, though this rate is expected to improve in the coming years as policy changes intended to facilitate birth registration take hold.²⁴ Just 26 percent had registered their marriage with the Foreigners' Registry, as opposed to a religious authority, and 27 percent had no legal documentation of their marriage at all.²⁵ In Jordan, where Jordanian nationality is only passed on through the father (as in Lebanon), the failure to register an informal marriage at a sharia court within one month makes it more difficult to register any births from the marriage, preventing children from accessing services (and Syrian nationality). In both Jordan and Lebanon, the governments have taken steps to ease access to civil registration, such as waiving fees and accepting alternative forms of documentation.²⁶

The following case studies present creative programmatic and policy approaches that have been deployed to address similar challenges in other refugee situations, including: providing access to legal status (2), reducing the risk of statelessness (3), and facilitating access to civil documentation (4). The case studies provide lessons learned on both promising practices and potential challenges.

2. PROVIDING LEGAL RESIDENCE TO REFUGEES

Lack of legal residency is a common barrier for Syrian refugees in receiving countries, where practical and legal obstacles stand in the way of documentation and residency. Having residency would help cut down on risks of detention and removal as well as constraints on movement. Yet political obstacles often stand in the way of providing legal residence to refugees. In Peru, the Temporary Stay Permit allowed more than 500,000 migrants and refugees to receive temporary legal status, approximately half of whom have now been able to access residency status that is indefinitely renewable. While the program was time limited and had some implementation challenges, it was successful in providing critical legal protections to a substantial number of refugees and migrants.

THE TEMPORARY STAY PERMIT IN PERU

Country	Peru
Years active	2017–present
Key objectives	The Temporary Stay Permit (PTP) in Peru seeks to regularize the status of Venezuelans in Peru by providing them with legal temporary residence in the country.
Target population	558,000 Venezuelan migrants and refugees who entered the country by October 31, 2018 ²⁷
Budget	Funding for the PTP was included in the National Migration Superintendence budget, which was USD 45.7 million in 2018. ²⁸

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE TEMPORARY STAY PERMIT

Driven by a worsening political and economic crisis in their country, hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have sought refuge in Peru over the past several years. Peru's Venezuelan population grew from just 3,000 in mid-2015 to more than 600,000 by the end of 2018.²⁹ Despite Peru's lack of experience with mass migration, there was significant political will to create protections for Venezuelans, particularly as the 2,000 asylum applications the country received by 2016 had already begun to overwhelm the system. To alleviate pressure on the asylum system, the government created the Temporary Stay Permit (Permiso Temporal de Permanencia, or PTP), which allows recipients to live and work in Peru for one year.

Box 2. What Is the Temporary Stay Permit?

PTP is a temporary permit granted by the National Migration Superintendence that allows those who meet minimal requirements to live and work in Peru for one year. In order to qualify for PTP, Venezuelans had to have entered Peru legally (that is, through an official entry point using either a Venezuelan national identity card or a passport prior to August 25, 2018, and using only a passport after August 25³⁰), and they had to have entered by October 31, 2018 and applied for PTP by December 31, 2018. Venezuelan passports have been notoriously difficult to obtain and renew since at least 2016.³¹ Applicants were additionally required to submit a criminal background check from Interpol, which cost USD 22, and pay an application fee of USD 12.³² PTP holders may enroll in school (since the public education system is universal, legal status is not required). They are not eligible for the public health insurance system.³³

After a year, PTP holders may apply for a "special residence status" that can be renewed indefinitely and that grants them access to additional services, essentially offering them a path to permanent residence in Peru. In order to adjust to special residence status, PTP holders have to submit an application within the 30 days before the termination of their PTP, pay USD 33, have a clean criminal record, not have left the country for more than 183 days, and provide information on the activities they have undertaken in Peru with PTP, such as attending school or working.

Several factors made the PTP possible. First, Peru's emergence both as a destination and transit³⁴ country for Venezuelan migrants and refugees has generated a new focus on immigration law and policy within the government. A new migration law went into effect in 2017, which incorporated PTP in its implementing regulations.³⁵ Second, the program was temporary. Officials feared that giving Venezuelans permanent residency could generate a backlash among the general public;³⁶ for this reason, PTP was created as a temporary, nonrenewable status rather than a permanent one.

For those who were able to access it, PTP provided a valuable step toward a durable solution. Of the estimated 558,000 Venezuelans who entered Peru legally by October 31, 2018, and were thus eligible for PTP, more than three-quarters successfully obtained it.³⁷ PTP has allowed 250,000 migrants and refugees to obtain special residence status—a way to stay permanently in the country and receive a Peruvian identification card that opens access to certain services, such as the public health insurance system.

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

The establishment of PTP in Peru provides important lessons. PTP was created in a context where there were few other avenues for regularization and limited resources available for a new program. While the program experienced challenges, including difficulties managing public opinion, it was successful in providing legal status to a large number of people in a way that was not particularly resource-intensive for the government.

1



USE TEMPORARY STATUS TO PROVIDE A PATHWAY TOWARD MORE PERMANENT SOLUTIONS.

- To encourage positive reception among host communities, governments and international donors should work together to couple a regularization program with smart communication to the public about refugees.
- Governments should ensure that temporary protections eventually provide access to more permanent benefits.

Access to documentation and legal protections are key issues for Syrian refugees in host countries. For many refugees from Syria, simply having documentation like PTP would help cut down on risks of detention and removal as well as constraints on movement. For those Venezuelans who were able to access it, PTP provided a valuable step toward a durable solution. Although PTP was initially conceived of as a temporary status, in 2018 Peru's migration agency set out the process by which PTP holders could apply for "special residence status," which can be renewed indefinitely.³⁸ This is a crucial component of PTP, as it offers a way for those who can meet the requirements (described in Box 2) to remain in Peru for the long term and access benefits available only to residents. Starting by offering temporary protections may be more politically feasible for host-country governments, but neither the Venezuela nor the Syria situations are temporary, and those fleeing them need to be able to access longer-lasting protections. If any of the neighboring countries hosting Syrian refugees apply lessons from PTP, it will be important for them to also consider ways to allow for long-term stays.

Sufficient political will to provide momentum and backing for such a measure is critical. Public opinion can buoy or detract from political will: in Peru, the public felt solidarity with Venezuelan migrants in the first years of migration, but that solidarity faded as migration continued unabated.³⁹ Officials initially designed the program to be temporary out of fear that giving Venezuelans permanent residency could generate a backlash among the general public. However, a backlash in political and public opinion still emerged; while 24 percent of Peruvians reported being scared of the Venezuelans coming to Peru in 2018, that number shot up to 52 percent in 2019 as hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans continued to enter the country.⁴⁰ In October 2018, the government suspended the program.⁴¹

The PTP experience thus also suggests that temporary programs alone will not be enough to mitigate public concerns around the arrival of large numbers of refugees and migrants. Rather, governments must also actively manage public perceptions around the roll-out of legalization campaigns. The Peruvian government's strategy has largely been to avoid publicizing the benefits it is offering to Venezuelans in an attempt to avoid backlash from the Peruvian-born. However, an anti-immigrant narrative has still managed to take hold. Syria's neighbors could learn from Peru's experience and opt instead to take a proactive approach to communicating about migration. Partnerships with international donors could facilitate these campaigns, and could fund local organizations to work with members of the media to avoid inflammatory reporting. Communication strategies may include messaging in a way that recognizes people's concerns while explaining the facts, and avoiding repetition of false stories, even to correct them.⁴² These measures open up space for a documentation and regularization initiative such as PTP to succeed by minimizing potential backlash among the host community.

2



PROVIDE LEGAL DOCUMENTATION TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING THE LABOR MARKET AND PUBLIC SERVICES.

- Possessing legal documentation opens up access to services and livelihood opportunities for refugees.
- New permits should be aligned with existing legal frameworks and eligibility requirements to avoid administrative barriers to accessing key benefits.

Legal documentation and work authorization are key to enabling migrants' and refugees' pathways toward durable solutions, and one of PTP's greatest successes has been its ability to provide this documentation. For example, migrants with PTP and with special resident status are more likely to earn above the minimum wage than irregular migrants and refugees in Peru.⁴³ To be successful, programs like PTP must be coordinated with other relevant national legal frameworks that have immigration status requirements. Otherwise, administrative roadblocks can form. For example, the PTP was not coordinated with public health insurance officials, and as a result, PTP holders were not able to access the health insurance system. PTP holders are, however, able to register in the national Unique Registry of Taxpayers (RUC), a requirement for anyone working formally in Peru, and this is a result of successful collaboration with the National Superintendence of Customs and Tax Administration (SUNAT).⁴⁴ It is also important to work with employers and business groups to provide guidance on hiring immigrants with new documentation, as a way to facilitate access to the labor market in practice.

In the Syrian context, it will be important to facilitate this inter-sectoral coordination to ensure that a permit similar to the PTP could allow refugees to access critical ancillary services. For example, to access education and healthcare in Jordan, Syrian refugees need a service card issued by the Ministry of the Interior.⁴⁵ In KRI, refugees need valid residency to access education and to access healthcare for some chronic conditions.⁴⁶ It will thus be important to amend any existing legislation or regulations to ensure that recipients of temporary protections can access these services, and to disseminate updated information on documentary requirements to local officials enforcing those requirements.

3



DESIGN TEMPORARY LEGAL RESIDENCE PERMITS FOR EASY IMPLEMENTATION.

- Governments should be cognizant of and try to minimize administrative and operational challenges for those in need of protection.
- Governments should also keep eligibility criteria as minimal as possible while maintaining the integrity of the program, for example, by not requiring unnecessary documentation or fees.

Part of PTP's success in reaching as many beneficiaries as possible comes from its limited documentation requirements. Beneficiaries were able to apply simply using their travel or national ID documents, rather than going through a full status determination process. The requirement to complete an Interpol background check was difficult for some migrants and refugees. It cost around USD 24 and required applicants to show up in person to have fingerprints taken. These two requirements could be difficult for low-income individuals and those with long and inflexible work hours,⁴⁷ or limited access to transportation. Interpol was also not prepared to receive the volume of requests that it did: the website often crashed and there were limited slots available daily.⁴⁸ This suggests that in other contexts, background check requirements may need to be rethought in a way that is more accessible, for example, through fee waivers, and avoids overwhelming security systems.

In the Syrian refugee context, hosting countries have adopted different legal frameworks to deal with Syrian refugees' presence and could draw on lessons from Peru's experience with PTP to address issues they may be facing within those frameworks. Knowledge-sharing between Peru and Turkey could help to strengthen Turkey's existing temporary protection scheme. For example, those with temporary protection in Turkey have to wait six months after receiving protection and have an employer sponsor in order to obtain a work permit.⁴⁹ Additionally, Turkey's temporary protection scheme does not allow Syrians to adjust to residence status and start on a path to citizenship.⁵⁰ Turkish officials could learn from Peru's experience with PTP about the benefits and feasibility of issuing work permits immediately, as well as strategies for creating residence status opportunities. Like Peru, Turkey can make these changes administratively, rather than going through a legislature, and so could also learn about how to construct these administrative policies from Peruvian officials.

In Jordan, Syrians have been able to register as refugees with UNHCR. Some may also receive legal documentation by registering with the Ministry of the Interior (MOI). The documentation they receive, known as MOI cards, offers legal protection and access to services. However, many Syrians have struggled to meet the documentation requirements for an MOI card, and the cutoff date for eligibility leaves many ineligible.⁵¹ Similarly, in KRI, Syrian refugees can access residence permits, but meeting requirements, particularly for those living outside camps, sometimes presents a burden.⁵² There may be fewer opportunities to take up administrative and operational lessons learned from PTP in Lebanon, at least in the short term.

Recommendations

Donors:

- Encourage creative thinking on future partnerships between governments and international partners to link regularization programs with smart communication work about refugees; the goal being to encourage refugees' positive reception among host communities.

National governments:

- Keep eligibility criteria for regularization as minimal as possible while maintaining the integrity of regularization programs, for example, by not requiring additional documentation or fees.
- Review other relevant national legal frameworks that have immigration status requirements (e.g., governing access to education, healthcare, and the labor market), to allow permit holders to access those services or institutions and remove any administrative roadblocks.
- Create a path to permanent residency that permit holders can eventually access to support their legal protection and facilitate greater social integration and cohesion.

3. PREVENTING AND REDUCING STATELESSNESS

Nationality laws that discriminate on the basis of gender, the absence of legal frameworks on statelessness, practical barriers to accessing civil registration services, and a lack of required documentation continue to exacerbate the risk of statelessness for thousands of Syrian refugee children born across the region. Colombia's Primero La Niñez initiative offers lessons on how an automatic measure, with few documentation requirements and free of cost, benefited thousands of Venezuelan children at risk of statelessness in a politically sensitive environment. It also offers valuable lessons on how to coordinate efforts across government ministries and international donors for successful implementation.

COLOMBIA'S PRIMERO LA NIÑEZ INITIATIVE

Country	Colombia
Years active	August 2019–September 2021 (retroactive back to January 2015)
Key objectives	Primero La Niñez created a temporary change of Colombia's nationality law to grant Colombian citizenship to children born to Venezuelan parents in Colombian territory.
Target population	47,277 children born to Venezuelan parents in Colombian territory between January 2015 and July 2020.
Budget	UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided funding of USD 950,000; additional resources included within the National Civil Registry's budget.

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE INITIATIVE

Between 2015 and August 2019, approximately 26,000 Venezuelan children were born in Colombia amid the sociopolitical turmoil and economic collapse in neighboring Venezuela.⁵³ However, the closure of Venezuelan consulates in Colombia after the rupture of bilateral diplomatic relations made it practically impossible for Venezuelans to obtain nationality for children born abroad.⁵⁴ Because Colombia is one of the few countries in Latin America that does not grant citizenship upon birth, infants born to Venezuelan mothers were at risk of statelessness. All individuals born in Colombia receive a certificate of live birth from accredited hospitals and healthcare centers (or a healthcare professional, in the case of a home birth), which allows them to issue an official birth certificate. However, by law, individuals can only obtain Colombian nationality if one of the parents is either a Colombian citizen or if the parent possesses legal permanent residency.⁵⁵ This provision left out the majority of recently arrived Venezuelans, as many were either holders of the Special Stay Permit (PEP),⁵⁶ which did not count as legal permanent residency, or did not have legal status. When Venezuelan migrants and refugees were issued an official birth certificate, it included a notation that said, "not valid to prove nationality."

Alarmed by this phenomenon, the President's Advisor for the Colombian-Venezuelan Border and the Ministry of Foreign Relations established a working group in June 2019 to formulate an action plan.⁵⁷ This action was driven by advocacy led by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and other government agencies (including the Office of the Inspector General of Colombia, the Ombudsman's Office of Colombia, the Institute of Family Welfare, and the Civil National Registry).⁵⁸ The working group designed a countrywide strategy called Primero La Niñez (Childhood First). The strategy called for temporary changes in Colombia's legal framework to grant nationality to Venezuelan children, and an implementation plan led by the National Civil Registry, which oversees all matters related to identity (such as the printing of official birth certificates), with financial and technical support from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNCHR, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).⁵⁹

Box 3. Primero La Niñez

On August 2019, Colombia's President, Ivan Duque, publicly announced the launch of Primero La Niñez by signing a temporary, extraordinary resolution that granted Colombian citizenship to children born in Colombian territory to Venezuelan parents (or single Venezuelan mothers or fathers)⁶⁰ between August 19, 2015 and September 19, 2021.⁶¹ A month after the announcement, the Colombian Congress passed a bill that turned the resolution into law under the same conditions, though it retroactively extended the period of eligibility from August 19 to January 1, 2015. The bill allows the Colombian government to presume that all Venezuelans whose children were born in Colombia within that period are Colombian residents, regardless of their immigration status.⁶² The Colombian National Civil Registry took the lead in implementing the policy. The agency retroactively amended birth certificates for children born during the eligibility period on its centralized online database and issued new copies upon request.⁶³ For those born after the measure entered into force, the certificate of live birth automatically included the notation "valid to prove nationality."⁶⁴ The government also made documentation requirements for registration more flexible. If Venezuelan parent(s) did not have a valid Colombian-issued ID, such as a Colombian foreigner's ID or the Special Stay Permit (PEP), they could present a valid or expired Venezuelan passport or any other Venezuelan ID to issue the accredited birth certificate. This made the process more accessible to Venezuelan migrants and refugees without a legal immigration status.

The announcement of this measure was followed by an intense nationwide outreach campaign, which was critical to the measure's success.⁶⁵ The government published a series of explainers that clearly describe the scope of the measure for various government agencies and members of the media.⁶⁶ It also conducted a wide dissemination campaign alongside local and international partners and used diverse platforms such as popular radio stations, TV, newspapers, and social media. Partners handed flyers out in places regularly attended by Venezuelan migrants, including supermarkets and buses. One year after its launch, Primero la Niñez had benefited more than 47,277 children. As Colombian citizens, beneficiaries are entitled to full access to basic services such as healthcare and education, and are able to receive essential documentation, such as a passport, identity card, and citizenship card.

Photo By: DRC




LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

Primero la Niñez provides key lessons on how to design a policy to curb statelessness. These include the following:

- Lower documentation requirements and waive procedural fees to enable a conducive policy environment in a politically sensitive environment.
- Coordinate efforts among government ministries and international donors, forging robust partnerships to leverage technical and financial resources to strengthen government capacity.
- Run a successful outreach campaign.

This policy is relevant to the Syrian refugee context. According to UNHCR's 2015 estimates, 160,000 children born to Syrian refugee parents were at risk of being stateless.⁶⁷ Though solutions in each country will need to be tailored to specific circumstances, Primero La Niñez highlights how an administrative measure, even if temporary, can go a long way in preventing statelessness.

1



KEEP QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS SIMPLE TO MAKE POLICIES EASIER TO IMPLEMENT.

- Keep qualification requirements minimal to broaden access to registration services. This includes, in some instances, waiving fees.

One of the key factors behind Primero La Niñez's success was that it was an automatic administrative measure that required minimum effort from beneficiaries. To implement the measure, officials from the Colombian National Civil Registry identified all the birth certificates that had been issued throughout the country for children of Venezuelan parents during the retroactive coverage period (January 2015–August 2019). After retrieving this information, officials manually input the nationality amendment in the online national registry. Besides automatically updating this information, the Colombian government waived a one-time fee for Venezuelan parents who wished to obtain an amended birth certificate. Venezuelan parents who had not been issued a birth certificate previously or who gave birth after the retroactive period (August 2019–onwards) could request a new birth certificate, also without a fee. The only requirement was to present the certificate of live birth and any document that proved their Venezuelan nationality (including an expired Venezuelan passport or ID), regardless of their immigration status. The fact that the administrative policy changes were automatic, combined with the low-stress documentation requirement and no-fee birth certificate, ensured that thousands of Venezuelan children benefited from this measure.

While comprehensive reform of nationality laws might be challenging, Syrian refugee hosting countries could issue similar temporary administrative measures to curb the risk of statelessness for Syrian refugee children born in their countries. They could also waive registration fees and accept other documents to verify the identity of parent(s) besides marriage certificates or proof of legal stay. For instance, Turkey could use the Temporary Protection Identification Document as a valid document or others could follow KRI's example of accepting UNCHR certificates or asylum applications to validate nationality.

While Primero la Niñez was immensely valuable to the children who benefited, the policy did have limitations. As a temporary policy, children born after the end date of the measure will once again be at risk of being stateless, and there is no certainty that the measure will be renewed. The policy's benefits were also limited to Venezuelan children, leaving children of other nationalities at continued risk of statelessness.⁶⁸ The measure also created disparities among siblings from Venezuelan parents, as children who were born in Venezuela but lacked documentation living in Colombia were not covered by the measure.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the documentation requirements will continue to be a barrier for Venezuelans who do not possess any form of ID. Despite these shortcomings, the measure marked a step forward for Colombia's response to the Venezuelan migration crisis.

2



ENSURE HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP AND MAINTAIN CROSS-AGENCY COORDINATION.

- Political will and leadership at the highest government levels are critical to advance policy and legislative initiatives.
- Central leadership and an overarching mission are key for ensuring inter-agency coordination and policy implementation.

A key ingredient of *Primer* La Niñez was the active role played by the executive to enable a conducive environment for policy implementation. Before the measure was enacted, local NGOs had sent letters to the National Registry highlighting the risk of statelessness of Venezuelan children born in Colombia. International organizations had also alerted the President's Advisor for the Colombian-Venezuelan Border about this phenomenon during working meetings. In response, the executive issued a resolution that temporarily amended Colombia's nationality law, and this resolution was later backed by the legislature. Legislative changes were possible because the measure aligned with Colombia's core values of protecting the rights of children, enshrined in the Constitution.⁷⁰ The executive also played a critical role in rallying support for the measure by consulting with all government branches prior to the measure's announcement. It also coordinated on the agenda across government agencies and international organizations by assigning responsibilities to each stakeholder and facilitating decision-making along the process. Considering that the issues of identity and nationality have implications for other sectors (access to social welfare, education, and healthcare), the executive's leadership and mission were key to ensuring successful interagency coordination.⁷¹

Enabling a conducive policy environment in major Syrian refugee hosting countries can seem challenging. Proposals to amend nationality laws made by advocacy groups have been received with skepticism in some of the countries. In Lebanon, for example, advocates have been mobilizing for years to reform citizenship rules, including for children born to Lebanese mothers and non-Lebanese fathers, who are not eligible for citizenship under current rules. But some of their efforts have been turned down by politicians, who note that it is not a high priority.⁷² In other instances, some have claimed that amending the law "could destabilize the country by upsetting its demographic and sectarian balance."⁷³ Efforts to emulate Colombia's approach in the Syrian refugee context will require strong political buy-in across various government levels, including the executive and the legislative. Political will needs to be accompanied by a strong implementation strategy, which requires coordination with various government ministries, international organizations, and humanitarian actors.

3



ALIGN MESSAGING AROUND THE POLICY WITH CORE NATIONAL VALUES IN ORDER TO BUILD PUBLIC SUPPORT.

- Enact legal or policy changes that are aligned with the host country's core values enshrined in national legislation (such as the Constitution) or international commitments (conventions, protocols).

The Colombian government was aware of the potential backlash that a naturalization measure could cause among the broader public. In mid-2019, an opinion poll showed that Colombians' disapproval of the government's handling of the Venezuelan crisis was on the rise and that Colombians' support of accommodative policies for Venezuelans had fallen from 56 percent to 46 percent.⁷⁴ In part, what made legislative changes possible was their alignment with the country's norms and values. The Colombian government justified the measure by referring to its constitutional duty to safeguard

the human rights of all children, including the right to nationality.⁷⁵ The Colombian government also quoted its obligations as signatory of various international agreements on child rights and statelessness prevention.⁷⁶ The policy change was also announced as a temporary measure until the situation in Venezuela improved, which signaled the urgent need for the measure based on the context in neighboring Venezuela.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Colombian government argued that the full inclusion of these children would make the delivery of basic services more efficient.⁷⁸ These aspects helped the Colombian government navigate a politically sensitive climate.

The efforts made by governments and international organizations in the four main Syrian refugee hosting countries have focused on easing birth registration or procedures. Little has been done in terms of enacting broader policies that benefit a larger percentage of Syrian refugees at risk of statelessness. Colombia's approach offers some key lessons on how actors in these four countries could link the agenda of solving statelessness to national values enshrined in national legislation, such as justice, equality, and protection of child rights, among others. While none of the host countries are signatories to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, they are all party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which safeguards children against statelessness.⁷⁹ Turkey, Iraq, and Jordan are also signatories to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Additionally, Turkey and Iraq are signatories to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination that also protects the right to a nationality. Thus, similar to Colombia, actors could refer to international agreements to advance agendas while elevating the profiles of their countries in the international arena.

Recommendations

National governments:

- Enact legal or policy changes in nationality laws that are aligned with the host country's core values, as enshrined in national legislation (such as the Constitution) and international commitments (such as conventions and protocols), to reduce political and social backlash.
- Enable a conducive environment for policy design and implementation by securing political will and leadership at the highest government levels to advance policy and legislative initiatives.
- Provide central leadership and outline an overarching mission to ensure effective inter-agency coordination and policy implementation.
- Keep criteria for benefiting from anti-statelessness programs simple in order to avoid unnecessary costs or difficulties implementing the program.
- Revise nationality laws to address discriminatory legal frameworks that prevent women from passing nationality on to children.

Civil society:

- Continue advocating for revisions to nationality laws to allow children at risk of statelessness to access nationality.

Photo By: DRC



4. PROVIDE SERVICES AND REFERRALS FROM A SINGLE ACCESS POINT

Lack of civil documentation presents a major challenge for Syrian refugees in the Middle East. Administrative burdens, as well as refugees' limited mobility, further complicate access to the civil registry. As a result, refugees can face restrictions to access services and additional vulnerabilities. The one-stop shop has overcome some of these barriers in Ethiopia by building an infrastructure to improve access to documentation and services for both nationals and refugees.

ETHIOPIA'S ONE-STOP SHOP

Country	Ethiopia
Years active	June 2019–present
Key objectives	Provide refugees and host communities with access to documentation (e.g., civil registration and vital statistics), as well as services (e.g., education and training opportunities) in one physical location
Target population	Refugees and host communities in the 26 camps and Addis Ababa ⁸⁰
Budget	UNHCR Ethiopia received funding from the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) amounting to USD 2.85 million (first round of AMIF funding) and USD 4.29 million (second round) for the period of July 1, 2019, to October 31, 2021. Additional contributions were received from the Netherlands (USD 3.3 million, as part of the Regional Development and Protection Program) and Denmark (USD 2.52 million) covering the period 2017–20 to support UNHCR's registration activities. ⁸¹

CONTEXT AND DESIGN

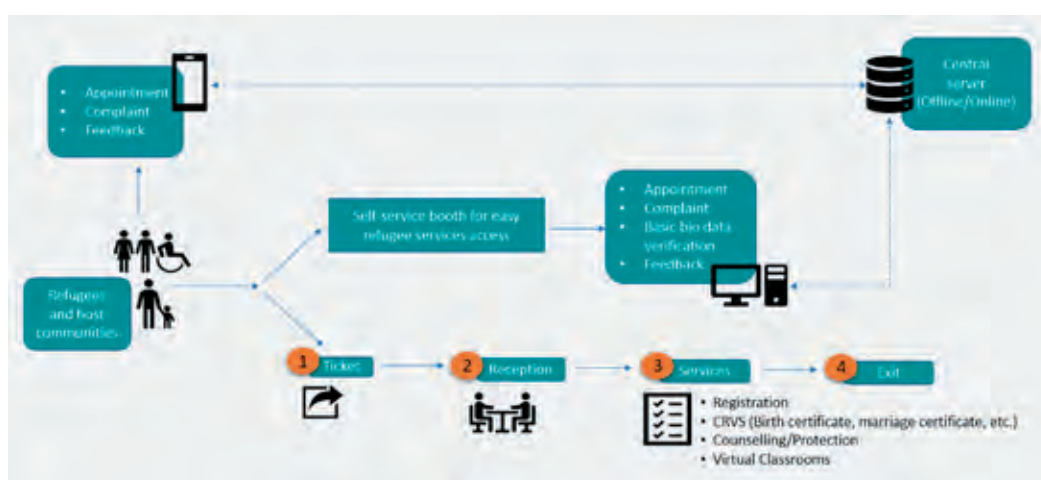
Ethiopia hosts over 700,000 refugees of 26 nationalities (mainly South Sudanese, Somalis, and Eritreans).⁸² The overwhelming majority of refugees live in camps, in the north (Tigray Regional State) or in the four least developed regions of the country in the east (Somali, Afar) and the west (Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella). Ensuring refugees' access to documentation, including civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), has been a challenge.⁸³ The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) aims to overcome this problem by advocating refugee ID documents to be issued by the national identification registration authority, with the same design and specifications applied to identity documents for nationals.⁸⁴ At the 2016 UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, the Government of Ethiopia committed to achieving this goal⁸⁵ via the One-Stop Shop (OSS). The first OSS was launched in June 2019 near Bambasi Camp. By providing access to vital event registration and documentation, the OSS aimed to facilitate comprehensive registration for refugees and, to a lesser extent, better access to education and job opportunities (through virtual classrooms and training facilities).

Box 4. What Is the One-Stop Shop?

The OSS delivers all documentation services for refugees and host communities in one single location, including immediate proof of registration, refugee ID cards (for refugees), and civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS), such as birth, death, marriage, and divorce certificates. The OSS also facilitates refugees' and host communities' registration for essential services, including health services, food and other essential items, as well as virtual education or training courses.

In the past year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners established 16 OSSs across Ethiopia. UNHCR is leading the work to set up the OSS infrastructure and coordinate all the relevant stakeholders. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supports vital events' registration in the OSS through technical assistance, such as capacity-building and CRVS training for local officials. UNICEF teams also helped introduce more advanced registration methods. The Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) is responsible for refugees' vital events registration and the issuance of refugee identity cards. Finally, the Vital Events Registration Agency (VERA) oversees and authorizes all the activities planned at the OSS, and issues certified ID documents and civil registration to locals and (nonrefugee) foreigners.⁸⁶

The visual below depicts access management and services available at the OSS.⁸⁷



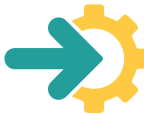
As the implementation of the OSS is still ongoing, there is no evaluation of the practice published to date. But the need to introduce a more reliable and comprehensive registration system for refugees and host communities was underlined early on during the project: the launch of the first OSS in June 2019 coincided with a comprehensive registration exercise led by UNHCR and the Agency for

Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) in Addis Ababa and all 26 refugee camps in the country. At that time, the authorities found that there were nearly 200,000 fewer refugees than they had recorded before, due to a number of reasons such as double-counting refugees and including persons who had spontaneously returned to South Sudan.⁸⁸ According to UNHCR and ARRA, the OSS was therefore seen as a critical step toward improving the quality and reliability of the registration system in the future, for example, by strengthening collaboration between registration authorities and service providers on the ground (e.g., through the establishment of new memorandums of understanding). So far, gathering relevant stakeholders in one location, in close proximity to where most refugees live, has helped to overcome some barriers to registration, such as transportation costs, limited interagency referrals, and overall long processing times for pending requests.

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

UNHCR and the Government of Ethiopia are still in the process of establishing the OSS, and there is thus no evidence yet available on its outcomes or impact. However, the OSS approach is believed to hold several potential advantages, many of which could be relevant to the Syrian context if the OSS proves to be successful.

1




INTEGRATE REFUGEES INTO CORE DOCUMENTATION SERVICES.

- Make OSS services available to refugees and host communities, to ensure the government's support and increase its documentation capacity in the long term.

The integrated approach of the OSS may help to alleviate pressure on documentation services for refugees as well as for host communities. As such, the OSS supports the social inclusion of these communities.⁸⁹ It could also create greater incentives for the government to support the OSS in the longer term, considering they also benefit Ethiopians in some remote areas, where local communities may already face barriers to accessing civil registration and vital statistics. Long waiting times and failures to register civil events are reported in KRI, Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon for refugees and local populations. As both communities face barriers in accessing documentation services, an integrated approach similar to the OSS model may pave the way for more solid CVRS delivery for everyone.⁹⁰ This would also help prevent knock-on effects, such as being unable to register births in Jordan and Lebanon because an official proof of marriage is required to do so (and over half of married Syrian couples do not have marriage certificates).⁹¹ It will be important, however, to also build up the capacity of vital event registration services, alongside improving accessibility, in order to avoid these services becoming overwhelmed with pent-up demand.

2



CO-LOCATE SERVICES TO MAKE THEM EASIER TO ACCESS.

- Co-locating registration authorities and service providers in one location can increase efficiency, both in terms of time and costs.

The OSS experience in Ethiopia shows that co-locating authorities responsible for registration and services in one physical space may be more cost and time efficient. UNHCR stressed that the proximity of registration authorities and service providers reduces the time it takes to exchange information and resolve pending requests.⁹² Although to date the impact of the OSS experience in Ethiopia has not been documented in numbers, similar approaches in European countries have sped up processing periods for asylum claims by 39 percent.⁹³ Moreover, OSS can reduce the transportation cost and time it would require refugees and host communities to access a variety of services in different places. This is important for Syrian refugees, who often experience restrictions to their freedom of movement,

such as requirements to get permits to leave camps, transportation costs, and thus may face difficulties traveling to different government service centers.⁹⁴ Co-locating services in one building would also reduce the number of trips refugees are required to take, a potentially significant benefit in Lebanon, where security checkpoints in between refugee settlements make travel risky.⁹⁵

In Ethiopia, UNHCR and UNICEF have engaged in capacity-building activities with registration authorities from the local government to ensure services are not just more time- and cost-effective, but also more comprehensive. Refugees are asked to share information on their educational and professional skills, and details of family members located in other countries. According to UNHCR, this should make referral mechanisms more effective, for example, by matching refugees with employment opportunities aligned with their skills.⁹⁶ A number of initiatives similar to the OSS already exist in the region, such as Community Support Centres in Jordan where refugees can, for example, access counselling and referral services in one place.⁹⁷ However, the focus on documentation for both refugees and host communities within the OSS is unique, and could be used to develop or further expand such models in the Syrian displacement context.

3



LOCATE CIVIL REGISTRY OFFICES STRATEGICALLY TO FACILITATE ACCESS FOR AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.

- Co-locate registration authorities near camps or in areas where refugees tend to concentrate (and where host communities also have a need).
- Identify suitable locations based on needs assessments (e.g., surveys) or previous experience in reaching target groups.

In Ethiopia, the current paper-based systems used to collect vital event data has inefficiencies that need to be addressed.⁹⁸ It can take up to six months before one recorded event reaches different administrative levels.⁹⁹ The OSS aims to mitigate this issue by providing digital access to some of the civil registration and vital statistics functions, such as basic bio data verification, including through smartphones. Refugees and host communities can also schedule appointments via a smartphone application, to avoid queuing at the OSS. UNHCR has noted that this remote access design has also helped to accommodate the restrictions on face-to-face interactions during COVID-19.¹⁰⁰ Digitizing services does have downsides, however; many beneficiaries do not have access to a smartphone (Ethiopia ranks lowest on the Global Connectivity Index¹⁰¹) and are not able to use the application. According to UNHCR, to overcome these limitations, each OSS is equipped with a digital booth where refugees and host communities can access the same functions as in the application.

The digitization of services has also enabled the creation of real-time monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Every time a service is accessed via the OSS, the beneficiary receives a ticket (similar to a receipt), which includes a unique number that can then be used to input feedback on the requested service via an online website.¹⁰² The website also provides the option of submitting general feedback on the functioning of the OSS services through its digital complaint and service request form. All feedback can be anonymized and is monitored by UNHCR to improve accountability in service delivery. However, at present, it remains unclear to what extent refugees and host communities have used this mechanism, how UNHCR and its partners respond to these complaints, and, finally, how illiterate refugees can contribute to this reporting.

Syrian refugees would also benefit from digital solutions to accessing registration and other essential services, especially in countries where delays in service provision are common. Compared to Ethiopia, the region provides a more enabling environment for such solutions, given the relatively few barriers and high rates of smartphone usage (e.g., in Jordan up to 70 percent of the refugee population owns a smartphone¹⁰³). This potential is also matched by a need to replace slow and inefficient paper-based registration systems that are still widely used by governments in the region.¹⁰⁴ The increased ease and speed with which civil registration services could be accessed are particularly needed in Jordan and Lebanon, where newborn nationals must be registered within

one year to acquire citizenship, yet on average over 20 percent of children under five lack a medical birth notification.¹⁰⁵ But, as in Ethiopia, there are also several challenges associated with relying on information and communication technology. In Jordan, for example, activating and using a SIM card requires proof of identification, and in order to purchase a SIM card, the UNHCR Asylum Seeker Certificate is not sufficient. Instead, non-Jordanians need to have an MOI card or a valid passport.¹⁰⁶

Recommendations

Donors:

- Support refugees' access to civil documentation through host country civil registration infrastructure, while maintaining refugees' protection and ensuring that related barriers are removed (e.g., access to relevant government centers, additional documentation requirements).

National governments:

- Open civil registration services to refugee populations and allow them to utilize the same access points as nationals. This has the potential to improve processing and capacities over time for all, including nationals.

Implementing partners:

- Review registration and documentation services to evaluate whether some services could be more efficiently provided in one location, or where co-locating services may improve beneficiaries' access by reducing travel time or costs, or the risks of needed travel to multiple locations.
- Consider carefully where service offices will be located and strive to identify locations that will allow as many beneficiaries as possible, including refugees and other vulnerable groups, to access these services. When determining where to locate services, consider vulnerabilities like gender that may restrict the ability of beneficiaries to travel or use certain types of transportation.
- Build monitoring and accountability mechanisms into program design, to ensure beneficiary feedback can be collected, analyzed, and used to improve services.



Photo By: DRC

5. CONCLUSIONS

Across the region and the case studies covered in this chapter, protection gaps cause a cascade of unwelcome effects. Without access to full legal status, refugees are often unable to obtain basic identity documentation, limiting their access to vital services and making them vulnerable to harassment, detention, and even deportation. Lack of status can restrict freedom of movement, either formally through encampment policies or informally because of fears of police raids or detention. Without freedom of movement, refugees may find it difficult to travel to access livelihood opportunities, financial services, or educational opportunities. Civil registration and documentation are also difficult to access without legal status. Refugees may lack the rights to access these services, or service points may be located too far from their places of residence to be readily used. These challenges are particularly acute for children and youth, both in countries hosting Syrian refugees and in the other countries studied here. Without identity documents or birth registration, refugees are at a high risk of statelessness. A lack of formal status may prevent them from benefiting from education or health services, the effects of which may last a lifetime.

The case studies presented here point toward ways to overcome these barriers. The experience of Peru's Temporary Stay Permit demonstrates the centrality of legal status and documentation to addressing other barriers to local integration and self-sufficiency. Venezuelan refugees and migrants who were granted temporary status found it easier to obtain employment at above minimum wage than those whose status was irregular. Both the Temporary Stay Permit and Colombia's Primero La Niñez show that it is possible to move forward with potentially controversial legalization programs, with strong political leadership and careful public messaging. Both programs also point to the importance of keeping the eligibility criteria and process for accessing legalization programs simple, in order to reduce the costs of implementation and the potential for administrative barriers to hamper uptake. Finally, the One-Stop Shop in Ethiopia demonstrates that many of the protection barriers faced by refugees also exist for vulnerable national populations, and that supporting refugees provides an opportunity to improve the conditions of host communities as well.

Main Recommendations

National governments:

- Communicate about regularization strategies to the public in a strategic way. Regularization efforts that can be tied to national values and identity are likely to resonate more and receive less pushback than those tied to humanitarian needs or international imperatives alone.
- Plan for long-term implications from the beginning, even when implementing a strategy that is intended to be temporary. Temporary legalization efforts may have the potential to be made permanent at some point in the future, and this should be planned for from the beginning.
- When designing regularization policies, avoid putting in place overly complex qualification requirements in order to ensure policies are relatively easy to implement, and do not impose undue burdens on applicants or the administration.

Implementing partners and civil society actors:

- Where possible, locate documentation and other services together and build connections to ease referrals between services.
- Coordinate with implementing partners and national governments to ensure refugee and national communities are aware of their rights and the services available to them.

Donors:

- Identify areas where the vulnerabilities of refugee and national populations overlap, such as access to civil documentation, and where efforts to support access to protection for refugees could also strengthen national systems.

CHAPTER

2 SOCIAL PROTECTION



1. INTRODUCTION

Syrian refugees in the region often find it difficult to earn a living. In Lebanon more than 90 percent of Syrian refugees lived below the poverty line as of October 2020,¹⁰⁷ and in Jordan, 78 percent of refugees lived in poverty in 2019.¹⁰⁸ These vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the economic downturn that followed the implementation of quarantine measures wiped out livelihoods opportunities across the region for many, including refugees.¹⁰⁹

Box 1. About this Project

This chapter is part of a research project by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), titled “A Bridge To Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context”. As the protracted Syrian refugee crisis continues and refugee communities, host governments, and international donors and implementers attempt to move toward durable solutions, this project analyzes projects, policies, and approaches from around the world and draws global lessons learned for the Syrian context. This report provides recommendations for host-country policymakers, regional and international bodies, and nongovernmental actors.

As a result, many refugees rely on social assistance to meet their basic needs. However, national social protection systems (including both social assistance and social insurance programs) are limited in scope and generally do not cover refugees. Syrians are instead often served through a patchwork of social assistance programs run by international organizations. Because these programs are reliant on donor funding and utilize parallel distribution structures and targeting criteria, there are questions about their sustainability in the medium- and long-term. Initial steps toward aligning refugee and national social safety net systems are being taken. In Jordan, the government is exploring the extension of social insurance to workers in the informal economy, which could benefit many refugee workers, as well as members of the host community: the Joint Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment (JCVA) aims to align targeting systems so that they are based on similar vulnerability criteria,¹¹⁰ and in Turkey, the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) that serves Syrian refugees is run through Turkey’s social assistance offices.

Social safety net programs for Syrians in the region have broadly transitioned to cash-based assistance.¹¹¹ However, several barriers still hamper refugees’ access to benefits. The exclusion of refugees from banking and financial services has added a layer of complexity for distributing cash assistance. In Jordan and Lebanon, documentation requirements applied by banks often make accounts inaccessible to refugees.¹¹² To overcome this challenge, social safety net programs have used bank accounts held by implementing partners or turned to mobile money systems to distribute benefits. But these also pose barriers. In order to activate and use a SIM card, Jordan requires proof of identification, and in order to purchase a SIM card, an Asylum Seeker Certificate from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is not considered sufficient. Instead, non-Jordanians must have a Ministry of Interior (MOI) card or a valid passport,¹¹³ requirements which refugees may not be able to fulfill. While financial inclusion remains a significant issue, few social assistance programs in the region have linked their programming with efforts to address it.

Finally, there is a need across the region for better referral structures and coordination between cash programs and other services. In Jordan, a 2016–17 study found that both adults and children said they needed psychological support in addition to cash assistance.¹¹⁴ And in Turkey, while the ESSN is broadly viewed as effective at reaching beneficiaries with cash assistance, it does not include links to services in other sectors.¹¹⁵

This chapter presents four case studies that provide lessons learned on how cash assistance can better help meet refugees’ basic needs through a digital wallet (2), on how social assistance can be linked with financial inclusion (3), and on how refugees can be incorporated into national social protection (social insurance) frameworks (4).

2. USING CASH TO PROVIDE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TRANSFERS

As part of their inclusion in host states, refugees are entitled to assistance to meet their basic needs, based on specific criteria and depending on the availability of funding. In Kenya and in other refugee contexts globally, the World Food Program (WFP) has increasingly relied on cash-based transfers (CBTs) are believed to provide economic injections into local economies and have multiplier effects, thus creating livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities, and boosting the resilience of both.¹¹⁶

Beneficiaries usually prefer cash transfers because they are able to spend the cash as they choose.¹¹⁷ There can be concerns that cash distributions may be mis-used, either intentionally or due to financial illiteracy.¹¹⁸ As a result, WFP often uses vouchers, which may be redeemed at approved vendors for specific types of goods, as is the case with Kenya's Bamba Chakula cash assistance program. Despite the differences between the Kenya and the Syrian refugee context, and acknowledging the advanced cash assistance systems in Syrian refugee hosting countries, Bamba Chakula can help highlight some challenges and opportunities that could inform the existing and upcoming CBT programs in the region.

BAMBA CHAKULA IN KENYA

Country	Kenya
Years active	2015–present
Key objectives	The Bamba Chakula cash assistance program allows refugees to buy food not provided at distribution centers; supports digital cash and minimizes general food distribution to save resources; strengthens and supports local markets; and provides livelihood opportunities for refugees and host communities.
Target population	Nearly 418,000 refugees in the Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei camps have benefited from the program. ¹¹⁹
Budget	The European Union's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States collectively provided USD 2.5 million of funding per month for the program in 2019.

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF BAMBA CHAKULA

Kenya hosts one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world—reaching nearly 500,000 in 2020.¹²⁰ Many of the refugees live in camps in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei due to Kenya's strict encampment policy, which limits refugee mobility and livelihood opportunities.¹²¹ All three camps are located on semi-arid lands, leading to chronic issues of food insecurity.¹²² To address these issues, WFP began implementing Bamba Chakula, a food voucher program, in 2015.¹²³ WFP partnered with Safaricom, which runs the ubiquitous mobile money transfer platform M-PESA, to implement Bamba Chakula. The program was initially launched in Kakuma and expanded to Dadaab in 2016 and to Kalobeyei since the camp was founded. By using vouchers, WFP was able to overcome government concerns that direct cash transfers could present security issues.¹²⁴

Box 2. Bamba Chakula

Bamba Chakula is deposited as a voucher in a digital wallet associated with a unique SIM card given to each household. Refugees use the SIM card to purchase food items from vendors contracted by the World Food Program (WFP). Vendors are then reimbursed for the Bamba Chakula payments through M-PESA.¹²⁵ Based on this system, WFP provides a percentage of the staple cereal portion of monthly food assistance as a voucher (initially 10 percent and more recently up to ~50 percent).¹²⁶ Single-member households receive greater proportions of their assistance through Bamba Chakula to account for the ability of larger households to optimize the distribution of food rations across their members.¹²⁷ Refugees in Kalobeyei receive almost all of their food assistance through Bamba Chakula's food vouchers, in line with the camp's self-reliance model.¹²⁸


WFP is leading the implementation of Bamba Chakula, including by providing technical support to beneficiaries and vendors; conducting program education and outreach among beneficiaries to ensure they are aware of and able to use their vouchers; monitoring the market to evaluate how the intervention is affecting prices; and contracting and managing a sufficient number of vendors, who must agree to certain provisions to ensure they are offering fair market prices, maintaining food safety, and abiding by the guidelines placed on the use of Bamba Chakula.¹²⁹ Other actors provide additional support, including UNHCR (which provides the biometric identification system underpinning Bamba Chakula) and the non-governmental organizations World Vision, CARE, and the Norwegian Refugee Council (which provide in-kind assistance, market monitoring, and technical expertise).¹³⁰

Evaluations of Bamba Chakula point to several successes. Bamba Chakula has been correlated with reduced food insecurity among refugees,¹³¹ moderately improved dietary diversity, and improved food security for host populations through the injection of money into the local economy.¹³² Refugees appreciate the functionality of Bamba Chakula and the increased flexibility in food choice, as well as its ease of use.¹³³ This success is due in part to the program's robust partnerships between implementing organizations and consistent market monitoring.¹³⁴

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

There are three main takeaways from the Bamba Chakula experience that may be applicable to countries hosting Syrian refugees, complementing their own best practices in CBT programming.

1



CASH ASSISTANCE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO REFUGEES' SELF-RELIANCE, WHEN THE CONTEXT ITSELF IS CONDUCIVE.


- Programming needs to promote an enabling environment for refugees to achieve self-reliance in the medium- to long-term.

Bamba Chakula shows that cash assistance by itself largely addresses short-term rather than medium- or long-term needs. Lack of accommodating legislation as well as Kenya's encampment policy, the remoteness of the camps, and the restrictions on refugees' employment inhibit refugees from obtaining livelihoods and integrating in host communities.¹³⁵ In the Kalobeyei settlement, however, where other programs and policies have been developed to support self-reliance, including, kitchen gardens and agricultural training, cash assistance has supported self-reliance.¹³⁶

Syrian refugee hosting countries place fewer restrictions on refugees' right to work and movement than does Kenya. Despite this, evaluations of CBT programs in the Syrian refugee context have come to similar conclusions: cash assistance helps refugees meet the most basic needs and reduces negative coping mechanisms; however, livelihood opportunities remain scarce and self-reliance elusive. In Lebanon, measures of refugees' socio-economic welfare regress when they stop receiving

supplementary cash assistance,¹³⁷ and in Turkey, there is a push to transition the ESSN toward a more sustainable, development-driven approach.¹³⁸ In Jordan, WFP will advocate for a more sustainable approach to its unconditional food assistance (GFA) to Syrian refugees in partnership with the Government, donors and other key stakeholders. This will likely involve a three-prong approach with beneficiary profiling, implementation with/through development partners of a variety of response packages (from social assistance, vocational and skill development, SMEs investment to durable employment) and coordination/advocacy.¹³⁹

2




PLACING RESTRICTIONS ON HOW REFUGEES USE CASH ASSISTANCE MAY LIMIT ITS EFFECTIVENESS.

- Restricting how and where cash-based assistance can be used may limit its effectiveness and encourage the circumvention of restrictions.

In Kenya, the restrictions embedded within Bamba Chakula's vouchers have led beneficiaries and vendors to create informal systems to circumvent them. For example, beneficiaries sometimes barter portions of their Bamba Chakula transfers for non-food items, which they are not permitted to purchase with Bamba Chakula, or for the cash to buy them—a coping mechanism Bamba Chakula was explicitly intended to combat.¹⁴⁰ This is exacerbated by the lack of coordination between aid interventions, as cuts in rations of non-food items by one program are not compensated for with increases in another program.¹⁴¹ Restrictions on which vendors are able to accept Bamba Chakula have also had effects on local markets. Approved shopkeepers have started informal markets, renting out places in their Bamba Chakula lines for non-contracted vendors to sell goods to beneficiaries, thus undercutting the goals of WFP's application and contracting requirements.¹⁴²

Vendor limitations are also reported to have adverse consequences in the Syrian refugee context. In Jordan, for example, anecdotal evidence shows that limiting beneficiaries' choice of vendors has resulted in non-competitive pricing and other discriminatory practices (at least as perceived by beneficiaries).¹⁴³ When these restrictions are lifted, beneficiaries tend to shop outside the WFP-contracted network.¹⁴⁴ While cash assistance provided in the Syrian refugee context is generally multipurpose and unconditional, a number of households receive restricted assistance. For instance in Lebanon, 54,150 economically vulnerable Syrian families receive 100,000 LBP per person per month to use in WFP shops to buy food and essential household items.¹⁴⁵ Overall, the use of unrestricted cash in these contexts has led to increased food security and beneficiaries' satisfaction with assistance, demonstrating the importance of designing cash benefits in this way.¹⁴⁶

3



ENSURE THE STABILITY AND PREDICTABILITY OF TRANSFERS.

- The value of cash-based transfers is dependent on market prices, sufficient funding, and consistent delivery.

Funding constraints and instability have hampered Bamba Chakula's effectiveness. Bamba Chakula transfer amounts do not change in response to in-kind assistance ration cuts in other programs or to changes in prices due to market fluctuations, drought, and political instability.¹⁴⁷ Shifts and delays in the timing of dispersals can cause beneficiaries to revert to negative coping mechanisms such as borrowing money to fill gaps between transfers.¹⁴⁸ Refugees can accumulate significant debts to vendors who allow them to use Bamba Chakula SIM cards as collateral.¹⁴⁹ Additional funding constraints due to COVID-19 have further limited both the amount of in-kind and Bamba Chakula assistance WFP can provide, reducing the benefits of the program.¹⁵⁰ In light of the negative impact of the pandemic in the Syrian refugee context, including challenges linked to currency devaluation in

Lebanon, ensuring the stability and predictability of transfers is crucial. Evidence from Lebanon has shown that cash programmes have proven resilient and adapted to the multi-pronged crises faced in the country from late 2019 onwards. However, given the continued need for cash assistance in the region to support vulnerable refugees, it will be critical to ensure that mechanisms for flexible and consistent funding are in place going forward.

Recommendations

Donors:

- Avoid restrictions on the use of benefits whenever possible to maximize beneficiaries' ability to adapt the use of cash to their individual needs.
- Move toward more sustainable assistance models, including by expanding livelihood opportunities.
- Provide consistent, sustainable and flexible funding, including multi-year funding when appropriate, to avoid disruptions in the provision of benefits and to keep up with inflation and other shifts in the context.

Implementing partners:

- Advocate for a sufficiently enabling environment through the reduction of restrictions on mobility and the right to work to foster refugees' self-reliance in the long term.
- Continue to use innovative, appropriately tailored cash transfer modalities, such as mobile money, to overcome distribution barriers.
- Leverage various cash assistance modalities to improve refugees' financial inclusion, including by ensuring access to mobile money and bank accounts.



By: UNDP/ Mustafa Bilge Satkin

3. PROMOTING FINANCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Refugees are largely excluded from financial services in most first asylum countries. A lack of access to formal status or identity documentation can make it impossible to open bank accounts, and encampment policies may preclude refugees from visiting physical bank locations. Even where refugees legally have the right to open an account with their refugee ID, individual banks may not allow them to do so. In Jordan, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) found that just 9 of 15 banks surveyed allowed Syrian refugees to open a bank account, and those that did required a valid passport and work permit. As a result, fewer than 8 percent of refugees in Jordan have access to banking services,¹⁵¹ which can pose a barrier to receiving cash assistance. Mobile money transfers have been used in Jordan to help overcome these distribution barriers, while regulations have made this more difficult in Lebanon. Yet even as mobile money can streamline distribution, it does little to build refugees' connections and access to the financial services sector, which is critical to supporting livelihood development. Mobile money transfers in Jordan and Lebanon, for example, were made using accounts held by implementing partners rather than beneficiaries themselves.¹⁵² MyBucks Bank in Dzaleka Camp, Malawi, has worked with UNHCR to develop a unique solution to these challenges.

MYBUCKS BANK IN DZALEKA CAMP, MALAWI

Country	Malawi
Years active	2017–present
Key objectives	The opening of a branch of MyBucks Bank in Dzaleka Camp was intended to improve camp residents' access to financial and banking services. The branch also provides financial literacy training and disburses cash assistance.
Target population	44,385 refugees and asylum seekers living in Dzaleka Camp, as of December 2019. ¹⁵³ Banking services are also open to the local population.
Budget	The bank is fully self-supporting via its financial products. The financial literacy classes are funded through MyBucks partnership with Opportunity International, an international microfinance organization. ¹⁵⁴

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE INITIATIVE

As of December 2019, UNHCR reported that 96 percent of refugees in Dzaleka Camp were living in poverty.¹⁵⁵ Many of them depended on food and cash assistance to meet their basic needs.¹⁵⁶ Fostering livelihood activities is thus a high priority for UNHCR and international assistance agencies working in the camp. UNHCR has developed a series of initiatives in the camp that aim to connect refugees with high-demand production activities in local markets.¹⁵⁷ Efforts to build livelihoods among the refugee population, however, have been hampered by a lack of access to banking services, including both loans and savings products. Refugees in Dzaleka face several barriers to banking. First, restrictions on travel outside the camp limit their ability to physically access banking services.¹⁵⁸ Second, in order to open an account, banks in Malawi have most often required a government-issued photo ID, which most refugees do not have. As a result, very few refugees are able to access banking services via mainstream commercial banks.¹⁵⁹

In 2017, UNHCR and the Malawi government entered into an agreement with the financial tech company MyBucks to build a local branch in the Dzaleka Camp that would accept UNHCR refugee cards as ID, thus overcoming both the location and documentation barriers otherwise faced by refugees. The branch opened in April 2018, following an in-depth market assessment by MyBucks as well as consultations with the Dzaleka Camp administrator, refugee camp leaders, and host community leaders.¹⁶⁰ In 2020, the bank expanded its services to include issuing cash transfer payments on behalf of UNHCR. The bank itself is fully owned and operated by MyBucks.

Box 3. What Is the Dzaleka MyBucks Bank?

The bank in Dzaleka Camp is a privately owned branch of MyBucks Bank offering full financial services to refugees and the local community, including savings accounts, group lending, foreign exchange transfers, and an ATM. Unlike other banks in the area, MyBucks is able to accept refugee documents issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a form of identification to open an account via a waiver from the Malawi central bank. The bank also provides free financial literacy and business skills training to its clients, funded under a partnership between MyBucks and Opportunity International.

In 2019, UNHCR launched its Solutions Capital Initiative in Malawi under the framework of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The initiative included a partnership with MyBucks to provide cash transfers rather than food vouchers to Dzaleka residents for the first time, via the Dzaleka MyBucks branch, consolidating UNHCR's social assistance and livelihood activities in one location and easing coordination. The initiative also includes Graduation Approach programming, with business and financial training that will be delivered via the local branch of MyBucks Bank.¹⁶¹

While MyBucks Bank's branch in Dzaleka has not been formally evaluated, data provided by MyBucks and UNHCR suggest that the bank is so far meeting its goals. As of June 2019, the bank reported holding nearly 6,500 active savings accounts and disbursing more than 600 small-business loans.¹⁶² The bank reported a loan repayment rate of 100 percent as of May 2020, two years after the branch first opened.¹⁶³ The high repayment rate has allowed its financial services to be self-supporting. In addition, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the camp have chosen to transfer their organizational accounts to the MyBucks Dzaleka branch, increasing the bank's medium-term financial viability.¹⁶⁴

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

The initial success of the MyBucks model offers several lessons on how to construct social assistance and financial service programs in a way that is sustainable and helps to promote self-reliance. Stakeholders view the model as having high potential to be replicated elsewhere. UNHCR and MyBucks have explored possibilities to replicate the model elsewhere in Africa, where MyBucks is heavily invested. UNHCR has presented the model to colleagues in Zimbabwe and Angola, and MyBucks is exploring opening up branches in refugee communities in Zambia and Mozambique.¹⁶⁵ While the MyBucks project itself may not be directly replicable in the Syrian refugee context, since the bank is not invested there, several of the lessons learned may apply nonetheless.

1



ALIGN THE DELIVERY OF CASH ASSISTANCE AND LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMMING WITH FINANCIAL INCLUSION INITIATIVES

- A one-stop shop for financial services can provide cash-based assistance, cash support for livelihood development, financial literacy training, as well as regular savings and loan services—all in one location.
- The alignment of cash assistance and livelihood interventions with accessible banking services helps to ensure that financial inclusion is not a barrier to self-reliance.

The lack of alignment of social assistance, livelihoods, and financial inclusion interventions is a key gap in the Syrian context, and a lack of financial inclusion has inhibited the ability of Syrian refugees to benefit from cash transfers.¹⁶⁶ A review of cash transfer programs in Jordan and Lebanon, for example, found that because transfers were highly digitized and happened outside the formal banking sector via accounts held in the names of aid agencies, they do not improve beneficiaries' financial inclusion.¹⁶⁷ This challenge has been overcome in the case of the My Bucks Dzaleka branch, which adopts a multipronged approach in supporting financial inclusion. The branch disburses cash grants, but also serves as a center for business development and financial literacy training for beneficiaries participating in livelihood development via the Graduation Approach. Through its partnership with Opportunity International, MyBucks also provides financial literacy and business development training to the wider community. Participants have ready access to MyBucks banking services, though the effect of these interventions on individual outcomes has not yet been formally evaluated.

2



IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH ACTORS IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR THAT HAVE SHARED INTERESTS AND CAPACITY TO SERVE LOW-INCOME CLIENTS.

- Providing financial literacy and providing services to the unbanked can be a key part of a bank's corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy.
- Setting up a bank branch in a refugee camp can be part of a wider regional investment strategy.

Although the initiative for the Dzaleka branch came from UNHCR, the development of the MyBucks branch was largely led by the MyBucks corporation. UNHCR acted as a close partner, providing MyBucks with needed information and contacts among stakeholders in Dzaleka and the Malawi government; however, MyBucks maintained ownership of the project, including by conducting market assessments and designing the financial products that would be offered. The branch in Dzaleka operates as a private, independent, and self-sustaining entity. Crucially, MyBucks negotiated directly with the Malawi government to obtain an agreement that allows refugees to use their UNHCR registration cards as ID to open accounts rather than only permitting a government-issued ID to be used.¹⁶⁸

A similar initiative could prove useful in the Syrian refugee context, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon, where regulatory frameworks and banks' lack of familiarity with low-income clients have proven to be barriers to refugees' inclusion in the formal financial system. Targeted pilot projects for delivering cash assistance, and efforts to promote financial inclusion, implemented alongside interested and experienced banks or financial service actors, could help to demonstrate the feasibility of waiving regulatory barriers more broadly. Developing strong relationships with non-traditional partners in the financial services industry and allowing them to make a business case for needed regulatory changes may also facilitate negotiations with government partners. Finally, allowing partners in the financial services industry to take ownership of the design and implementation of pilot projects may make these better tailored to the context and more sustainable over time.

Recommendations

National governments:

- Work with financial institutions to develop solutions to regulatory and policy barriers, such as ID requirements, that restrict access to formal financial products for refugees.

Donors:

- Align the delivery of cash assistance and livelihoods training with financial inclusion initiatives.

Implementing partners:

- Where possible, provide cash assistance via formal financial institutions that allow beneficiaries to develop experience with and trust in the financial services sector.
- Identify and develop partnerships with actors in the financial services sector that have shared interests and capacity to serve low-income clients.
- Where partners in the financial services sector have the capacity and knowledge to take on a leading role in designing and implementing an intervention, consider allowing them to do so. Widening ownership of an intervention beyond the aid sector may allow it to be better tailored to the context and more sustainable over time.

Financial institutions:

- Reconsider assumptions regarding the feasibility of doing business with traditionally unbanked populations, including refugees. Work with partners, such as UNHCR and NGOs, to identify potential strategies for incorporating these populations into business plans in a sustainable way.



By: cemT

4. TRANSFORMING NATIONAL SOCIAL SAFETY NETS TO ALLOW FOR REFUGEES' INCLUSION

Social protection for refugees is most often provided through parallel initiatives implemented by international humanitarian agencies and funded by international donors. Distribution of benefits occurs completely separately from national systems, and with different qualification criteria. Most refugee social protection programs rely on the continued generosity of international donors in order to operate, and tend to be non-contributory schemes. To address this lack of sustainability, there has been a push to begin to include refugees into national contributory social protection schemes, such as social security. Incorporating refugees who are active in the labor market into social insurance funds is particularly appealing. Because these funds rely on contributions by employed workers, they have the potential to be financially self-supporting, unlike assistance provided by humanitarian agencies. Two initiatives, in Germany and Cameroon, provide lessons on how this might be done.

INCLUDING REFUGEES IN GERMANY'S CONTRIBUTORY UNEMPLOYMENT SCHEME

Country	Germany
Years active	1957–present
Key objectives	Ensuring that formally employed refugees and asylum seekers in Germany who have been formally employed have the same rights to unemployment benefits (and with the same requirements) as German workers ¹⁶⁹
Target population	Unemployed refugees in Germany who have worked for 12 months or more with an obligation to pay social security
Budget	EUR 6.5 billion (in 2019) in contributory insurance benefits paid for by the German Federal Employment Agency ¹⁷⁰

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE INITIATIVE

German residents benefit from unemployment insurance, provided they meet several criteria. Key among these is having worked formally in a job subject to social security contributions prior to their unemployment. Unemployment insurance is provided under Arbeitslosengeld I (ALG I), a contributory insurance scheme largely based on the social security contributions of employees and employers.¹⁷¹ Foreign workers in Germany first became eligible for contributory social insurance during the so-called guest worker period¹⁷² in the 1950s, when changes in employment regulations provided foreigners, including refugees, with unrestricted access to the German labor market.¹⁷³ Under law at the time, persons (regardless of residence status) with a job subject to social security contributions were eligible for unemployment insurance, and resident foreign nationals, including recognized refugees, were thus automatically included in the scheme.¹⁷⁴

At present, anyone resident in Germany who is employed in a formal job with social security contributions is eligible for ALG I. Refugees and asylum seekers may work legally in the formal labor market in Germany, and are thus included in the scheme, provided they meet certain criteria (see box 4). This means they receive the same rights to unemployment benefits and are subject to the same requirements as German citizens. Because all contributions are held together in a common fund, refugees' financial contributions, based on their employment, strengthen the safety net available to Germany as a whole, while also safeguarding the refugees themselves during periods of unemployment.

Box 4. How Does Germany's Contributory Unemployment Insurance Work?

To be included in ALG I, beneficiaries, including refugees, must:

- Be unemployed;
- Apply for ALG I benefits with the employment agency;
- Have been employed in a job with social security contributions for at least 12 months within the last 2 years;
- Be actively seeking employment; and
- Cooperate with a job center to find a new job.¹⁷⁵

All ALG beneficiaries are entitled to about 60 percent of their last gross salary.¹⁷⁶ This can be as high as 67 percent if there are children in the household. The duration for which beneficiaries are eligible for ALG I depends on their previous employment (see Table 1).¹⁷⁷ Beneficiaries also receive health and pension benefits, as well as subsidies to undertake professional training.¹⁷⁸

Formal employment (in months)	Age	Duration of ALG I (in months)
12	any	6
16	any	8
20	any	10
24	any	12
30	≥50	15
36	≥55	18
48	≥58	24

Like many other types of insurance in Germany, such as health and pension insurance schemes, unemployment insurance is financed by contributions from employers and employees. The German Federal Employment Agency provides additional funding for complementary measures such as training aimed at supporting beneficiaries' reentry into the labor market.

There are several reasons why including refugees in ALG I may be beneficial, though evaluations of the scheme's specific impact on refugees are scarce. According to the latest figures, around 368,000 nationals from the major countries of origin of asylum seekers¹⁷⁹ are employed in jobs with social security contributions.¹⁸⁰ Many of these are short-term jobs, however, and unemployment insurance can be an important safety net to help them secure their livelihood during periods of unemployment.¹⁸¹ Moreover, it can also accelerate their re-entry into the formal labor market by, for example, subsidizing professional training or language learning. Including refugees in unemployment insurance is also in line with practices and laws under which refugees are protected from discrimination, whether at the international (e.g., Article 24 of the Geneva Convention¹⁸²) or national (e.g., Article 2[1] of the General Equal Treatment Act¹⁸³) level.

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

While the case study shows that providing refugees with unemployment insurance is generally possible, the size and scale of coverage that refugees receive in Germany might be difficult to replicate in Syria's neighboring countries. However, two lessons may hold value for contexts where Syrian refugees' access to social insurance schemes has been limited.

1



ENABLE ACCESS TO THE FORMAL LABOR MARKET IS A CRITICAL BARRIER TO ALLOW REFUGEES TO BENEFIT FROM UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

- Access to the formal labor market determines eligibility for contributory social insurance as much as legal frameworks.
- Finding long-term employment subject to social security contributions is a key barrier to accessing unemployment insurance.

Refugees in Germany are legally eligible for ALG I, but their limited inclusion in the formal labor market often prevents them from benefiting from this right in practice. A recent study conducted by the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs found that only 9–15 percent of surveyed refugees had a job with social security contributions for one month or longer between 2017 and 2019.¹⁸⁴ In fact, for one-third of surveyed refugees, the longest period of employment subject to social security contributions was only half a year. This partly explains why only 2 percent of surveyed refugees actually benefited from ALG I between 2017 and 2019, when the share of those employed in a job with social security contributions was much higher.¹⁸⁵

Finding formal, long-term employment is an even greater challenge in Syrian refugee hosting countries. In Jordan, for example, twice as many Syrian refugees work in informal markets as in the formal labor market;¹⁸⁶ in Turkey, the number of informal Syrian workers is between 750,000 and 950,000 (35 to 45 percent of the total Syrian population in Turkey).¹⁸⁷ In Lebanon in January 2019, the World Bank reported that the Lebanese economy would have needed to create six times as many jobs just to absorb regular market entrants.¹⁸⁸ Syrian refugees face a range of barriers to accessing formal employment, including the availability of formal employment in largely informal economies; employers' willingness to register and make contributions; minimum periods of working days per month to be eligible for social insurance; as well as a lack of coverage in sectors where refugees are often employed (e.g., agriculture¹⁸⁹).

2



SUPPORT FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BY INCLUDING REFUGEES.

- Including refugees in unemployment insurance does not require international assistance but can be done through national, self-funded systems, provided necessary legal frameworks are in place.
- Whether it is financially possible to include refugees in unemployment insurance depends heavily on the availability of larger well-funded and functioning social protection schemes.

One of the key questions underlying the inclusion of refugees in social insurance schemes is whether this practice is financially viable. Much of this depends on the availability of large, well-funded and functioning social insurance schemes. Unemployment is typically one branch of national social security systems. Over the course of several decades, Germany has developed one of the most comprehensive social security and social protection systems globally, committing about one-quarter of its gross domestic product to public social spending annually.¹⁹⁰ Including refugees in German

unemployment insurance therefore does not require special measures or international assistance, but is instead possible thanks to the non-discriminatory legal frameworks, in line with international standards, and national funding structures that are already in place.

In the Syrian refugee context, limited social welfare systems, including limited administrative capacity and narrow legal eligibility requirements, remain a constant challenge to including refugees in social security, including unemployment insurance. Although the Social Security Law in Jordan makes it mandatory for all workers employed 16 days or more per month with a single employer to register for social security, refugee workers—who are often in daily, seasonal, or other precarious forms of work—tend to be excluded. Because these categories of workers are not covered by the social security law, they do not have access to funds that would buffer loss of income and instability during periods of unemployment. To overcome these barriers, international actors such as the World Bank have promoted Syrian refugees' access to unemployment insurance.¹⁹¹ There have been some positive first steps. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), the International Labour Organization (ILO), together with UN partners, is providing support to the local government to implement social security reforms, though high levels of unemployment and political instability in the country have hampered progress in the short term.¹⁹²

Recommendations

National governments:

- Expand refugees' right to work in the formal labor market. This will facilitate their coverage under existing contributory unemployment insurance schemes, allowing refugees to benefit from their host country's social safety net while expanding the net itself by growing its contribution base.
- Provide refugees with access to contributory unemployment insurance schemes, and facilitate the process by which refugees and employers can make contributions.

Donors:

- Explore the opportunities of supporting the development of social insurance schemes in refugee-hosting countries, and advocate with host governments to ensure that refugees are included, both legally and practically, in these schemes.

Implementing partners:

- Educate refugees and employers about their rights and obligations to pay into and benefit from contributory unemployment insurance schemes.

THE TRANSITIONAL SAFETY NET FOR CENTRAL AFRICAN REFUGEES IN CAMEROON

Country	Cameroon
Years active	2018–20
Key objectives	The Transitional Safety Net provides continuous support to refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) and host communities over a two-year period, contributing to meeting their basic needs as well as enabling them to engage in income-generating activities and reduce their reliance on humanitarian assistance.
Target population	More than 6,000 households. ¹⁹³ The caseload is split between 70 percent refugees from CAR and 30 percent Cameroonians.
Budget	USD 5,285,238 self-funded by UNHCR (for 2019) ¹⁹⁴

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE TRANSITIONAL SAFETY NET

Cameroon has hosted over 300,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) since December 2013,¹⁹⁵ mainly in the eastern, Adamawa, and northern regions.¹⁹⁶ These three regions offer limited access to services and job opportunities,¹⁹⁷ and hosting refugees has exacerbated these difficulties, including by adding pressure on local infrastructure.¹⁹⁸ In Cameroon, refugees have access to a whole range of social and economic rights, including the right to work, and access to education and healthcare, but the majority of CAR refugees still live in extreme poverty—with 81 percent of refugees considered highly vulnerable by WFP as of January 2019.¹⁹⁹

Before 2013, social safety nets in Cameroon covered only 1 percent of the total population and were mostly ad hoc.²⁰⁰ In 2013, the World Bank launched the Social Safety Nets Project (SSNP) with an initial credit of USD 50 million to support the development of a more comprehensive and sustainable social assistance system.²⁰¹ In 2018, the World Bank approved additional financing from the International Development Association's IDA18 refugee window to increase the number of beneficiaries under the SSNP, extend the geographic scope of the program, and specifically target refugees alongside Cameroonians.²⁰² Under this additional financing, the SSNP targets areas where at least one-third of the population are refugees.²⁰³

To support this process, UNHCR launched the Transitional Safety Net (TSN) pilot program in 2018, aimed at providing social assistance to CAR refugees and Cameroonians specifically in the eastern and northern host regions.²⁰⁴ The TSN is intended as a stopgap measure to provide assistance to refugees not covered under the Social Safety Net (SSN) while the national program is rolled out. The TSN is intended to complement the government's SSN supported by the World Bank's SSNP, and it transfers the same amount of cash for the same duration—roughly USD 640 in total over a period of two years.

Box 5. What Is the Transitional Safety Net?

The Transitional Safety Net (TSN) program aims to provide assistance to refugee populations until the Social Safety Net (SSN) can be expanded.²⁰⁵ For now, the TSN provides households with monthly and annual cash transfers of roughly USD 15 and USD 142, respectively.²⁰⁶ Annual cash transfers are intended to stimulate investments in income-generating activities, while monthly cash transfers can be used to cover basic needs.²⁰⁷ Phase two of the project will also include financial training, support for beneficiaries to engage in income-generating activities, as well as referrals of vulnerable refugees to social services.²⁰⁸ In addition, the second phase will deliver capacity-building activities to support the inclusion of refugees in the SSN, such as the training of local authorities.²⁰⁹


The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) leads the TSN financially and operationally, but also seeks collaboration with the World Food Program (WFP), which provides food assistance in parallel to the TSN in the form of monthly food distributions. UNHCR and WFP have a joint targeting approach to assistance, whereby WFP targets the most vulnerable refugees through its food assistance and UNHCR targets the next level of vulnerable refugees through cash transfers.²¹⁰ The World Bank is not directly involved in the TSN, and according to interviewees, the coordination between UNHCR and the World Bank has been limited despite both actors implementing social safety nets in Cameroon.²¹¹ Moreover, coordination between UNHCR and the Government of Cameroon in capacity-building efforts is limited.

The TSN was launched in September 2018 with 500 households in the eastern region and a further 1,365 households in the northern region.²¹² The project has since expanded to 6,900 households, mainly in the eastern region.²¹³ At present, there is no assessment of the TSN's impact on refugees and host communities, although UNHCR is planning to review its cash-based interventions in Cameroon in early 2021. But an impact evaluation of a cash transfer pilot between 2013 and 2016 by the Government of Cameroon found positive results in a similar program for Cameroon nationals. The pilot contributed to reducing poverty and food insecurity,²¹⁴ and increased savings, payment of school fees, access to identification documents, and voting registration.²¹⁵ While these results are specific to Cameroon nationals, they suggest that cash transfers could have a positive affect within the context, and are supported by similar studies elsewhere.²¹⁶

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

While the TSN is still ongoing, there are a few key lessons that can be drawn from this experience they may have value for the Syrian refugee context. These include the importance of harmonizing and addressing barriers to social safety net systems, as well as linking cash assistance to livelihood support.

1



HARMONIZE REFUGEE SUPPORT WITH OTHER SOCIAL SAFETY NETS.

- The targeting criteria of different social safety nets should be aligned to avoid overlap in the delivery of cash assistance and the selection of beneficiaries, primarily based on vulnerability criteria.
- A minimum expenditure basket should be used to define poverty lines and assess the most pressing needs of host communities and refugees.

Because the Transitional Safety Net (TSN) aims to complement the Social Safety Net (SSN), UNHCR has targeted geographic areas where the SSN has limited presence. The TSN also aims to complement the refugee and host community caseload of the SSN, targeting 70 percent refugees (versus 30 percent in the SSN) and 30 percent host communities (versus 70 percent in the SSN).²¹⁷ With the SSN mainly targeting Cameroonians, UNHCR can fill a gap in refugee assistance with fewer risks of exacerbating social tensions between groups. According to UNHCR, however, there are practical challenges associated with targeting a set percentage of refugees and households. For example, the share of Cameroonian households identified as poor under the TSN and SSN tends to be greater in some geographies than the 30 or 70 percent allocated, respectively. While this may mean that fewer refugee households receive cash assistance than initially intended, it does ensure that the most vulnerable households are targeted first. The TSN also has the same transfer value as the SSN.²¹⁸ This has reportedly helped establish a comprehensive and shared understanding of the poverty lines and minimum needs of households, further harmonizing the targeting approach of these actors.²¹⁹

In Syria's neighboring countries, humanitarian assistance programs (including for refugees) are largely run in parallel to national social safety nets. In Jordan, for example, a range of international NGOs provide cash assistance to both Jordanians and refugees, but there are rarely interconnections between these interventions and Jordan's national social safety net program.²²⁰ While the authorities have recently tried to better connect these initiatives, Jordanians and Syrians still share concerns about their accessibility, transparency, and fairness.²²¹ Lessons may apply from the TSN, which has tried to align its targeting criteria with other cash-based interventions in Cameroon (SSN and WFP food assistance) to help ensure it reaches poor refugee and host community households who do not yet receive cash-based assistance. But the TSN experience has also highlighted a number of common challenges in terms of coordinating such interventions with the government and other partners in the region, who might have different objectives and levels of funding available. While according to UNHCR, local authorities, refugees, and Cameroonians think this system is fair,²²² this has not been rigorously evaluated, with the effectiveness of this system also depending on the level of coordination between these actors (e.g., information-sharing on targeted households). In Lebanon, on the other hand, the Ministry of Social Affairs has started to develop a national social protection system, including cash transfers, but it is unlikely to include Syrian refugees.²²³ This is in part due to the government facing serious budgetary constraints and giving priority to its nationals, almost half of which have also lacked access to social protection in the past, and who now also face severe economic challenges.²²⁴ Here, the Cameroonian experience provides a good example of how social safety net programs may complement activities at the national level by including refugees as a target group.

2



ADDRESS INFORMAL BARRIERS THAT PREVENT REFUGEES FROM ACCESSING SOCIAL SAFETY NETS.

- Efforts should be made to inform refugees of the rights they are entitled to and the different services available to them.
- Providing refugees and host communities with mobile telephones and cash assistance through mobile money can increase their financial inclusion and the impact of social safety nets.

The TSN seeks to overcome several key barriers to social safety nets. First, research has shown that refugees tend to lack awareness of their rights under these systems, which limits their ability to request the services they are entitled to.²²⁵ Some Syrian refugees and vulnerable host community members, for example, lack information about how to access social assistance, or are unsure whether they are eligible for such services. The TSN has identified this issue and is planning to implement awareness-raising and training components for vulnerable households (including refugees and Cameroonians) on the rights they are entitled to and the different services available to them.²²⁶ Moreover, narrow financial inclusion can hamper access to cash transfers. Financial inclusion is a key issue for many Syrian refugees, who have limited access to financial services. The TSN has tried to address the lack of access to documentation and financial services among CAR refugees in Cameroon (which has made their access to social safety nets complicated²²⁷) by ensuring refugees who do not have a bank account can still access cash. To do so, the TSN has provided mobile phones to CAR refugees and Cameroonians in host regions so they can cash out money at local mobile money vendors. UNHCR has also negotiated highly competitive transfer fees (0.3 percent) with the financial service provider that delivers mobile money to targeted households, making the services less costly.²²⁸

3



ENSURE CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS ALSO SUPPORT LIVELIHOOD, AND WHERE NECESSARY LINK TO OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE TO ACHIEVE THIS.

- As part of their exit strategy, cash-based interventions should enable recipients to secure their livelihoods.
- Where cash assistance alone does not provide sufficient assistance, vulnerable refugees should receive other types of assistance (e.g., training, referrals).
- Post-distribution monitoring is critical to build a better evidence base and advocate for long-term funding.

One of the key goals of the TSN, as part of its exit strategy, is to help narrow the gap between cash-based interventions (CBIs) and livelihoods. Developing a comprehensive CBI remains a challenge in the Syrian refugee context, despite ongoing needs. Research on the effects of cash assistance in Jordan, for example, has shown that while these interventions may help families avoid harmful coping strategies, they can be insufficient on their own to fully develop refugees' self-reliance.²²⁹ In Lebanon, a recent evaluation of the multipurpose cash assistance (MPC) program highlighted that vulnerable households experienced positive effects on their education, healthcare, and to some extent livelihoods, but a longer timeframe for MPC was needed to scale and sustain this impact.²³⁰ The TSN aims to achieve scale and sustainability by providing monthly and annual cash transfers over a 24-month period.²³¹ A second phase of the TSN may also incorporate training in income-generating activities and referrals for vulnerable households to appropriate services (e.g., health or social assistance) in order to better support the transition to self-reliance.

Recommendations

Donors:

- Support social safety net programs that are coordinated and include a plan for an eventual transition to a single national system.

National governments:

- Coordinate with donors and implementing partners to align the criteria of refugee social assistance programs with national social safety nets.

Implementing partners:

- Align the targeting criteria of different social safety nets to avoid overlap and enable the eventual transition to a single national social safety net.
- Take a collaborative approach among stakeholders when designing safety net programs, and ensure strong coordination among all partners during implementation.
- Incorporate livelihood development alongside cash transfers to enable the eventual transition of beneficiaries off of social assistance.



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5. CONCLUSIONS

Social assistance remains a crucial tool for mitigating the effects of poverty and a lack of livelihoods among refugees, both in the Syrian refugee context and elsewhere. Yet the inability of refugees to access national social welfare systems—and the insufficiency of these systems in many countries, even for nationals—means refugees are reliant on separate systems funded by international donors and are thus vulnerable to funding cuts. Moreover, these separate systems may not be sufficiently coordinated with other services and thus miss opportunities to identify vulnerabilities and provide referrals to appropriate supports. Refugees' lack of inclusion in financial services can make it difficult to even distribute benefits to them.

The case studies presented in this section provide some lessons learned for how these barriers could be overcome. Bamba Chakula and the MyBucks Bank in Dzaleka demonstrate the value of aligning cash assistance with other interventions and ensuring cash assistance programs are able to provide referrals to other services. In Dzaleka, the MyBucks Bank provides another model for distributing cash assistance that draws on the private sector to facilitate refugee financial inclusion. In Germany, the social insurance system illustrates how refugees can be included in contributory social safety nets, which are self-supporting. Finally, Cameroon's Transitional Safety Net initiative shows how investments in social assistance for refugees can be aligned with and supportive of wider efforts to improve social safety nets for society as a whole.

Main Recommendations

National governments:

- Consider how parallel social assistance systems can be harmonized or aligned, and where possible national social assistance programs opened to refugees. aligning
- Consider opening contributory social insurance systems to refugees, and ensure any informal barriers to their use are removed, while also enabling more access to the formal labor market.
- Collaborate with international partners and civil society to address technical and financial support needs, and address concerns and manage potential social tensions.

Implementing partners:

- Ensure that social assistance and financial inclusion initiatives are accountable and provide autonomy to beneficiaries. Programs should be designed to give autonomy to refugees and allow them to make decisions for themselves regarding how to put their cash benefits to use or what financial services they need.
- Reach out to non-traditional partners, including the financial services sector, and allow them to take ownership for designing and implementing interventions and services, to ensure that programs are tailored to the market context.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation practices to build up the evidence base on what works, improve practices, and provide persuasive narratives to donors.

Other civil-society actors:

- Educate refugees and employers about their rights and responsibilities with regard to contributory social insurance schemes.

Donors:

- Identify areas where investments in social protection for refugees can be used to strengthen social protection systems on the national level.
- Work with implementing partners and national governments to include refugees in existing social safety net programs.





CHAPTER

3

EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Access to quality education remains a sticking point for the many Syrian refugee children and youth in the region. Turkey hosts the largest share of this population, with more than 1 million school-aged-children,²³² nearly all of whom reside outside camps. Jordan hosts some 232,000 school-aged Syrians,²³³ with most living in Amman and the northern governorates. In Iraq, where nearly all Syrians live in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), 61 percent live in urban areas while the rest are in camps; the overall population includes more than 68,800 school-aged children.²³⁴ In Lebanon, where Syrians live among host communities, there were some 488,000 Syrian school-aged children as of 2018.²³⁵

Across the Middle East, education policies have overall been inclusive of refugee students. Since 2014, for instance, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education has supported the integration of Syrian refugees into formal and informal schooling through its Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon (RACE I, 2014–16) and RACE II programs (2017–21).²³⁶ In Jordan, the government adopted an Education Strategic Plan (2018–22) that seeks to improve access to and quality of education for both Jordanian and refugee children.²³⁷ In Turkey, all children under temporary protection have the right to be registered in public schools for the purpose of basic education.²³⁸ And in Iraq, child refugees and asylum seekers with legal residency can enroll in public primary and secondary schools for free and can also access informal learning programs including technical vocational trainings, “catch-up” classes, and early childhood development programs.²³⁹

Box 1. About this project

This chapter is part of a research project by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), titled «A Bridge To Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context». As the protracted Syrian refugee crisis continues and refugee communities, host governments, and international donors and implementers attempt to move toward durable solutions, this project analyzes projects, policies, and approaches from around the world and draws lessons learned for the Syrian context. This report provides recommendations for host-country policymakers, regional and international bodies, and nongovernmental actors.

Despite these inclusive policies, major obstacles continue to limit access to education among Syrian children, and as many as 800,000 remain out of school across the four major Syrian refugee host countries studied.²⁴⁰ The lack of adequate infrastructure is a main challenge, especially in regions where there were already not enough schools.²⁴¹ In KRI, for instance, some of the cities hosting refugees do not have sufficient classroom space.²⁴² In Turkey, schools already experienced limited resources and crowded classrooms before the arrival of large numbers of Syrians.²⁴³ Host countries have also had to recruit and train more staff to accommodate the new student population. In Lebanon, the government established double shifts in schools, but previous analysis has shown that this often coincided with a decrease in students’ learning time and an increase in teaching staff turnover.²⁴⁴ Across the region, the arrival of refugees has sometimes led to further staff retention difficulties,²⁴⁵ as teachers can become overworked and the situation has demanded more work in terms of lesson planning and managing the classroom.²⁴⁶ Still, efforts have been deployed to train teachers on how to better include refugees (and limit bullying²⁴⁷) and implement learner-centered approaches.²⁴⁸

Limits to refugee education are also linked to the economic difficulties faced by refugee households and challenges of meeting administrative requirements in host countries. For example, a 2019 study found that Syrian refugee families in Jordan increasingly had to rely on child labor in agriculture to meet their needs.²⁴⁹ Similar issues were recorded in Lebanon, KRI, and Turkey, where many refugee children have had to work to support their families and, as a result, do not attend school.²⁵⁰ As part of an effort to overcome economic hardship, some families have also resorted to child marriage; a 2014 report estimated that the rate of child marriage among Syrian refugees in Jordan increased from 18 percent in 2012 to 32 percent in the first quarter of 2014 (against less than 13 percent in Syria before the war).²⁵¹ Another main obstacle is that many families lack the documentation needed to register their children in schools, either a government-endorsed certificate for students or a service card issued by the ministry of interior or a placement test (as in Jordan²⁵²), or official identification



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and certification of past studies (as in Lebanon and Turkey).²⁵³ Even when cumbersome administrative requirements are lifted, this is not always applied in the same way everywhere, in some cases for lack of awareness among school principals.²⁵⁴ Finally, Syrian children may be reluctant to attend school if they experience violence and bullying, and discrimination against refugee students has been widely reported across the region.²⁵⁵

None of these challenges are restricted to primary education, and many Syrian students do not have the opportunity to attend secondary and higher education. In 2015, there were an estimated 450,000 university-aged Syrian refugees (worldwide), and in 2016, of the 150,000 Syrians thought to be eligible for admission into higher education, less than 6 percent were believed to be enrolled.²⁵⁶ The main obstacles to higher education are the associated fees and the limited or uneven recognition of credits and past certificates. For instance, Syrian refugees living in Jordan have to pay the same fees as foreign students, which is likely to dissuade some from studying. In comparison, in Turkey, students can benefit from free tuitions fees for state universities, and they can apply for scholarships for private universities.²⁵⁷ However, not all Turkish universities (or departments within these universities) have the same standards for recognizing credits obtained in Syria, which can be a major obstacle for some students.²⁵⁸

Many of these educational challenges are not specific to the Syrian context. Based on 2018 data, there are 7.1 million refugee school-aged children under the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate and some 3.7 million are out of school.²⁵⁹ In 2018, the Global Compact on Refugees emphasized the need to improve refugee inclusion in national education systems, while strengthening their resilience.²⁶⁰ The Global Refugee Forum convened in December 2019 further highlighted these priorities. Out of the 285 financial pledges put forward, the largest number of commitments (69) were education focused.²⁶¹ The Refugee Compact also aligns with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically with Goal 4 to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”²⁶²

Drawing on these international commitments and recent developments in the education field, this chapter presents lessons learned from policies and practices in other parts of the world, across three areas: how to design and implement inclusive education policies (Subsection 2); how to meet the specific needs of refugee students (3); and how to promote access to higher education for refugees (4).

2. DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICIES

As recommended by the Global Compact on Refugees,²⁶³ countries hosting refugees increasingly include refugee students in their national education system. However, host-country governments often face pressure on their education infrastructure when seeking to accommodate this new population. Lessons learned from the adoption and implementation of policies in Peru and Uganda provide insights that could benefit similar approaches in the Middle East.

PERU'S LIMA APRENDE

Country	Peru
Years active	Since February 2019, renewed on an annual basis
Key objectives	Expand access to basic education for all school-aged children in Lima regardless of nationality or legal status
Target population	14,000 school-aged children identified as being out of school in Lima (including both migrant/refugee and native-born children)
Budget	USD 5 million for the first-year implementation (MINEDU – Peru's Ministry of Education) ²⁶⁴

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF LIMA APRENDE

In Peru, the spike in arrivals of Venezuelan migrant and refugee children that began in 2016 has strained the capacity of the education system that, by law, guarantees all children full access to basic and secondary education.²⁶⁵ Since 2016, more than 1 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees have moved to Peru,²⁶⁶ making it the second largest host country for Venezuelans, after Colombia. Approximately 20 percent of Venezuelan migrants in Peru are children and adolescents under age 18, and the majority—almost two-thirds—have settled in the capital city of Lima and the nearby Callao province.

Prior to the Venezuelan crisis, some public schools in Lima and Callao were already struggling with overcrowded classrooms, and the arrival of this new student population has added to their difficulties.²⁶⁷ In addition to the lack of available spots, Venezuelan migrant and refugee students have encountered challenges due to administrative issues (e.g., lack of proper documentation for enrollment, or arriving after the official enrollment period) and limited familiarity with the education system more broadly. These arrivals have also raised new challenges for principals and teachers navigating a multicultural learning environment for the first time and facing difficulties keeping up with registration, adequate instruction methods, and classroom cohesion. In late 2018, with encouragement from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF),²⁶⁸ the Peruvian Ministry of Education (MINEDU) began developing a suitable response and an action plan for 2019.²⁶⁹

Box 2. Lima Aprende

In February 2019, the MINEDU conducted a needs assessment and drafted an action plan that became known as Lima Aprende – “Lima Learns, Not a Child without Studying.” This strategy aimed to address four key needs identified at the basic education level:

1. **Expand the capacity of public schools, in terms of infrastructure and human resources.** This entailed launching a ten-month school calendar (starting in June 2019, ending in February 2020) for early childhood, basic, and primary education, and creating 10,000 additional places in 94 public schools in Lima and Callao by establishing double shifts and activating unused spaces in these schools.
2. **Boost enrollment in early education, basic, and secondary education of both Venezuelan and Peruvian children who were out of school.** The authorities spearheaded an awareness campaign to reach families of children not attending school and encouraged them to enroll their children. To do this, they disseminated information on Lima Aprende, with the support of partners (including principals and teachers, nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], international organizations, and government agencies) and through different platforms and mediums.²⁷⁰
3. **Provide capacity building and professional development opportunities for principals and teaching staff.** MINEDU, with support from international organizations, conducted regular trainings and workshops for educators to learn about immigration issues, provide guidance on how to implement new government regulations related to enrollment procedures for foreign-born students, and strategies to provide academic and emotional support in a multicultural environment.
4. **Foster social cohesion and prevent xenophobia and discrimination in the classrooms.** The strategy also included ten mobile support groups composed of four members: two psychologists, one instructor, and one social worker to assist teachers and students with emotional and social support.

One year after its implementation, Lima Aprende yielded some positive results, while also facing some limitations. Of the 10,000 additional school places created,²⁷¹ 6,000 were filled by new students who had not previously been in school but 4,000 remained vacant due to limitations in the enrollment strategy.²⁷² About 50 percent of the program’s beneficiaries were Venezuelan, and the other 50 percent were Peruvian children.²⁷³ Notably, per official estimates, 50 percent of all Venezuelan children in Peru remain out of school.²⁷⁴ The mobile support groups were able to work in 120 schools at all three levels (early childhood, primary, and secondary education),²⁷⁵ and more than 147 principals and teachers participated in the trainings and workshops.²⁷⁶

One of Lima Aprende’s main shortcomings so far has been the enrollment strategy. Interviewees with senior officials highlighted the need to adopt a more targeted approach to target immigrant and refugee children who do not have access to information or are unfamiliar on how to obtain school placement or register for school.²⁷⁷ First, the lack of a centralized system and/or online platform for enrollment in public schools remains a barrier, as prior to COVID-19, people needed to go in person to schools to complete the process. Moreover, this was the first time in Peru’s history when a school year launched with a new starting date, which made recruitment efforts more challenging among non-immigrant communities used to the old schedule.

MINEDU decided to relaunch the strategy for 2020. For that year, it created 16,000 vacancies in 300 new schools and managed to fill 15,300 of them.²⁷⁸ At the moment, however, budget constraints,²⁷⁹ changes in leadership inside MINEDU, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have reduced the ability of the initiative to continue adding school capacity, as the ministry temporarily halted training and workshops, as well as the mobile support groups. It remains to be seen how the strategy will evolve for 2021, as it is plausible that pandemic-related social-distancing and lockdown measures will remain in place.

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

1


CONDUCT JOINT NEEDS ASSESSMENT TO MAP OUT GAPS IN EDUCATION SERVICES FOR REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES TO INFORM POLICY DESIGN

- It is important to include all students in the initial needs assessment, regardless of nativity, to get a complete picture of educational access and quality issues.
- Investments in data management are often needed to overcome the lack of data interoperability.
- A mix of quantitative and qualitative data can help map out what the relevant issues are and how to address them.

Lima Aprende offers key lessons on how to leverage rigorous data collection and analysis to design an effective policy intervention. In Peru, initial data collection efforts conducted with the support of by international organizations provided preliminary estimates of the number of Venezuelan migrant and refugee children who were out of school. However, in November 2018, the government and UNICEF decided to join forces to conduct a more comprehensive assessment. To do so, they tapped into all existent data from government databases. They also conducted a census of 500 schools in Lima and Callao to identify their main needs. This survey provided more in-depth information about the socioemotional challenges that principals, teachers, as well as students were facing in schools.²⁸⁰ Meanwhile, the data available in the Ministry of Education's *Sistema de Información de Apoyo a la Gestión de la Institución Educativa* (SIAGIE, the information system supporting the management of educational institutions) and the interoperability of Peru's Migration Information Registry (RIM) were key for identifying the number of native- and foreign-born children who were out of school, the schools operating over capacity, and the districts around Lima that required infrastructure investment to accommodate new students.²⁸¹ Thus, the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies was essential for the design of a response plan that matched the needs of the actors involved in a comprehensive way. The financial and technical support of international organizations and the collaboration between government departments were critical to conducting the census and data analysis that led to the inception of Lima Aprende.²⁸²

In the Syrian context, the absence of thorough assessments due to insufficient data gathering mechanisms, the lack of disaggregated data, and limited information-sharing have at times hindered the formulation of evidence-based policies and effective decision-making processes.²⁸³ For instance, Jordan's Education Management Information System, which the government uses to track education data, including on school capacity, lacks sufficient information, is infrequently updated, and is not linked to other major data sources.²⁸⁴ As Lima Aprende shows, robust data collection methods and strong technical intergovernmental collaboration are key elements for effective policy design.

2



PROMOTE MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE WHEN IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

- Effective implementation often needs high-level leadership within the government, which can be accomplished through the appointment of a general manager reporting directly at political level.
- It is essential to ensure coordination at national and local levels, at all stages of the policy design and implementation. Cross-department cooperation can be enhanced through a working group.
- Direct engagement with local authorities, school principals, and teachers is vital to making sure they are able to receive the support available.

Lima Aprende demonstrates the importance of having leadership at the highest level to help realize policy interventions, secure buy-in among stakeholders, and foster strong coordination and cooperation among them. In Peru, the MINEDU Vice Minister of Institutional Management at the time played a critical role in setting into motion the working group that developed Lima Aprende.²⁸⁵ He also assigned a general manager for this working group, who would report progress directly to him.²⁸⁶

In addition to the leadership within MINEDU, strong coordination and cooperation among members of MINEDU's working group and international organizations were key to Lima Aprende's design and implementation. Policymakers and representatives from international organizations held regular meetings with each other and with other critical stakeholders, including representatives of all seven of Lima's local education management units.²⁸⁷ The objective of these meetings was to incorporate their feedback into the design and rollout of the strategy, to assign clear roles for its implementation and outreach, and to exchange information to coordinate the stakeholders' agendas. Principals, school administrators, and teachers were also included in these meetings. As the main implementers, it was crucial to ensure their buy-in. And given that they would be the main beneficiaries of technical assistance and much-needed human and financial resources, they were very receptive to the strategy.²⁸⁸

Some of the shortcomings of previous policy interventions in the major host countries for Syrian refugees have been the top-bottom approach to their design and implementation. These interventions have been highly dependent on external funding, leadership, and guidance from international donors. At times, this has led to disagreements among national authorities and international donors over how resources should be allocated, and when faced with budget shortfalls and implementations challenges, it has been difficult to identify bottlenecks and the single government actor responsible for the pitfalls.²⁸⁹ Lima Aprende showcases how some of these challenges can be overcome: ensuring there is high-level government leadership as well as government ownership of the process, internal follow-up, role clarity among stakeholders, as well as constant coordination and cooperation at all phases of the policy intervention.

3



IMPROVE THE RESILIENCE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, IN THE SHORT AND LONGER TERM

- Some temporary measures can help cope with immediate pressure (e.g., double shifts schools), but authorities need to move toward more sustainable practices in the medium and longer term.

In the Syrian context, some governments have developed targeted approaches to address the education needs of refugee populations. Examples include Temporary Education Centers (TECs) in Turkey²⁹⁰, or the Accelerated Learning Program in Lebanon²⁹¹ or double-shift schools in Lebanon, Jordan²⁹² and Turkey.²⁹³ While these targeted approaches have been necessary to meet immediate needs, they have shown limitations in terms of the long-term integration of refugees into host communities, as they have tended to segregate newcomer students from their local peers and can hamper their ability to learn the local language (in the case of Turkey).²⁹⁴

In addition, interventions specifically designed for refugees have sometimes been perceived by local communities as prioritizing the needs of refugees over those of other residents, leading to retaliation and exacerbating social tensions.²⁹⁵ In comparison, the Peruvian government's approach in Lima Aprende focused on designing a more flexible and inclusive system by opening afternoon shifts and enrollment for the new calendar year, to the benefit of both Peruvian and Venezuelan children (and acknowledging that this was a temporary measure). This integrated strategy resulted in the positive reception of the initiative by local constituencies, and it was key for strengthening cohesion between the migrant and refugee population and the local community.²⁹⁶

UGANDA'S EDUCATION RESPONSE PLAN (ERP)

Country	Uganda
Years active	2018–2021
Key objectives	Enhance access to education through material support (building new schools, distributing learning materials) and improve the quality of education services (training of teachers, improved learning methods) for refugees and host communities in 12 refugee-hosting districts
Target population	567,500 students per school year, including 435,344 refugees and 131,316 Ugandan children ²⁹⁷
Budget	USD 389 million (but not fully financed) ²⁹⁸

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE ERP

Uganda is Africa's largest refugee-hosting country, with approximately 1.4 million refugees as of 2020, of whom more than 60 percent are children under the age of 18.²⁹⁹ A large part of this population arrived in Uganda after 2016, when the country received large-scale refugee arrivals from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi. Even prior to these arrivals, Uganda did not have enough classrooms or teachers for its school-age population.³⁰⁰ As of 2018, 57 percent of refugee children in Uganda (around 353,000 children) and 34 percent of local children in refugee-hosting districts (around 171,000) did not have access to education.³⁰¹

Starting in 2016, a combination of international and national policy developments drove attention and funding to Uganda's education system. In 2016, the World Humanitarian Summit established a global fund for education in emergency situations, called Education Cannot Wait, and selected Uganda as a priority country. Uganda subsequently received funding to provide education for marginalized children, including refugees. At the national level, the Ugandan government embraced the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in 2017, acknowledging the principle of inclusive and coordinated education service delivery.³⁰² In the same year, Kampala developed the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) for 2017–20, to guide its response to the refugee crisis and the provision of quality education to refugees and host communities.³⁰³ Subsequently, in 2018, the government drafted the Education Response Plan (ERP) to operationalize the ESSP and the CRRF.

Box 3. What Is the Education Response Plan?

The ERP was designed to alleviate the pressure on Uganda's education system while still expanding access to education and improving the quality of instruction for children and youth (ages 3–24) within refugee and host communities in 12 priority districts across Uganda.³⁰⁴ The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) conducted an initial needs assessment and started outlining activities and pilots to improve teaching and learning in 34 refugee-hosting counties. These activities included recruiting and training teachers, providing instructional materials, developing capacity for teacher supervision, and improving coordination of donors and implementing partners under the ERP. The plan also envisioned a real-time learning component to adapt activities to new needs over the course of the program.³⁰⁵

The ERP is primarily implemented by the Government of Uganda, with strong coordination between national and local authorities—facilitated by decentralized planning—and partnerships with international actors. On the ground, UN agencies, international and local NGOs, as well as private providers and government bodies all participate in the delivery of the ERP, while cooperating with local authorities. Refugees and host communities have also been included as key stakeholders in implementation, and the ERP has made it possible to accredit refugee teachers, among other things.³⁰⁶

Two years after the launch of the ERP, UNHCR and the MoES have already reported early signs of its impact on Uganda's education system. When the ERP started, only 43 percent of school-aged refugees were in school in Uganda, but one year later, this share increased to 56.5 percent (with about 90,000 more refugee children in school).³⁰⁷ Improvements in primary education have been particularly rapid, with school enrollment increasing from 58 percent to 73 percent between 2018 and 2019 (exceeding the 65 percent enrollment target). Enrollment in secondary education also rose, though more modestly (from 11 percent to 15 percent). While it is not possible to precisely identify the extent to which each of the ERP's activities has contributed to these improvements at this stage, initial evaluations of the ERP and interviews with UNHCR and MoES representatives suggest that the program has achieved some quick gains in a short time, particularly in the areas of institutional development, coordination, and data management.³⁰⁸

Progress under the ERP can be attributed to several factors, including a favorable policy environment (via the ESSP, the inter-sectoral Steering Committee of the Education Response Plan Secretariat and the CRRF) in Uganda and a high level of commitment from a wide range of development and humanitarian partners within the Education in Emergency Response (e.g., the World Bank, African Development Bank, UNICEF, UNHCR) as well as donors (e.g., Education Cannot Wait, the EU Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations [DG ECHO]) who have helped to secure funding, provide technical support and roll out activities under the ERP.³⁰⁹ But the program is not without its challenges. The ERP has had limited success in helping students transition to secondary schools, mainly due to the relative lack of secondary schools near refugee settlements, but also because attending secondary school is not compulsory in Uganda—meaning that both opportunities and incentives for enrollment are weak.³¹⁰ Moreover, the impact of the ERP on education outcomes remains a blind spot, as current monitoring activities and progress reports focus mainly on outputs of program activities rather than capturing the effects on school attendance and learning of refugees. Therefore, it remains to be seen the extent to which and how the ERP will have fulfilled its main promises by the end of 2021.

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

1



ADDRESS ACCESS ISSUES TO EDUCATION THROUGH TARGETED INVESTMENTS

- Accelerated Education Programming can be useful to help refugee children who have dropped out of school re-enter the education system.
- Access to education should be facilitated for learners with special needs (e.g., through assistive devices and specialised teaching methods).
- Remote learning technologies can facilitate educational access in remote regions, but connectivity issues—if unaddressed—may limit their impact.

To mitigate crowdedness in Ugandan schools, the government first decided to construct new schools, building 530 within the first year of the ERP.³¹¹ Other measures have been deployed to help children access schooling. The ERP has supported the use of Accelerated Education Programming (AEP), which condenses the seven-year primary education cycle into three levels.³¹² Despite ongoing challenges, including teacher remuneration, language barriers, and student retention issues, the AEP curriculum has provided disadvantaged, older, and out-of-school children with access to primary education.³¹³ As of 2019, 618 teachers had been trained in the AEP curriculum and more than 22,000 students had received instruction.³¹⁴ It also offers children an avenue to higher education by preparing them to sit the Primary Leavers' Exam and obtain a nationally recognized school certificate.³¹⁵ In addition to the AEP, the ERP has promoted the use of assistive devices (such as hearing aids) and trained teachers to support children with special needs, in furtherance of the aim to make the school environment more accessible and suited to students with disabilities (12 percent of all learners in Uganda).³¹⁶

Finally, the ERP includes a component on distance learning through technological innovations to address barriers to education, such as the long distance some students (particularly in remote areas) must travel to schools and the prevalence and fear of gender-based violence in or on the way to schools, which discourages some learners (especially girls) from enrolling.³¹⁷ COVID-19 brought this component into even sharper focus, with the ERP Secretariat and the MoES providing distance learning support as part of its COVID-19 response to allow students to remain connected to their schools.³¹⁸ Specifically, this has included guidance for teachers on how to develop and deliver radio and television lessons for learners (both via radio and SD cards), and for parents on their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that learning continues at home.³¹⁹ However, this sudden shift to remote learning has brought challenges for households who do not have access to radio, TV sets, or home-schooling materials, and for children who have to spend more time supporting their families with work at home.³²⁰ To mitigate this issue, the Education Cannot Wait fund allocated USD 1 million in emergency funding to ERP partners; this was used, for example, to distribute 38,000 home learning kits and more than 900 solar-powered radios to the poorest refugee and host-community households.³²¹ Altogether, these lessons from the ERP could be useful to increase enrollment in other countries where refugee children have dropped out of school and in places, such as Jordan and Lebanon, where as many as 30 percent of Syrian refugee students report having special needs.³²²

2



ADDRESS ACCESS ISSUES TO EDUCATION THROUGH TARGETED INVESTMENTS

- Under certain conditions, refugee teachers can help address gaps in staffing.
- Training teachers on medical and protection referral pathways can help improve the delivery of services to refugees, as well as the broader communities in which they live.

In Uganda, a main challenge has been attracting and retaining teachers in remote areas, including in regions hosting a large number of refugees. For example, in 2019, one refugee-hosting district reported that only 30 percent of its teaching staff would regularly come to work at the schools.³²³ Despite these issues, the government has made strides in increasing the number of teachers, with 936 new hires between 2018 and 2019.³²⁴ The authorities have also sought to register, license, and train more refugee teachers to increase the student-to-teacher ratio.³²⁵ But a study by the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and DG ECHO has shown that employing refugee teachers in Uganda could be challenging, in particular due to difficulties some may face in adjusting to the Uganda curriculum and different salary expectations.³²⁶

In addition to increasing the number of teachers, the Ugandan government and its partners have delivered training for teachers in refugee-hosting districts, including on positive classroom management techniques and medical and protection referral pathways.³²⁷ As of September 2020, 283 teachers (14 percent of the overall target population) had received training, but the extent to which this has affected the quality of teaching and student support remains to be assessed.³²⁸ Sensitizing teachers to forced displacement issues remains a challenge in the Syrian displacement context; for example, teachers are not always familiar with the constraints faced by refugee students, who may need to skip classes to work in order to support their families. In cases where teachers apply strict attendance criteria, as reported in Lebanon and Jordan,³²⁹ refugee students can be at higher risk of dropping out.

3



DESIGN EFFECTIVE MONITORING SYSTEMS TO TRACK PROGRAM PROGRESS

- Better monitoring, with the support of UN agencies and other partners and the use of new technologies, is critical to identify lessons learned.
- The data collected through monitoring can help efforts to advocate for policies and programs to increase refugees' long-term access to all levels of education services.

To monitor progress and promote real-time learning throughout implementation, the ERP teams have planned to build monitoring capacity at both the district and national level. Looking ahead, the program plans to train local authorities on how to use technology to engage in more frequent, digital feedback loops, as opposed to traditional, paper-based reporting.³³⁰ This would add to efforts by other actors, including UN agencies, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, as well as NGOs, that already support monitoring and evaluation efforts through research on the effects of refugees' presence on Uganda's education system.³³¹ If implemented successfully, this pillar of the ERP could help develop a monitoring and evaluation culture, enabling educational services to continually improve and making it possible to hold donors, implementing partners, and national and local authorities accountable. The data collected can also strengthen efforts to advocate for certain policies or programs by demonstrating their effectiveness or promise to the government and its partners, to request international funding, and to design policies that are even more inclusive for refugees.³³²

At present, however, monitoring activities are largely focused on outputs (e.g., enrollment rates, number of teachers trained, schools built, wash facilities installed), with a recent ERP progress report

flagging the inadequate measurement of quality and learning outcomes as one of three key issues facing the program.³³³ Current indicators also need to be adjusted to reflect the COVID-19 context; for example, rather than focusing on assessing improvements in school infrastructure, it may be more appropriate to measure learning outcomes at home. These challenges are present in the Syrian displacement context as well, where studies have highlighted that the quality of education and education outcomes are often not adequately monitored, pointing to gaps in the capacity of Education Management Information Systems and recommending further investments in data collection on learning outcomes.³³⁴ A major good practice used in the ERP has been the mapping out of policy targets early on, with a disaggregated results framework directly included in the plan.³³⁵

Recommendations

National governments:

- Ensure clear leadership and reporting structure to implement education policies, and where necessary set up adapted governance systems to do so.
- Invest in teacher recruitment, retention and training and capacities to ensure school staff are well prepared to work with refugee students.
- Work with partners to collect education data from multiple sources and move towards an inter-operable system for this data, while ensuring data protection principles are enforced.

Civil-society organizations:

- Support efforts by authorities and donors to monitor the effects of inclusive education policies, including through innovative modalities.

Donors:

- Provide long-term financial and technical assistance to host countries seeking to improve refugee inclusion in their education systems, to support the strengthening of education infrastructure as well as teaching staff and broader school administrative teams.
- Pilot innovative tools, such as remote-learning technologies, and provide resources to scale them up if proven effective and relevant.



By: ehasdemir

3. ANSWERING THE SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF REFUGEE STUDENTS

Despite Syrian host countries having inclusive education systems and granting refugees access to formal education, Syrian students are likely to face difficulties catching up with their peers due to linguistic, curricular, and social differences as well as to the negative impacts of forced displacement. Targeted interventions such as out-of-school-hours learning support programs, which are already highly prevalent in responses to Syrian displacement, can help address some of these difficulties, even though they need to be deployed in close coordination with other programs and the broader education system. While the Australian Learning Beyond the Bell program operates in an environment that is very different from those in the countries that host most Syrian refugees, its decentralized, community-specific model could be replicated and even adapted to include students from host communities, which could further promote both refugees' social inclusion and general educational improvement in the Middle East.

AUSTRALIA'S OUT-OF-SCHOOL-HOURS LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM: LEARNING BEYOND THE BELL

Country	Victoria, Australia
Years active	Since 2008
Key objectives	Provide extra support to students who have significant levels of disadvantage, including refugees, to improve their learning outcomes and inclusion in their school community
Target population	On average, up to 8,000 students each year, primarily refugees and migrants ³³⁶
Budget	Budgetary needs differ from project to project. Learning Beyond the Bell (LBB) relies on various funding streams, including a partnership with the Australian Communities Foundation, which provides up to AUD 20,000 for LBB-affiliated Out-of-School-Hours Learning Support Programs (USD 14,000). These OSHLSPs typically apply for grants ranging from AUD 15,000 to 40,000 (USD 10,000 to 28,000). ³³⁷

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

Australia resettles several thousand refugees each year,³³⁸ many of whom face challenges establishing themselves and integrating into local communities. In addition to difficulties stemming from limited English proficiency, young refugees may encounter other challenges accessing education, including trouble transitioning into formal education following extended gaps in their schooling, being placed in inappropriate class levels based on their age rather than their educational attainment, and insufficient support from family as they process their resettlement experience and transition into a new learning environment.³³⁹ Out-of-school-hours learning support programs (OSHLSPs) are a type of intervention that seeks to address these difficulties. Activities typically range from extracurricular activities such as sports, music, and clubs, to more academic and personal-development-focused tutoring, mentorship, and homework support.³⁴⁰ They provide opportunities for students to build leadership and social skills outside the formal classroom setting. In refugee contexts, OSHLSPs help children bridge educational gaps and adjust to their new educational environment.³⁴¹ These initiatives tend to be well established in high-income countries such as Australia,³⁴² but they are less common in low- and middle-income countries, where resources are often strained.³⁴³

In Australia, OSHLSPs serving the state of Victoria's diverse population of refugees and migrants have operated since the early 2000s.³⁴⁴ Studies in 2007 found these programs provided substantial benefits for participating children, including building confidence, improving learning outcomes, and developing communication skills.³⁴⁵ However, these interventions remained fragmented and uncoordinated, and they fell short of a clear exit strategy for when these projects come to an end.³⁴⁶ Programs often relied on untrained volunteers and were not always designed to meet the needs of

refugees.³⁴⁷ Based on these findings, in 2008, a Victoria-based NGO, the Centre for Multicultural Youth,³⁴⁸ developed and launched a new initiative, Learning Beyond the Bell (LBB).³⁴⁹

Box 4. Learning Beyond the Bell

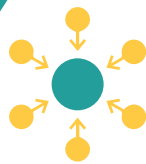
LBB operates as a network of more than 350 out-of-school-hours learning support programs throughout Victoria, with the Centre for Multicultural Youth providing centralized support.³⁵⁰ The actual OSHLSPs are run by NGOs, community organizations, and schools, each with its own operational characteristics and targeted to meet the specific needs of local refugee and migrant communities.³⁵¹ Initiatives run by or in coordination with schools sometimes have class coordinators, who help align OSHLSP activities with the material covered in school. Some OSHLSPs also involve parents and broader refugee and migrant communities.³⁵²

Projects are predominantly staffed by volunteers and the Centre for Multicultural Youth plays a coordinating and supporting role in LBB's operations. The organization helps those interested in LBB to conduct needs assessments and design project activities. They also deliver trainings and provide e-learning modules, including logistics and child safety trainings, courses on the specific challenges facing refugee learners, and resources to help newly arrived families navigate the educational system.³⁵³ Finally, the Centre for Multicultural Youth connects OSHLSPs with funding and other support, maintaining lists of relevant specialized partners,³⁵⁴ and they liaise with the Government of Victoria.

In the 12 years since its creation, LBB has helped address some of the education-related challenges facing Victoria's refugee and migrant children, reaching more than 11,000 students.³⁵⁵ Using case study analysis and surveys of project stakeholders throughout LBB's implementation (a comprehensive impact assessment has not yet been conducted), the Centre for Multicultural Youth found that LBB has boosted refugee and migrant academic confidence and progress, created social connections and increased social confidence, improved English language abilities, and engaged parents in their children's academic community.³⁵⁶

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

1



UNDERSTAND AND INVOLVE TARGETED COMMUNITIES IN PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION


- Decentralized OSHLSPs should be adapted to conduct rigorous needs assessments at start-up and to regularly update their approach to address issues as they arise.
- Consulting directly with beneficiaries allows for greater community buy-in and support.
- The involvement of local volunteers can help promote social cohesion.

OSHLSPs are most successful when the needs of the target beneficiaries are clearly identified, and when the program is designed based on this information and with considerable flexibility. Because Victoria's refugee and migrant population is diverse and its characteristics change over time, the decentralized structure of LBB is particularly well suited to respond to evolving issues. Not only can new programs address the specific needs of new communities, the close relationship, regular consultation, and coordination between program leaders and targeted communities mean existing programs can shift and add new programmatic elements based on feedback.³⁵⁷ This can include, for example, adding a physical activity component or placing additional focus on family engagement.³⁵⁸

Consultation can take many forms, such as individual conversations with community leaders and key entities (schools, migrant resource centers, etc.); surveys and focus groups; and, most importantly, regular discussions with students and their families.³⁵⁹ These consultations not only allow for better targeting, but also give the community a stake in the program's success.³⁶⁰ In the Syrian refugee context, this would entail tailoring interventions for specific refugee and host communities based on shared experiences and needs. This could be especially valuable for refugee communities living outside of camps, whose circumstances and needs are more diverse and who face specific challenges integrating into national schools. Program design and implementation should be adapted based on continued feedback and consultation.

LBB-affiliated OSHLSPs, through their reliance on volunteers, also offer local communities the opportunity to get to know their refugee neighbors and become part of the integration process. Volunteers can help create intergenerational and intercommunal friendships and support structures, while peer tutoring can build relationships between students closer in age; both types of connections improve integration outcomes.³⁶¹ For this to succeed, programs require dedicated, qualified volunteers who receive adequate training and oversight. The recruitment and training process can benefit from partnerships with local institutions, such as universities, and sustained engagement can help the program succeed long term.³⁶² In the Syrian refugee context, using local volunteers could help improve social cohesion, especially if the volunteers see a benefit from the program as well. This could include specific benefits, such as opportunities to receive specialized training, and more general ones, such as additional support and space for community activities.

2



EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT AND COORDINATE A DECENTRALIZED MODEL

- Decentralized projects require an umbrella or lead organization to coordinate and oversee them, as well as to provide assistance when required.
- OSHLSPs require strong leadership and solid organizational structures to be sustainable.

LBB succeeds in part because of the Centre for Multicultural Youth's coordination and support role, as well as its help ensuring that groups starting and running projects are aware of potential operational and organizational challenges and partnering interested schools with those organizations most qualified to assist. In the Syrian refugee context, previous attempts at informal³⁶³ education for refugees in Jordan, for example, have lacked the effective coordination and long-term funding necessary to operate sustainably.³⁶⁴ As such, a coordinating organization or consortium at the national, regional, or local level could ensure that the implementing partners, including grassroots organizations that may be interested in participating, are not overlapping targeted communities, are similarly trained, and have access to common resources.

Even with effective coordination, LBB relies on its network of implementing organizations (NGOs, community organizations, and schools), which means its interventions succeed or fail based on the strengths and weaknesses of these partners. Organizations with strong leadership and experience in managing projects are most successful at running OSHLSPs long term. Other groups, such as those formed specifically to implement OSHLSPs, may succeed in the short term, especially with strong leaders; however, this strength often peters out and the program dissipates over time. In the Syrian refugee context, numerous organizations have experience with refugee education; they could leverage this project management experience and other operational strengths to successfully implement their own OSHLSPs. However, newer grassroots organizations may require more oversight and support to build their implementation capacity, a role that could be filled by a coordinating entity.

3



ENSURE COMPLEMENTARITY WITH BROADER REFUGEE EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

- OSHLSPs can only achieve their objectives if they are designed and implemented in ways that complement other educational initiatives.
- These targeted interventions need to be connected with broader education policies, at both the local and national level.

While LBB itself has had positive impacts on its targeted communities, it is only one component within a larger refugee education strategy. In addition to Australia’s English language support programs, Victoria has interventions including an intensive capacity-building program targeting schools with large numbers of refugees,³⁶⁵ activities to support schools in addressing refugee trauma,³⁶⁶ and initiatives such as giving schools access to interpretation services and multicultural education advisors.³⁶⁷ Since LBB builds on formal refugee education, it relies on this comprehensive approach to maximize its impact.

Similarly, in the Syrian context, extracurricular activities and OSHLSPs cannot overcome the extensive obstacles refugees face to equitably and effectively accessing formal education if they act as standalone interventions.³⁶⁸ These barriers include an insufficient number of teachers given the number of students, inadequate building space, documentation requirements, social stigma and bullying, and widespread poverty that can lead refugee children to work instead of attending school. Without addressing these broader issues—or supporting other interventions and policies that are working to do so—OSHLSPs will not be fully effective.

Recommendations

National and local governments should:

- Integrate out-of-school-hours learning support programs into broader education policies and strategic planning and build adequate referral systems to connect learners to them.
- Consider out-of-school-hours learning support programs and other volunteer-based programs to help strengthen social cohesion between refugee and host communities.

Implementing partners (incl. civil-society organizations) should:

- Ensure that displacement-related effects on children’s education and related challenges are specifically accounted for, especially when conducting needs assessments.
- Build coordination and consultation with local communities into program design to ensure consistent and continuing stakeholder buy-in and feedback.
- At the local and regional levels, map out and coordinate with other projects that have similar objectives to share best practices and learning and maximize impact.
- Work with grassroots and community organizations to build their capacity to sustainably implement out-of-school-hours learning support programs.

Donors should:

- In addition to supporting host-country governments in designing and implementing inclusive education policies, fund activities specifically designed to help refugee students overcome the specific challenges they face, including targeted out-of-school-hours learning support programs.



By: Tolga Sezgin

4. HIGHER EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In refugee contexts, the focus of educational interventions is often on primary education. Promoting access to higher education can be more difficult as it tends to be directly linked to granting refugees access to the formal labor market, and in many countries that host large numbers of refugees, youth unemployment is already high, and this question is sensitive. The European Union has funded a series of projects in the region, from Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians (HOPES) to HOPES-Lebanon (HOPES-LEB), SPARK, and Higher Education and Vocational Training Program for Vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian Youth (EDU-SYRIA II) as part of the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (MADAD). Examination of these initiatives shows how different approaches can deliver on these objectives and what the trade-offs are of each approach.

FOUR EU PROJECTS: HOPES, HOPES-LEB, SPARK, EDU-SYRIA II

Countries	Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq
Years active	HOPES: 2016–20 HOPES-LEB, in Lebanon: 2020–23 SPARK, in Turkey: 2019–24 EDU-SYRIA II, in Jordan: 2019–24
Key objectives	These projects aim to increase participation in further and higher education among Syrian youth as well as host-community members ³⁶⁹
Target population	Syrian refugees of postsecondary-age as well as young people in host communities affected by the presence of refugees
Budget	HOPES: EUR 12 million HOPES-LEB: EUR 8.4 million SPARK: EUR 10 million EDU-SYRIA II: EUR 2.6 million These four interventions are funded by MADAD.

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE PROJECTS

Prior to the war, 20 percent of Syrians ages 18 to 24 participated in higher education, but many have had to leave the country and interrupt their studies.³⁷⁰ Often, they have not resumed their studies in their host countries,³⁷¹ due to a series of obstacles including the lack of necessary documentation for university admission, language barriers, and the costs of higher education. Limited access to higher education has had a knock-on effect on refugees' employability; this has exacerbated other challenges they face in seeking to access the formal labor market and compete for jobs in countries where youth unemployment is high.

Since 2014, MADAD has allocated nearly EUR 75 million in higher and further education³⁷² to enhance Syrian refugees' employability and their social and economic inclusion, in line with successive regional and country response plans to the Syrian crisis.³⁷³ In 2016, MADAD launched the first phase of HOPES in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq (as well as other projects implemented by the NGO SPARK, the German-Jordanian University [GJU], and UNHCR). The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) together with three other EU Member State agencies (the British Council, Campus France, and Nuffic, the Dutch organization for internationalization in education)³⁷⁴ led implementation.³⁷⁵

In the second phase of higher education programming, initiated in 2019, MADAD funded three projects: SPARK-Turkey, EDU-SYRIA II in Jordan, and HOPES-LEB in Lebanon (in 2020), respectively implemented by SPARK, the GJU, and DAAD. The objectives of these new projects are roughly similar to those of HOPES, and they all aim to increase access to higher education for Syrian refugees. They offer, however, an approach more tailored to each national context, including by targeting members of host communities more directly and linking higher education more systematically to labor market needs.

Box 5. What Are the Higher Education Projects under MADAD?

The first HOPES intervention was structured around five main components: (1) academic counselling, with education officers to help Syrian students and other youth in host communities access to higher education; (2) scholarships for students at the bachelor's or master's degree level, with a special focus on Syrians who had interrupted their studies; (3) English classes, including face-to-face and online courses; (4) funding for innovative educational offerings, such as credit-based short courses offered by local providers; and (5) stakeholder dialogues with higher education experts and actors (e.g., universities and ministries) in the region.³⁷⁶

The new projects funded by MADAD follow three different but complementary approaches:

- HOPES-LEB³⁷⁷ constitutes a direct continuation of HOPES activities in Lebanon, mainly offering academic counselling and scholarships to Syrian and Lebanese students in partner universities (1,000) and funding institutional capacity development. This project, however, places more emphasis on the integration of vulnerable Lebanese students into higher education and the integration of graduates into the labor market.³⁷⁸
- SPARK-TURKEY³⁷⁹ provides scholarships to 925 Syrian and Turkish students, as well as access to internship and job placement opportunities and tailored learning options (for Syrians). The initiative seeks to enhance social cohesion between these groups, as well as to increase their employability. Compared to the other interventions, this project puts an increased emphasis on access to vocational training, and it plans to train refugees for the potential needs of the labor market in Syria.
- EDU-SYRIA II³⁸⁰ targets 180 Syrian and Jordanian students, with the aim of facilitating their access to higher education as well as vocational training (e.g., master's programs at the GJU, bachelor's program at Zarqa University).

The HOPES project was evaluated in 2018, indicating that 620 academic scholarships were granted to students at the bachelor's and master's levels, and for vocational training and similar diplomas.³⁸¹ HOPES also provided counselling to 26,333 students and funded 32 short-term education projects

that were implemented by local and regional institutions. In addition, it promoted institutional dialogue and networking by organizing two regional conferences in Beirut and Amman, plus 20 national stakeholder dialogues across the region. Finally, HOPES trained 283 teachers and built partnerships with 19 higher education institutions to deliver English courses to 8,514 students in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Two of the main limitations identified in the final evaluation of HOPES are that the number of beneficiaries was limited, compared to the scale of needs in the region, and that graduates rarely managed to secure durable employment.³⁸²

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

1



ADOPT AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO HIGHER EDUCATION BY TARGETING BOTH YOUNG SYRIAN REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- As in primary education programming, including host communities as well as refugees in higher education programming can both boost inclusion and help secure long-term government support.
- Requires sustainable support from development actors and solid institutional relationships.

All MADAD interventions have targeted both Syrian refugees and host communities, with a renewed emphasis on host communities in the three most recent projects to answer the demand and needs of host governments for additional support in this area.³⁸³ In Jordan, refugees and host communities both benefited from HOPES since the launch of the project was subject to a national rule whereby one-third of the budget had to directly benefit Jordanians.³⁸⁴ In the other countries, DAAD and its partners opted for an inclusive approach from the beginning, for instance by sponsoring the same number of refugees and host-community students in Lebanon.³⁸⁵ For this second wave of projects, MADAD insisted that more members of host communities should benefit from the activities, especially in host countries where youth were facing increasing difficulties accessing livelihoods and governments had become less welcoming of refugees and had requested additional support.³⁸⁶

2



RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR A LOCALIZED APPROACH AND TRADE-OFFS IN SELECTING IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- Consideration for and careful navigation of sensitive political situations is key to getting and sustaining buy-in, as demonstrated by EU Member State agencies in HOPES and HOPES-LEB.
- Partnering with NGOs can allow for flexibility (as was the case with SPARK), while working with well-established institutions (such as the GJU in Jordan) can allow programs to build on a historical presence and broad networks.

In the first phase of HOPES, the EU Member State agencies could rely on long-standing relationships in the host countries. This proved particularly helpful in Turkey in the aftermath of the attempted coup in 2016, since DAAD and its partners were less vulnerable than NGOs to political pressure.³⁸⁷ In countries such as Lebanon, the networks of HOPES partners made reaching agreements with local universities easier.³⁸⁸ In addition, these agencies could rely on the support of their embassies to disentangle potential issues, and their association with several European governments facilitated the development of partnerships with universities in the European Union.³⁸⁹ But as (mostly) public

agencies, HOPES partners have also proved less agile. By contrast, SPARK could deploy its activities faster and demonstrated more flexibility. It could also capitalize on the other projects it was already implementing in the region,³⁹⁰ from relationships with key stakeholders to technical knowhow and needs analysis. As for the GJU, its main assets were well-oiled relationships with key stakeholders in Jordan, as well as an excellent understanding of the context and the challenges resulting from the Syrian crisis.³⁹¹ As such, the choice of partners for the second phase of programming reflects a more tailored assessment of the context and the operational challenges likely to arise in each country.

3



ENCOURAGE LINKAGES BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION AND LOCAL LABOR MARKETS, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS APPROACH

- A stronger focus on local labor markets can be useful for the social and economic inclusion of young Syrian refugees.
- However, employment opportunities may be limited, at least in the short term, and the expectations of beneficiaries need to be managed.

In the three newer projects, EU donors and their implementing partners have emphasized the need to better connect investments in higher and further education with labor market needs. For example, HOPES-LEB plans to invest more resources in linking students with the private sector (e.g., e-commerce by providing students with a domain for free). On the flipside, job opportunities for youth are already limited in several of these countries. In Lebanon, the estimated youth unemployment rate was nearly 18 percent in 2020,³⁹² and in Jordan it was nearly 35 percent.³⁹³ Refugees often face even greater difficulties, given their limited access to work permits and connections with potential employers. As such, while higher education interventions should match labor market needs, implementing partners must also manage the expectations of beneficiaries regarding the intrinsic limitations of local economies, particularly in light of the economic fallout of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations

National governments:

- Adopt an inclusive approach to higher education that involves both refugees and host communities, as a highly skilled workforce will benefit the host country in the long term.
- Leverage international projects to promote cooperation between universities in the Middle East and European institutions.

Implementing partners:

- Adapt the engagement with host-country authorities to the situation and manage expectations among refugees about the opportunities available after graduation, given the restrictions on refugees' access to the formal job market.

Donors:

- Provide long-term financial support to higher education in host countries, so as to promote an inclusive higher education system.
- Select implementing partners based on the specific needs and characteristics of each context (for instance, the need for solid institutional support or the flexibility to adapt project design to quickly evolving needs).
- Integrate a stronger focus on labor market integration into higher education programming, while also investing in livelihood projects to promote job creation in target countries.

5. CONCLUSION

Access to education is essential to prevent refugee students from dropping out and never being able to catch up with their peers, particularly for those whose education has been interrupted by the sudden need to flee. Most host countries are ready to include refugee students in their primary education systems, but these countries often face difficulties upgrading their infrastructure and preventing the sudden influx of new students from negatively affecting the overall quality of the education system. As experiences in Peru and Uganda illustrate, donors and development actors have a critical role to play in assisting host governments in building additional schools (when needed) and recruiting and training more teaching staff. At the same time, refugee students often face difficulties due to their status or because their education was interrupted, they are unfamiliar with the national curriculum in the host country, or they encounter specific challenges (e.g., trauma, mental-health issues). Initiatives by civil-society actors, such as Learning Beyond the Bell, can help address these problems, support refugee integration into the school system, and promote greater social cohesion. Such initiatives are also relevant for refugees who wish to pursue higher education, many of whom also face difficulties integrating into the host-country university or vocational training system. A series of projects funded by MADAD have sought to facilitate access to further education for refugees (and host communities) through scholarships and counselling, as well as by building the capacity of higher education institutions in host countries. These interventions can, however, have mixed outcomes, as recent experiences have shown they do not always lead to refugees gaining formal employment, which may generate some frustrations among beneficiaries.

Main Recommendations

National and local governments:

- Spearhead the inclusion of refugees in the national education system, including provisions for improved infrastructure, staffing, and data collection and management.
- Encourage efforts to promote social cohesion between refugees and host-community members, including through efforts in the classrooms (e.g., training of teachers) and civil-society initiatives (e.g., after-school projects).
- Enable refugees who graduate from university or vocational training to access formal employment, with support from donors and implementing partners to create livelihood opportunities that benefit entire communities.

Implementing partners and civil-society actors:

- Support advocacy efforts to promote better inclusion of refugees in schools and higher education institutions.
- Contribute to monitoring and research efforts to assess the progress of inclusive educational policies and projects and to identify pending needs.

Donors:

- Commit to long-term support for host countries as they upgrade the capacity of their education systems, including higher education.
- Connect programming related to refugee education with broader education interventions in host countries.
- Acknowledge and fund targeted interventions for refugee students to address the specific difficulties they face.
- When supporting the inclusion of refugees in higher education projects, link these interventions with livelihoods projects to create more job opportunities that benefit refugees and host communities and, ultimately, to help overcome economic barriers to refugee education.





CHAPTER

4

LIVELIHOODS

1. INTRODUCTION

Ensuring that refugees have access to livelihoods is a crucial stepping-stone to support their resilience and self-reliance. Yet many Syrian refugees – and host community members – in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) are engaged in informal work and have varying degrees of access to formal, sustainable, and decent jobs. Their first obstacle to employment is the legal frameworks in their host countries. In Jordan and Turkey,³⁹⁴ policies have shifted over time to allow refugees to receive work permits, while in Lebanon, formal labor is limited to those refugees sponsored as part of the kafala system.³⁹⁵ These policies often limit the sectors refugees are allowed to work in, which can lead to a mismatch between their skills and those needed in the sectors open to them. Further difficulties—including cumbersome procedures, lack of information, and fees—also hold back refugees from getting work permits or creating their own businesses.³⁹⁶

Box 1. About this Project

This chapter is part of a research project by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), titled “A Bridge To Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context”. As the protracted Syrian refugee crisis continues and refugee communities, host governments, and international donors and implementers attempt to move toward durable solutions, this project analyzes projects, policies, and approaches from around the world and draws lessons learned for the Syrian context. This report provides recommendations for host-country policymakers, regional and international bodies, and nongovernmental actors.

Refugees also face challenges due to restrictions on their mobility and other social and economic rights. As mentioned above, in Turkey, refugees’ work permits allow them to work only in the province where they are registered.³⁹⁷ In Jordan, refugees’ opportunities are constrained by practical obstacles to mobility associated with the risk of losing their humanitarian benefits, such as shelter, housing, and healthcare when they move out of the province where they are registered.³⁹⁸ Box 2 below provides a summary of these difficulties.



By: Sam Tarling

Box 2. Syrian Refugees' Access to Labor Markets in the Syria Region

Jordan

In 2016, the Jordan Compact committed to expanding Syrian refugees' access to the labor market by granting 200,000 work permits in specific sectors in tandem with concessional financing and beyond-aid commitments such as trade concessions that relaxed rules of origin for exports to Europe—all to drive inclusive growth for both Syrians and Jordanians. Since then, Jordan has made several adjustments to expand livelihood opportunities, including: expanding eligibility to work in certain subsectors, making some work permits in certain sectors seasonal or not linked to a single employer, and offering home-based business registration.³⁹⁹

By the end of January 2020, nearly 180,000 work permits had been issued to Syrians (including renewals).⁴⁰⁰ At the time of the writing, Syrians can work in five sectors with a work permit: construction, agriculture, manufacturing, food and beverage services, and retail and wholesale trade – for the latter three sectors, work permits are tied to an employer.⁴⁰¹ For the agriculture and construction sectors, work permits are not tied to a specific employer, but can be used for the entire sector.⁴⁰² Agricultural work permits are requested through agricultural cooperatives and Construction work permits are issued through the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions. Moreover, Syrian refugees are also allowed to open home-based businesses in specific sectors – food processing, handicraft and tailoring. In June 2020, the World Bank and the Government of Jordan's program to expand Syrians' access to the formal labor market received a two-year extension and additional financing of USD 100 million to support greater flexibility in work permits (only one-third of Syrians in the country are permit holders).⁴⁰³

Turkey

In 2014, Turkey enacted a Temporary Protection regime for Syrian refugees that allows them access to social services, including health and education, but does not permit full labor market access and freedom of movement.⁴⁰⁴ The current work permit system was established in 2016, allowing employers to request permits on Syrian workers' behalf as long as they have been under Temporary Protection for six months and work in the province where they are registered.⁴⁰⁵ Additional regulations include a work permit fee of USD 67 (as of July 2019), one-year validity, and a hiring cap for each employer (although it can be waived).⁴⁰⁶ At the end of 2018, the government reported that about 65,000 permits had been granted.⁴⁰⁷ Syrians in Turkey have been able to engage in entrepreneurship, since companies founded by foreigners are granted the same rights as those started by Turkish citizens.⁴⁰⁸ Between the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011 and July 2020, Syrians had registered over 9,000 companies in the country.⁴⁰⁹

Lebanon

While Lebanon made policy commitments to improve Syrians' access to the labor market as part of the 2016 EU-Lebanon Compact, in practice the widespread lack of legal residency permits poses immense barriers to accessing livelihood opportunities—including work permits and business registration.⁴¹⁰ The minority of Syrians who do have legal status can only access formal work with a permit (based on a June 2019 plan) in construction, agriculture, and the environment if they obtain a Lebanese sponsor, an arrangement with conditions such as ratio caps among nationals and foreign workers.⁴¹¹

Kurdistan Region of Iraq

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), both refugees and asylum seekers without a visa are allowed to work formally in the region if they obtain a KRI residency permit and are age 15 or older.⁴¹² Those who entered with a visa must have their employer acquire a work permit after they gain a residency permit. In August 2020, the ILO and KRI's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs signed an agreement to increase the number of formal jobs available to refugees, internally displaced persons, and host community members by building the capacity of employment service offices to create more decent jobs through integrated services, such as job and skills matching, career guidance and counselling, as well as on-the-job training.⁴¹³

In Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and KRI, Syrian refugees seeking livelihood opportunities do so in economies and labor markets that lack sufficient absorption capacity. For example, Lebanon faces a political and economic crisis that, coupled with the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to heightened economic vulnerability among Lebanese.⁴¹⁴ In this and similar contexts, allowing Syrians access to national labor markets can risk feeding resentment among host communities.

All these difficulties in obtaining formal labor opportunities have led a large portion of refugees to work in informal jobs, where they are subject to significantly lower pay and vulnerable to exploitation.⁴¹⁵ Informal employment can leave refugees unprotected by labor laws such as recourse against abusive employers, minimum wage guarantees, and access to social security. Sponsorship arrangements grant employers significant leverage over their employees, meaning that refugees have fewer means of leaving abusive work environments while maintaining legal status.⁴¹⁶ Syrian women and children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, wage disparities, and hazardous working conditions.⁴¹⁷

Finally, Syrian refugees are likely to face additional obstacles to accessing the labor market, such as language barriers and lack of resources and support networks.⁴¹⁸ They might encounter difficulties navigating unfamiliar regulatory frameworks to start their own business or getting their skills or previous certifications recognized. For entrepreneurs, a lack of networks and connections may make it difficult to develop a client base.

Globally, policies and interventions meant to support refugees' livelihoods are increasingly shaped by the development-oriented approaches of the Global Compact for Refugees and the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2014–18 Global Strategy for Livelihoods put forward by UNHCR also helped shift toward market-oriented approaches linking development and private sector actors.⁴¹⁹ Under this strategy, UNHCR and ILO developed an approach to integrated market solutions to improve the livelihoods of both refugees and host communities, under which they have conducted assessments and developed interventions.⁴²⁰ UNHCR's 2019–23 strategy builds on this, emphasizing refugees' economic inclusion and holistic approaches to supporting affected communities.⁴²¹

As the approach to refugees' livelihoods has come to focus more on development, so too have practices, programs, and approaches from around the globe. The following four case studies present lessons learned across four areas: expanding access to the right to work (2), ensuring decent work opportunities for refugees (3), improving the economic resilience of host countries (4), and providing targeted support activities to refugees (5).

2. ACCESS TO THE RIGHT TO WORK

Although Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and KRI have policies and procedures in place to grant Syrian refugees the right to work, at least in some sectors and under some conditions, Syrians still face many challenges to accessing formal employment.⁴²² Since 2019, Ethiopia has also opened its labor market to refugees and its experience provides some lessons learned on how to roll out these policies.

ETHIOPIA'S REVISED PROCLAMATION ON REFUGEES

Country	Ethiopia
Years active	Since 2019
Key objectives	The section on work and livelihoods of the 2019 Refugee Proclamation in Ethiopia seeks to promote refugees' self-reliance by allowing their access to the formal labor market. It grants refugees and asylum seekers access to residence and work permits and supports the creation of livelihood opportunities for these populations. The proclamation also lays out an additional range of rights for refugees, from freedom of mobility to access to documentation and education.
Target population	More than 700,000 refugees and asylum seekers living in Ethiopia ⁴²³
Budget	The Government of Ethiopia received funding from UNHCR and international partners (mainly the European Union, the World Bank, the Department for International Development, and the European Investment Bank) to support the implementation of the proclamation with capacity building and livelihood projects. ⁴²⁴

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE POLICY

In September 2016, at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees and Migrants in New York, Ethiopia made nine pledges to promote the economic and social inclusion of its refugee population.⁴²⁵ These pledges were then incorporated in the country's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) roadmap in November 2017. The pledges covered six thematic areas: education, social and basic services, out-of-camp policy, documentation, work and livelihoods, and local integration.⁴²⁶ Specifically, the Ethiopian government committed to provide work permits for refugees in sectors open to foreign workers, and to create more job opportunities open to them.⁴²⁷ In January 2019, Ethiopia issued a new Refugee Proclamation, which replaced the 2004 version and outlined additional rights for refugees (Box 3). This new version has been essential to the rolling out of the CRRF and the launch of the Ethiopian Jobs Compact,⁴²⁸ a project supported by international donors and multilateral development banks to advance national industrialization efforts and support the creation of 100,000 jobs, up to 30 percent of which could be allocated to refugees.⁴²⁹

Box 3. What Does Ethiopia's Refugee Proclamation Say about Work and Livelihoods?



Source: Created by the Migration Policy Institute

Ethiopia's revised Refugees Proclamation grants refugees the "most favorable treatment accorded to foreign nationals" to engage in wage-earning employment and self-employment. As such, recognized refugees and asylum seekers should be subject to the same labor and investment laws that govern foreign nationals in Ethiopia.⁴³⁰

The proclamation also grants refugees equal treatment with Ethiopian nationals in a few cases, including in access to job opportunities created as a result of certain development projects designed with the support of the international community and the agreement of the Ethiopian government to benefit Ethiopian nationals and recognized refugees (for instance, the Jobs Compact).⁴³¹

Nearly one year after the release of the proclamation, the government moved forward with a series of regulations to actually implement the policy.⁴³² For instance, the Directive to Determine the Procedure for Refugees Right to Work, issued by the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) following the proclamation, established that refugees and asylum seekers should not pay any fee to obtain a residence or a work permit.⁴³³ At the time of the writing, ARRA was also in the process of concluding memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs⁴³⁴ and the Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency to roll out and coordinate the adequate administrative procedures.⁴³⁵

While it is too early to assess the full impact of the proclamation on refugees in Ethiopia, it appears that its effects might be more modest than originally envisioned. So far, the proclamation and its accompanying directive on refugees' right to work have narrowed down the interpretation of the pledges regarding the conditions under which refugees can enjoy the right to work.⁴³⁶ Only a few residence permits have been issued since 2019, mainly to refugees that are targeted under joint livelihoods and economic inclusion projects.⁴³⁷ Similarly, a few work permits have been issued, and mainly to refugees who have completed technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and gained employment through an international project.⁴³⁸

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

1



TO BE SUCCESSFUL, POLICIES THAT SEEK TO PROMOTE REFUGEES' INCLUSION IN LABOR MARKETS REQUIRE COMMITMENT AT MULTIPLE LEVELS.

- It is important to secure political will at the country level, building on drivers specific to the national context.
- It is also important to secure the commitment of international donors and implementing partners to fund capacity building activities and livelihood projects in the long term.
- A mechanism to monitor and secure collaboration between government and international actors and keeping their interest could accompany these efforts.

The Ethiopian experience highlights how the political commitment of host governments to grant refugees the right to work is intrinsically connected to donors' engagement in supporting local economic development. In Ethiopia, the pledges made by the government in 2016 and donors' initial interest in supporting them set the groundwork for a change in legislation. Yet the decisive spark came from the World Bank and the idea of launching a Jobs Compact in Ethiopia.⁴³⁹ This helped secure the commitment of the Ethiopian authorities—even after major political changes in 2018 and internal restructuring within ARRA.⁴⁴⁰ It also contributed to the mobilization of other humanitarian and development actors to fund more projects to support the implementation of Ethiopia's compact and livelihood pledges.⁴⁴¹

This strategy to expand international aid in the country was very welcome, though it came with some setbacks and challenges in keeping the interests of international actors and national and regional government.⁴⁴² For instance, in the beginning, most development actors concentrated efforts to advance the CRRF in those few regions where strong commitment existed, in order to maximize impact and provide a proof of concept that could be learned from and adapted to other refugee-

hosting contexts within the country.⁴⁴³ But other regions might have felt neglected as a result and, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, donors and development actors have had to shift some of their priorities, ultimately slowing the implementation of the CRRF.⁴⁴⁴ As a result, at this point, there is concern that the regional and central government might lose interest in implementing the policy and reduce their commitment.

The four main countries hosting Syrian refugees have made strides toward opening their labor markets to refugees, often as part of efforts to attract development funding. This is especially so since the adoption of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (“3RP”) in 2014, which aims to encourage donors to increase their support to advance national response plans and provide multi-year funding.⁴⁴⁵ But as in Ethiopia, sustaining the political commitment of host governments as well as donors’ interest in the long term is challenging but goes hand in hand. This can entail developing a mechanism that monitors progress and new initiatives and helps secure the commitment of all parties.

2



PROMOTE AN OVERALL ENABLING POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR REFUGEES TO FOSTER THEIR ACCESS TO LABOR MARKETS

- Ensure refugees’ freedom of movement is a prerequisite for their access to formal employment. This should be supported by other inclusive policies in the fields of education, social protection, and health, which are critical for refugees to fully enjoy their right to work.
- Supporting refugees’ training and vocational skills can expand their opportunities and facilitate their integration into the labor market.

Granting refugees the right to work is rarely sufficient for them to actually gain access to the formal labor market. While the Ethiopian framework is permissive, in practice refugees’ options are still broadly limited to job opportunities offered under donor-funded projects.⁴⁴⁶ However, Ethiopia’s 2019 Refugee Proclamation includes a set of additional provisions accompanying the right to work, including access to financial services, education, the possibility to register life events, and an expanded out-of-camp policy aiming to secure freedom of mobility for up to 10 percent of refugees. These could positively impact on opportunities for refugees in the longer term. Besides these, job opportunities supported through vocational training are becoming increasingly available and facilitating refugees’ access to and integration in the job market.⁴⁴⁷

Similar to the Ethiopian context, Syrian refugees face additional barriers to livelihood opportunities due to other restrictions on their rights. For example, refugees in Turkey still face many barriers to effectively accessing work permits,⁴⁴⁸ ranging from documentation requirements to application costs and restrictions on their freedom of movement. This last dimension—freedom of movement—is particularly important, especially where refugees enjoy narrow economic opportunities.

3



SIMPLIFY ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND SUPPORT THE CREATION OF LIVELIHOODS OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE REFUGEES’ ACCESS THE LABOR MARKET

- Ease or remove restrictions to refugees’ access to the labor market, such as fees for applying for work permits and documentation requirements.
- Clarify the procedures accompanying related legislation.
- Strengthen the capacity of national and subnational authorities to scale refugees’ access to work, as well as coordination between stakeholders.
- Engage the private sector in supporting opportunities for refugees.

In addition to a permissive policy, refugees' access to the labor market also hinges on the processes by which they get work permits and gain formal employment.⁴⁴⁹ The relevant institutions need to be informed and trained in new procedures applicable to refugees.⁴⁵⁰ Once Ethiopia's new Refugee Proclamation was issued in January 2019, it took nearly 12 months for the government to develop clear implementation guidelines, and the procedure for delivering work permits is yet to be outlined.⁴⁵¹ As the new proclamation cascades responsibilities down to regional governments, their limited capacity to handle refugee issues has raised additional challenges.⁴⁵² The federal government has sought to address these difficulties through increased cooperation with UNHCR and regional entities, in order to raise awareness, coordinate, create ownership, and build capacity.⁴⁵³

This coordinated approach, as well as technical assistance efforts, is also relevant in the Syrian context, where similar challenges have been documented.⁴⁵⁴ For example, even though, in 2019, the Government of Jordan streamlined the process for Syrian refugees to access work permits this did not translate into a significant increase in their formal employment.⁴⁵⁵ Efforts to coordinate with employers and raise their awareness of how to respect and improve the conditions for decent work for refugees are also crucial to ensure refugees' rights are respected. The private sector has an important role to play in supporting opportunities for refugees, such as by facilitating vocational training and creating on-the-job training opportunities. Together, these efforts could help overcome refugees' difficulties related to language, navigating unfamiliar procedures, and interfacing with employers.

Recommendations

National governments:

- Promote a comprehensive policy framework, encompassing freedom of movement for refugees across sectors, while lowering barriers to accessing work permits and being hired.
- Clarify the procedures refugees need to follow and train the relevant national and regional authorities accordingly.
- Produce and disseminate guidelines for the private sector on how to secure the conditions for refugees' and vulnerable host community members' access to decent work.
- Set up an information-sharing platform with a monitoring system for donors, development actors, and the relevant authorities to prevent delays in implementation and avoid unmet expectations at the risk of loss of interest among the parties involved.

Implementing partners and civil society actors:

- Develop opportunities for vocational training (and language courses) for refugees and host communities.
- Support development projects in sectors relevant to the local economy, to create more jobs for refugees and host communities.
- Support monitoring and evaluation efforts to facilitate coordination among all relevant parties.
- In partnership with national and local authorities, educate refugees, employers, and host communities in new legislation and procedures and best practices.

International donors:

- Secure political will at the national and local levels.
- Work with international partners and national authorities to mobilize funding for livelihood projects and vocational training.

3. DECENT WORK CONDITIONS FOR REFUGEES

As donors and development actors increasingly engage in promoting refugees' self-reliance, programming and literature have focused primarily on the regularization of refugee labor and refugees' access to job markets, often without addressing the conditions of that work.⁴⁵⁶ In the meantime, the issue of decent work—characterized by fair hours, income, workplace security, and freedom of organization⁴⁵⁷—has come to the foreground of international policy more generally.⁴⁵⁸ Initiatives like Better Work (including in Jordan) have sought to improve working conditions for all workers, including refugees, in sectors such as construction, agriculture, and domestic services.⁴⁵⁹ And while there are differences in how different industries are managed and regulated in each country hosting Syrian refugees, there are several aspects of the Better Work approach that could be applied regionally.

BETTER WORK INITIATIVE IN JORDAN

Country	Jordan, but the program also targets eight other countries: Bangladesh, Egypt, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Haiti, Indonesia, Nicaragua, and Vietnam.
Years active	Since 2008
Key objectives	Improve working conditions, raise awareness of labor rights, and boost the competitiveness of the garment industry and other targeted sectors ⁴⁶⁰
Target population	Factories in the garment industry (and additional sectors), workers in these sectors (particularly migrants and refugees), and the Jordanian government
Budget	In 2020, roughly USD 3 million from the United States, European Union, and Canada ⁴⁶¹

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE BETTER WORK INITIATIVE

Since 1999, ILO has led efforts to promote decent work globally and in 2001, and launched Better Factory Cambodia, a project aimed at improving labor conditions in the garment industry.⁴⁶² Partnering with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), ILO expanded this to become the Better Work program, now involving 1,700 factories employing 2.4 million workers across nine countries.⁴⁶³ The initiative does not specifically target refugees, but it has sought to increase protection for migrant and refugee workers more broadly. Around the world, refugees, due to their often-informal labor status, are particularly vulnerable to discriminatory and exploitative labor practices and work conditions, including denial of fundamental labor rights, low and noncompetitive wages, and forced labor.⁴⁶⁴ And while refugees' labor rights are protected under international law, including the right to join trade unions, in practice these protections have not been widely implemented and examples of good practice are limited.⁴⁶⁵

In Jordan, a Better Work intervention was initiated in 2008 and at first focused exclusively on the garment industry, where the majority of workers are migrants. Following the 2016 Jordan Compact,⁴⁶⁶ and with the support of the European Union,⁴⁶⁷ Better Work Jordan (BWJ) expanded to the plastics, chemicals, and engineering sectors, and incorporated Syrian refugees more directly into its programming—although it does not work with sectors where the shares of refugee workers are largest, such as agriculture and construction.⁴⁶⁸ In its efforts toward equal treatment for all workers (see Box 4 and below), BWJ has taken into account some of the specific challenges Syrian refugees face in factories, such as lack of understanding of laws and regulations.⁴⁶⁹ While evidence of Syrians' working conditions in Jordan has been difficult to obtain, especially in the agricultural sector, studies have pointed to short contracts, low wages, lack of social security, and the presence of child labor.⁴⁷⁰ Workers with permits are more likely to face better working conditions than those without permits.⁴⁷¹

Box 4. Better Work Jordan

The Better Work approach relies on two main pillars: encouraging factories to improve working conditions and helping national stakeholders play stronger roles in governing the labor market.⁴⁷² Activities include providing practical assistance to facilitate employer-employee cooperation, conducting compliance assessment reports, and strengthening regulatory frameworks and national labor inspectorates.⁴⁷³

Aligning with Better Work's overall approach, BWJ has two primary activities: (i) building local stakeholder capacity to conduct assessments and audits, communicate with workers (including migrants and refugees), and better understand international labor standards; and (ii) working with trade unions and work representatives to improve engagement with members, address grievances, and enhance unions' inclusivity.⁴⁷⁴ BWJ closely collaborates with the Ministry of Labor, the Social Security Corporation, the Garment Trade Union, and the Jordan Chamber of Industry.⁴⁷⁵ Additionally, BWJ engages with factories, providing training and industry seminars and conducting assessments.⁴⁷⁶

Based on independent research conducted at Tufts University, ILO and IFC report that, globally, Better Work has helped improve working conditions, increase pay, and create positive knock-on effects for workers outside factories.⁴⁷⁷ And the program has reported improving working conditions in Jordanian factories in several ways. Specifically, it has helped Syrian refugees obtain a modified unified contract, better understand labor laws, gain representation in worker-management committees, and engage trade union leadership. Yet there are still improvements to be made, and continued success depends on the regular monitoring of compliance with regulations, ongoing and inclusive dialogue between workers and employers, the sustained engagement of stakeholders,⁴⁷⁸ and addressing pressures coming from the global supply chain.⁴⁷⁹ As of the end of 2019, BWJ worked with 94 garment factories and was beginning its expansion to additional sectors.⁴⁸⁰ In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased disputes between workers and management, highlighting the need for stronger grievance mechanisms.⁴⁸¹

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

1



PROMOTE REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AND THEIR ENFORCEMENT TO HELP GUARANTEE DECENT WORK CONDITIONS, INCLUDING FOR REFUGEE WORKERS.


- Laws and regulations should clearly guarantee decent workplace conditions, worker rights, and employer responsibilities, including for refugee workers.
- Government enforcement agencies, such as labor inspectorates, need to have the capacity to assess and enforce compliance with the regulatory framework, including for refugee workers.

The basis of a successful approach to promoting decent work for refugees and host communities is an appropriate legal and regulatory framework. Laws and regulations—including sector-specific work standards—ensure that employers can be held accountable and that employees are able to redress their grievances. These frameworks may differentiate between the rights afforded to nationals and those afforded to refugees,⁴⁸² and in the main countries hosting Syrian refugees do not apply evenly across sectors with large shares of refugee workers. For example, Jordan's existing regulatory framework for the garment industry, which underpins BWJ's ability to work effectively with factories, is fairly comprehensive and guarantees similar provisions for refugees and migrants with work permits as for nationals.⁴⁸³ In other sectors such as agriculture, however, Jordan lacks sufficient regulations,

inhibiting the implementation of a BWJ-style program.⁴⁸⁴ Similar issues arise in Lebanon, where progress has been made toward reforming the sponsorship (kafala) system generally, but refugees are still vulnerable to exploitation because their ability to obtain legal status often depends upon their employer's sponsorship.⁴⁸⁵ Lebanon's agriculture sector, where many refugees find informal work, is largely excluded from labor regulations.⁴⁸⁶

Beyond the development of a regulatory framework, the government's willingness and ability to monitor and enforce it are critical. In Jordan, the BWJ program builds the capacity of government inspectors through training and secondment programs, which cover issues facing vulnerable groups, as well as joint assessments.⁴⁸⁷ BWJ also conducts independent assessments, including in factories where refugees work, providing an external backstop to reinforce the government's inspections.⁴⁸⁸ In Lebanon, ILO engages in this line of programming, offering capacity building support to the government's labor inspection institutions at the policy and operational level.⁴⁸⁹ These activities could be accompanied by independent or joint compliance assessments to evaluate their effectiveness. But training and building the capacity to conduct investigations are only a start. Investigations need to be followed with enforcement actions if violations are found. As such, governments must have the capacity and the will to act if necessary.

2



INCENTIVIZE EMPLOYERS TO IMPLEMENT DECENT WORKING CONDITIONS

- Sectors linked to global supply chains and markets increasingly face pressure to provide decent working conditions and abide by fair labor standards.
- Favorable trade conditions and targeted investments can incentivize efforts to improve working conditions in sectors with large shares of refugee labor participation.

Securing decent working conditions and practices for refugees requires the willingness of employers to implement these conditions and cooperate with national labor authorities to enforce regulations. Better Work has succeeded in gaining factories' participation in part because of their connections to the global supply chain. As global brands have increasingly faced pressure to improve working conditions in their supply chains, they have asked their factories—both wholly owned and subcontracted—to engage in programs such as Better Work.⁴⁹⁰ Trade agreements linking favorable export conditions with decent work—such as the EU's relaxation of the Rules of Origin requirements as part of the Jordan Compact—also provide additional incentive, although evidence from Jordan shows the limitations of this approach.⁴⁹¹

The agriculture and construction sectors, where refugees are most likely to work, are less connected with global supply chains and markets and, as such, face less pressure from foreign investors, consumers, and governments to take the costly⁴⁹² steps necessary to regularize work and improve conditions. Economic incentives could be successful, as major economic powers such as the European Union have vested economic and human rights interests in the main countries hosting Syrian refugees. International funding to subsidize some of the costs of formalizing work and improving labor conditions could help ease employers into this model.⁴⁹³ For example, the European Union could use trade incentives to promote formalized hiring of and provision of decent working conditions for Syrian refugees in industrial and agricultural sectors, for instance, in southern Turkey.⁴⁹⁴

3



RAISE WORKFORCES' AWARENESS AND ORGANIZATION, INCLUDING AMONG REFUGEES

- Refugees need to be aware of their rights and options for redress when those rights are violated.
- Refugee workers should have the ability to effectively use these options, including through the same channels available to nationals.

Refugee workers, particularly those in informal sectors, are often unaware of their rights and the complaint mechanisms available to them, or are unwilling to utilize them, for fear of losing assistance benefits or risking forced return.⁴⁹⁵ In Jordan, for example, Syrians' awareness of their labor rights is limited, especially about working outside the agricultural and construction sectors.⁴⁹⁶ Addressing this requires raising awareness among refugees about rights and opportunities, something that can be facilitated, as BWJ has done, through greater refugee participation and organization in the workplace. This can, in turn, be fostered through the creation of workplace committees and refugees' inclusion in national unions and cooperatives, which are active in Lebanon and Turkey.⁴⁹⁷ These steps, which could be difficult to undertake given the sensitivities surrounding union membership,⁴⁹⁸ would also allow refugee workers the ability to advocate for themselves and for better working conditions. Achieving these organizational and awareness raising goals would require sustained engagement from key stakeholders, including trade unions and international organizations such as ILO.

Recommendations

National governments:

- Expand labor protections for Syrian refugees in all sectors where they work, including by strengthening the capacities of monitoring and enforcement bodies.
- Ensure that regulatory frameworks guarantee and support decent working conditions for all.
- Work with employers to enforce labor standards and remedy violations.

Implementing partners (including civil society actors):

- Identify specific challenges facing Syrian refugees in accessing decent work, including documentation of working conditions.
- Provide specific programming to address challenges unique to Syrian refugees in addition to mainstreaming them into efforts toward securing decent working conditions for all workers.
- Link decent work opportunities to existing job training and include the topic in awareness-raising programs to ensure Syrian refugees understand the grievance mechanisms available to them.
- Work with trade unions and workplace committees to include and advocate for the rights of Syrian refugee workers.

Donors:

- Advocate for regulatory frameworks that allow for and incentivize the formalization of refugees' labor.
- In conjunction with national authorities, continue to build the capacity of labor inspectorates to assess and enforce compliance with decent work provisions and support enforcement capacities for occupational health and safety standards.
- Incentivize employers' compliance with decent work provisions through economic and trade leverage.
- In conjunction with national authorities, raise awareness among refugees about their rights in the workplace and available grievance mechanisms.



By Mais Salman/DRC

4. INVESTING IN THE ECONOMIC RESILIENCE OF HOST SOCIETIES

Countries hosting large numbers of refugees may face additional pressure on public service delivery and in labor markets (at least where there is a margin for job competition in the informal sector to increase⁴⁹⁹) and economic infrastructure. In the aftermath of the Venezuelan crisis, for instance, Colombia reported higher spending on education, health, housing support, and other basic services. Yet previous analysis has also shown that, if well managed, refugees' presence could result in economic growth in the medium and long term.⁵⁰⁰ Programs like the one implemented by the Migration Unit of the Social Sector of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) precisely seek to help address the challenges resulting from large refugee flows and to turn refugees' presence into an opportunity for local development.

IDB MIGRATION UNIT – SOCIAL SECTOR

Countries	Latin America and the Caribbean
Years active	Since 2019
Key objectives	Help build the resilience of origin, destination, and transit countries involved in migration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean. Specifically, the economic opportunities projects have sought to facilitate the inclusion of migrants and refugees, as well as host communities, in labor markets and support sustainable growth
Target population	Migrants, refugees, and host communities in Latin America and the Caribbean
Budget	As of September 2020, over USD 100 million approved in grants (from the IDB Grant Facility) for the overall initiative, to leverage additional investment loans. ⁵⁰¹

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE IDB MIGRATION UNIT

Since 2015, the deteriorating conditions in Venezuela have led over 5 million refugees and migrants to leave the country.⁵⁰² Many of them moved to neighboring countries—Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Chile—where some got asylum status, while others came under legal statuses created specifically to manage the crisis (see case study of Peru in Chapter 1 on Protection).⁵⁰³ Latin American countries initially welcomed these populations and, in most places, granted them formal access to the labor market. But the pressure on social and economic infrastructure rapidly increased, especially in regions where health, education, and broader economic systems were already strained. Access to sustainable and decent livelihoods opportunities has proved particularly challenging, and as many as 66 percent of Venezuelan refugees and migrants were unemployed or working informally prior to the COVID-19 crisis.⁵⁰⁴ Many of their difficulties stemmed from a lack of access to information on the labor market, skills certification, and adequate job matching, as well as financial services for Venezuelans interested in starting their own business. The COVID-19 pandemic further deteriorated the access of Venezuelans to livelihoods, especially due to the temporary closure of the informal sector.⁵⁰⁵

All these challenges led IDB to launch the Migration Unit (former Initiative) in 2019. IDB had previously been involved in the migration field, the Plan for the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle introduced in 2014. At the time, however, the objective was primarily to address social and economic issues in Central America to curb irregular migration toward the United States.⁵⁰⁶ In contrast, the Migration Unit seeks to help countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to better manage migration flows and enhance the inclusion of refugees and migrants into host communities (Box 5).⁵⁰⁷ IDB's narrative supports turning these flows into a development opportunity for the region, while acknowledging their potential negative impacts on some segments of the economy or host communities in the short term.⁵⁰⁸

Box 5. IDB's Migration Unit

The Migration Unit covers a variety of sectors and is organized around four types of activities:⁵⁰⁹

1. Projects in four main thematic areas: identification services, basic services, social services, and economic opportunities. These projects are financed through IDB's financial (mainly concessional loans and grants) and non-financial instruments (technical cooperation and regional public goods). Most focus specifically on livelihoods and access to economic opportunities. In sum, IDB is financing and non-financing projects to strengthen labor market systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. This has included, for instance, projects to "strengthen employment policies in Colombia," or to "protect the jobs and income of vulnerable populations in Costa Rica."⁵¹⁰ In Ecuador, Colombia, Haiti, Mexico, Peru, and Panama, IDB launched a technical cooperation initiative to encourage the use of new technologies, to promote the economic inclusion of refugees and migrants.
2. Policy dialogues on migration and forced displacement with national and subnational authorities in the region.
3. Data collection/generation and research on migration and forced displacement flows, migrants' socioeconomic integration and attitudes toward migrants. Dissemination of research findings.
4. Capacity building of the governments involved in managing migration and refugee flows.

As projects under the Migration Unit started relatively recently, it is too early to evaluate their full outcomes. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several interventions had to be put on hold or adapted to the new context and the looming economic recession. Nonetheless, the methodology adopted by the Migration Unit—its comprehensive approach to operations and knowledge generation, its investment in solid needs assessments, and its close coordination with recipient governments—can inform future programs to build the economic resilience of Syrian refugee host countries.

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

1


CONNECT ECONOMIC RESILIENCE PROJECTS TO POLICY DIALOGUES AND REFORMS CAN HELP MAXIMIZE THEIR IMPACT.

- Promote arenas for policy dialogue at the local, national, and regional levels.
- Leverage the financing of projects to negotiate progress on inclusive policy frameworks.

The Migration Unit finances various initiatives but also policy dialogues with governments in the region, as part of an effort to promote inclusive policy frameworks for refugees and migrants.⁵¹¹ As the Venezuelan crisis enters its sixth year, these initiatives are particularly needed to help overcome the barriers to the economic inclusion of Venezuelans and facilitate coordination among host countries. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, these regional dialogues have turned into a useful platform for stakeholders to share their concerns and good practices, from digitalization to accelerating the accreditation of foreign health professionals.⁵¹² At the same time, gaps remain in the legislation and its implementation while discussions on project financing could seek to better link an increase in financing with policy reforms favorable to the social and economic inclusion of refugees. Similar trends can be observed in the Syrian context, and elsewhere, where multilateral development banks have been more active in helping host governments cope with refugee presence—yet without always securing policy reform for refugees.⁵¹³

2


PROMOTE A REGIONAL APPROACH WHEN ADDRESSING COMMON ECONOMIC RESILIENCE CHALLENGES

- Promote a regional approach to a protracted refugee crisis, instead of financing interventions strictly at the national level.
- Enhance international cooperation and cross-learning and avoid competition that could be detrimental to local economies and refugee populations.

From the beginning, the Venezuelan crisis had a regional dimension, with an obvious need to coordinate the status and benefits granted to Venezuelan refugees and migrants across the region. Already in 2018, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, and other partners established the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform to synchronize their interventions. The Migration Unit follows a similar approach with its ambition to develop common responses to the challenges experienced by countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. This regional approach should help prevent a race to the bottom and competition among states to attract development funding. Similarly, a regional answer is needed to respond to the Syrian crisis, with aid and development actors seeking to coordinate within the Syria Regional Refugee Response.⁵¹⁴ Learning from IDB and its partners regarding how to enhance coordination and cross-learning, and defuse tensions when managing refugee issues, should therefore be relevant.

3



BUILD AUTHORITIES' CAPACITY TO PROMOTE A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO CRISIS SITUATIONS.

- Ensure that authorities are well prepared to manage the challenges associated with refugee and migration issues. This requires conducting training with local authorities, and entities that have never worked on migration issues, possibly through remote learning methods.

As a development program, the Migration Unit integrated the need to work closely with local and national authorities early on in the process. To do so, IDB funded the development of online training modules for civil servants who had no prior experience in this field and for actors who needed to develop more targeted expertise on migration and forced displacement. As of 2020, 482 public officials from across the entire region had applied to join the course.⁵¹⁵ The online nature of the training allows it to reach a broad audience at low cost, and it is now proving particularly appropriate in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Syrian refugee context, authorities have had to manage the effects of the Syrian crisis for nearly 10 years (and to refugee crises even longer, given previous forced displacement crises in the region), but gaps remain in knowledge of the rights refugees have access to. This is especially the case as the legislation in some countries has changed over time and there have been more efforts to promote a whole-of-government approach to some topics that were only managed by ministries of interior previously.

Recommendations

National governments:

- Identify sectors or regions that have been affected by refugees' presence and can benefit from development financing to increase their resilience.
- Share lessons learned and best practices with other host governments in the region, and refrain from engaging in a race to the bottom in terms of the rights and benefits granted to refugees and migrants.
- Link national and local authorities with capacity building opportunities in the area of refugee and migration issues.

Implementing partners and multilateral development banks:

- Link project financing to policy reform and the implementation of inclusive policies.
- Encourage cross-border dialogue, including among local authorities of regions directly affected by the presence of refugees and migrants.
- Carefully select the authorities to join capacity-building efforts, to ensure these activities have long-term impacts.

Donors:

- In addition to thorough needs assessments at the local and national level, encourage regional coordination to support cross-learning.
- Development interventions should be accompanied by a sustained dialogue about refugee and migration policies, to ensure that projects (especially those focused on economic opportunities) can reach their full potential. Discussions at the regional level might help defuse some of the tensions in national political scenes.

5. PROVIDING TARGETED SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR REFUGEES

Even when the policy and economic environment is conducive, refugees often face specific challenges to entering the job market or creating their own business. Despite the differences in the environments in Brazil and the four major receiving countries of Syrian refugees, there are similarities in the difficulties faced by refugee entrepreneurs. The experience of Migraflix in Brazil can provide some insights on how to further tackle them.

MIGRAFLIX'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT FOR REFUGEES

Country	Brazil
Years active	Since 2015
Key objectives	Promote the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and migrants in Brazil through cultural entrepreneurship
Target population	1,024 migrants and refugees (with regular status) from Venezuela, Syria, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, and Colombia have benefited from the initiative since its launch. ⁵¹⁶
Budget	Grant based (USAID, IDB, IOM) and in-kind donations

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF MIGRAFLIX'S PROJECT

In Brazil, ensuring the social and economic inclusion of the country's 265,000 refugees⁵¹⁷ and 807,000 migrants⁵¹⁸ remains a pressing challenge.⁵¹⁹ Despite being legally permitted to work, refugees and migrants face numerous barriers to access decent and sustainable jobs.⁵²⁰ Recent economic recessions have weakened labor market conditions in Brazil,⁵²¹ and a complex and costly credential recognition process hinders the ability of educated refugees and migrants to put their professional skills into practice.⁵²² Moreover, refugees and migrants often lack information or support services to navigate the job search. Even when job opportunities are available, they may not be able to take advantage of them because of language barriers, cultural prejudices,⁵²³ or difficulties in procuring formal proof of address and bank account possession.⁵²⁴ At the same time, most employers lack adequate knowledge regarding the procedures to employ foreign staff, which might prevent them from carrying job applications from refugees.

In light of these obstacles, and as in various other forced displacement contexts, many refugees and migrants have turned to entrepreneurial activities, most of which are informal.⁵²⁵ There are several reasons for this: first, refugees and migrants are often unfamiliar with the legal requirements for registering a microbusiness or are unable to cover the fees to do so.⁵²⁶ Second, refugees and migrants face hurdles accessing sources of finance due to legal and practical barriers to their financial inclusion.⁵²⁷ Third, language barriers and other factors such as limited contacts with host populations due to their social status and living area can hinder their ability to develop and expand their customer base.⁵²⁸ The Brazilian government has a range of resources available for entrepreneurs,⁵²⁹ but these are not tailored to the specific needs of refugees and migrants. Organizations such as Migraflix, a São Paulo-based nonprofit organization, have stepped up to fill this gap (Box 6).

Box 6. Migraflif's Entrepreneurship Program for Refugees and Migrants⁵³⁰

Migraflif seeks to assist refugees and migrants become self-reliant through “cultural entrepreneurship.” This entails supporting refugees and migrants to start their own businesses in gastronomy and other creative industries. At the same time, Migraflif aims to raise awareness about the cultural diversity that refugees and migrants bring into Brazilian society and thus shape a different narrative on migration and bridge the gap between displaced people, migrants, and host communities. Migraflif's entrepreneurship programs are based on three pillars:

1. An online-based training platform available for migrants with modules on entrepreneurial skills (business plan development, finance and accounting, marketing); industry skills (gastronomy, catering, performance arts); and soft skills (communication, leadership, collaboration, customer awareness, problem solving). If refugees and migrants need language courses, Migraflif connects them with peer organizations.
2. Migraflif provides legal and technical support for the registration of new businesses. It also helps entrepreneurs build their customer base through establishing partnerships with marketing firms, sales platforms, and other companies such as Facebook, Uber Eats, Airbnb, Accenture, and LinkedIn, among others.
3. Individual mentorship is provided by business professionals in relevant fields. Migraflif also helps link beneficiaries to banking and microcredit institutes to access financial resources through partnerships with financial institutions.

Migraflif works closely with Caritas and Missão Paz—two nongovernmental organizations that provide assistance to refugees and migrants upon their arrival to Brazil—to advertise its activities to newcomers. Refugees and migrants can also apply for the in-person program on Migraflif's website and access content online. In October 2020, Migraflif launched a mobile-friendly digital platform called Migralab with the support of IOM and Accenture.⁵³¹ Through the platform, Migraflif seeks to reach, engage, and empower refugees and migrants at anytime, anywhere. At the same time, Migralab helps to monitor the progress of entrepreneurs and present personalized content by using predictive analytics.

Migraflif has deployed its project in six cities (Boa Vista, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Porto Alegre, Brasília, Campinas), benefiting over 1,000 refugees and migrants from Venezuela, Syria, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. After partaking in Migraflif, participants have reported an increase in their income-generation sources.⁵³² They have also expanded their social networks with other refugees and migrants, and their local communities, and report feeling more integrated into Brazilian society. While Migraflif has been able to fill in a gap and support displaced people, as a nonprofit organization with limited financial and staffing capacity, its impact remains small in scale. The digital platform Migralab is aimed at overcoming some of these capacity challenges, as well as the social distancing and in-person gathering restrictions introduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its launch (and at the time of the writing), 1,330 migrants have enrolled in Migralab. Migraflif hopes to reach to 3,000 migrants and refugees by the end of 2021 through the platform.⁵³³

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

1



TAILOR ACTIVITIES TO THE SKILLS AND ASPIRATIONS OF BENEFICIARIES

- Trainings should match the individual skills, lived experiences, and aspirations of participants.
- Establish flexible scheduling modalities to increase participation.
- Provide livelihood support (e.g., food, transportation, logistic support) throughout the trainings.

One of the key aspects of Migraflix's model is that it involves refugees and migrants in the design of the program by providing personalized trainings tailored to the qualifications and aspirations of each participant instead of a homogeneous one-size-fits-all model.⁵³⁴ While this approach leads to limitations in the number of participants who can enroll each cycle, it helps refugees and migrants attain deeper knowledge of the different aspects of running their business including identifying business opportunities, financing sector-specific needs, and developing a customer base, increasing the chances that the business developed during the program is sustainable. This model seems relevant to the Syrian context, where refugees have previously reported that training sessions are disconnected from both their aspirations and the needs of the local labor market.⁵³⁵

Migraflix provides its tailored training and one-on-one mentorship in weekend sessions since most participants have other responsibilities during the week, such as other employment, or care responsibilities in the home. Participants are given a stipend to cover transportation costs for attending the in-person training, as well as food. It also offers childcare for participants who need it. Syrian refugees seeking livelihood opportunities have highlighted the importance of flexibility, the ability to sustain multiple jobs, and logistics support such as transportation and childcare.⁵³⁶ Migraflix supports beneficiaries throughout the whole process and continues to provide mentorship even after the program ends.

2



BUILD ON PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND MATCH REFUGEES' SKILLS WITH THEIR NEEDS TO MAXIMIZE A PROJECT'S BENEFITS FOR BOTH PARTIES

- Establish partnerships with local companies so refugee entrepreneurs can secure access to local markets and build a solid customer base.
- Provide training in marketing (including via the use of social media platforms) to further expand entrepreneurs' customer base.

Through the development of partnerships with the private sector and training in the use of social media platforms as marketing tools, Migraflix bridges the gap between migrants, refugees, and local communities. First, Migraflix has developed partnerships with established companies that might require the services of the refugees and migrants who participate in the program. After participating in the program, refugee entrepreneurs render catering or other services like performance at company events. In addition, Migraflix has agreements with platforms like UberEats, Facebook Marketplace, and AirBnb to promote refugees' businesses and help them access local markets. This linkage between refugee and migrant entrepreneurs and private companies provides refugees with a critical boost in reaching new customers and expanding their networks within the local community. In parallel, Migraflix also trains them in marketing tools, so that they can consolidate their customer base.⁵³⁷ Displaced Syrians have regularly reported lacking social networks to foster job opportunities or access to local markets.⁵³⁸ Syrian refugees often end up relying on their personal networks, whereas a wider involvement of private actors may help them expand their market base.

Recommendations

Implementing partners and civil society actors:

- Develop personalized vocational training and entrepreneurship programs tailored to the needs, aspirations, and lived realities of participants instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, while taking into account labor market conditions and sector restrictions.
- Establish flexible scheduling to increase participation.
- Provide additional support, such as food, transportation, logistical support and childcare services, throughout the training period.
- Link refugee entrepreneurs with marketing tools and local companies so they can render services and build a customer base within the local community.



By: Elif Işık/DRC

6. CONCLUSIONS

Access to livelihoods is a critical step toward refugees' self-reliance. A prerequisite for refugees to engage in livelihood activities is to be granted the right to work and to avoid getting trapped in the informal sector where abuses are more common and more difficult to report. The experience of Ethiopia illustrates how critical it is to secure long-term political commitment, especially as political conditions in host countries are quickly evolving. It also shows that defining the precise conditions for refugees to access work permits and gain formal employment can be complex and encounter setbacks. Even refugees employed in the formal sector may face prejudices and other unfair treatment. It is essential that host countries, donors, civil society, and development actors mobilize to ensure decent employment conditions for all workers. The Better Work initiative in Jordan provides insights on how this can be achieved, but more efforts could still be deployed to target refugee workers. All these efforts need to be accompanied by serious efforts to support the economic resilience of host countries, where unemployment may already be high, and tensions may quickly arise if refugees compete for jobs with nationals. Development actors like the IDB have been active on this front in recent years, showing the potential of multilateral development banks to take a stronger role in addressing these questions and helping to finance large-scale initiatives. Finally, host governments, development actors, and other implementing partners need to acknowledge that refugees face specific difficulties in gaining employment or creating their own business. Addressing these demands a set of specific initiatives, like Migraflix in Brazil, to ensure conducive conditions for refugees.

Main Recommendations

National governments:

- Facilitate access to labor markets more broadly, through efforts to ensure refugees' freedom of movement and by removing barriers to refugees' access to work permits or employment. Such measures could ultimately benefit countries of first asylum by allowing for a better trained workforce.
- Clarify the procedures refugees need to follow to access work permits, and train the relevant authorities, including on the labor laws refugees fall under.
- Ensure that refugee workers are covered by existing labor laws on decent work, and that regular monitoring of workers' conditions also covers their situation.

Implementing partners:

- In partnership with national and local authorities, educate refugees, employers, and host communities on legislation and procedures by raising awareness and training local and national administrative staff.
- Develop tailored projects to address the specific needs (and skills) of refugee workers and entrepreneurs, in particular when it comes to job matching and entrepreneurship programs.

Donors:

- Mobilize resources to strengthen the economic resilience of host countries, through grant projects (e.g., capacity building activities for authorities, start-up packages) or loans (e.g., to support economic infrastructure altogether, or loans to financial institutions and other similar actors to stimulate the local economy), while insuring refugees' inclusion in the gains from these initiatives.
- Work with international partners and national authorities to mobilize funding for livelihood projects, to create more and better job opportunities for refugee and host communities. These can range from vocational training and job matching to support to the private sector and local entrepreneurship.
- Encourage policy changes in terms of access to formal employment and prioritize decent working conditions for refugees and host communities alike.





CHAPTER

5

HEALTHCARE

1. INTRODUCTION

Among the numerous challenges displaced Syrians face, access to quality healthcare remains one of the most salient. The urgency of this need has only intensified in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Refugees often suffer from health complications due to injuries and trauma sustained during the conflict they are fleeing, while on their journey to the host country, or as a result of endemic conditions exacerbated by poverty. Analyses of the health needs of Syrian refugees have pointed to issues such as skin, digestive, and respiratory ailments,⁵³⁹ chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension,⁵⁴⁰ outbreaks of previously eradicated diseases and increases in the spread of drug-resistant tuberculosis,⁵⁴¹ and significant mental health challenges.⁵⁴²

Box 1. About this Project

This chapter is part of a research project by the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), titled “A Bridge To Firmer Ground: Learning from International Experiences to Support Pathways to Solutions in the Syrian Refugee Context”. As the protracted Syrian refugee crisis continues and refugee communities, host governments, and international donors and implementers attempt to move toward durable solutions, this project analyzes projects, policies, and approaches from around the world and draws lessons learned for the Syrian context. This report provides recommendations for host-country policymakers, regional and international bodies, and nongovernmental actors.

The four countries that host the majority of Syrian refugees have, to varying extents, included refugees living outside of camps in their national healthcare systems (see Box 2). However, many of these systems struggle with the pressure placed on health infrastructure and personnel, including insufficient numbers of doctors and specialists.⁵⁴³ Additionally, efforts to make healthcare accessible to refugees focus largely on primary care, and it often remains difficult to access secondary and tertiary care. The pressures placed on health systems by the arrival of large number of refugees can also cause resentment within host communities, as other locals face many of the same challenges to accessing healthcare.

Box 2. Syrian Refugees’ Access to Healthcare

Jordan: Syrians living outside of camps initially received free primary healthcare at public facilities, but since 2014, they have had to pay the same rate as uninsured Jordanians. Rate requirements have subsequently fluctuated.⁵⁴⁴ Syrians in camps can access healthcare provided by humanitarian organizations there.

Lebanon: Syrian refugees use the same healthcare facilities as Lebanese nationals, which is highly fragmented and privatized. For primary care, international donors support different schemes implemented by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also covers some of registered refugees’ healthcare costs for secondary healthcare.⁵⁴⁵

Turkey: Syrians registered with the government are entitled to the same health services as Turkish citizens in their province of registration. Primary healthcare was free until December 2019, when co-payment requirements were introduced.

Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI): Syrians have access to free primary healthcare through camp-based centers or public health facilities in host communities.⁵⁴⁶ In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) restarted a comprehensive health support program in the region, benefitting both refugee and host-community members through improved access to primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare facilities.⁵⁴⁷



By: Ahmad Al-Jarery

Significant gaps also exist in addressing the specific needs of refugees, in particular women who are at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence.⁵⁴⁸ Syrians face limited access to gynecologists and staff with reproductive healthcare training as well as family planning services. Maternal care is often also an issue, and many refugee women have limited access to care during their pregnancy and can face more complications during delivery as a result.⁵⁴⁹ Other healthcare gaps include mental health services⁵⁵⁰ and psychosocial support, treatment for chronic diseases,⁵⁵¹ and services for persons with disabilities.⁵⁵²

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these needs, and refugees in the region (and around the world) face barriers to accessing social safety nets and often live in locations where healthcare systems were already under strain before the pandemic hit. In Jordan, a COVID-19 assessment (among Syrians, Jordanians, and other residents) found that nearly 70 percent of respondents faced challenges accessing basic healthcare.⁵⁵³ Similarly, in Iraq, a survey to gauge the impacts of the pandemic found that one-third of refugees were concerned about accessing healthcare facilities, and that one-third of elderly individuals and those with certain needs or serious medical conditions have not received the care they need.⁵⁵⁴ COVID-19 testing and treating has become the top priority for healthcare providers, limiting the resources available to provide treatment for other conditions. In addition, the economic impacts of the pandemic have deepened the economic barriers many refugees already faced to accessing care and the pressures health systems were already under to provide for their needs and those of other residents.

Efforts have been made in recent years to improve refugees' access to healthcare, and while the pandemic has been disruptive, it has also demonstrated how critical this work is. Driven by UNHCR and the WHO, global policy towards refugee health focuses on providing access to healthcare and specialized support (including reproductive and mental healthcare) and addressing socioeconomic determinants of health outcomes, such as nutrition and hygiene.⁵⁵⁵ Policies have also increasingly recognized the importance of including refugees in national health systems and providing long-term support, improving the capacity of these systems to serve both refugees and host communities, and mainstreaming refugee health issues into national health strategies.⁵⁵⁶ There is also an increased emphasis on the need to improve data collection and information dissemination to combat knowledge gaps.⁵⁵⁷

This chapter presents lessons learned about improving refugees' access to healthcare from case studies across three areas: (2) designing inclusive health policies; (3) improving the overall resilience of health systems in refugee-hosting communities; and (4) supporting specialized care for refugees, with a particular focus on refugee women in this specific case.

2. HEALTH POLICIES AND MEASURES INCLUSIVE OF REFUGEES

In the Middle East, many Syrian refugees continue to have limited access to completely free or subsidized public healthcare. Where they have access to health services delivered by international organizations and NGOs, these are often part of a parallel system. The model adopted in Costa Rica to incorporate vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers into the national healthcare system offers potentially useful lessons for the Syrian refugee context. While Costa Rica hosts a smaller refugee population than the major host countries for Syrian refugees, this case study illustrates well how inclusive policies can be developed and implemented.

ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTHCARE IN COSTA RICA

Country	Costa Rica
Year active	Originally, January through December 2020. It has been extended until March 2021 because of the availability of funds already contemplated for the implementation of the agreement.
Key objective	Agreement between UNHCR and the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) to provide vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers with free access to the national healthcare system. ⁵⁵⁸
Target population	6,000 vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, with priority given to people with serious and chronic conditions, those deemed the most socioeconomically vulnerable, and households with people over age 60, health workers, and those who face the greatest risk of COVID-19 infection (refugees and asylum seekers who are health workers by profession and who are not working in the formal sector but have been caring for people in their networks since the beginning of the pandemic) ⁵⁵⁹
Budget	USD 1.8 million, provided by UNHCR, ⁵⁶⁰ plus additional financial support provided by the government of Costa Rica

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE UNHCR–CCSS AGREEMENT

In December 2019, UNHCR and the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS) signed an agreement to expand asylum seekers' and refugees' access to the national healthcare system, motivated by the sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers entering the country. In 2019, Costa Rica was among the top ten countries worldwide receiving the most new asylum claims,⁵⁶¹ with more than 86,000 Nicaraguans arriving that year, driven by political unrest, violence, and a social crisis in their country.⁵⁶² This resulted in increased waiting periods for basic services and forced many newcomers to rely heavily on savings, increasing their vulnerabilities⁵⁶³ and testing the country's capacity to protect and integrate them.

Assessments conducted by UNHCR have consistently identified access to healthcare as a critical need among vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in the country.⁵⁶⁴ Indeed, many reach Costa Rica with serious injuries incurred during their travels or due to violence experienced in their countries of origin.⁵⁶⁵ In response, UNHCR and Costa Rican authorities have made additional efforts to address this issue, as well as made a commitment during the 72nd World Health Assembly in May 2019 to promote the health of refugees and migrants by securing their access to universal healthcare coverage.⁵⁶⁶

Box 3. What Is the UNHCR-CCSS Agreement?

The UNHCR–Costa Rican Social Security Fund agreement aimed to provide access to healthcare for 6,000 asylum seekers and refugees in 2020.⁵⁶⁷ Beneficiaries received free health insurance allowing them to access the national healthcare system for the duration of the agreement (initially, January–December 2020, but later extended to March 2021), or until they found a job—in which case the employer would cover their health insurance premiums.⁵⁶⁸ The initiative excluded minors (children under age 18), pregnant and nursing women, and other individuals already eligible for medical coverage. Beneficiaries were given an insurance card with their photograph on it and the insurance number assigned to them by the CCSS.⁵⁶⁹

Designing and implementing this agreement relied on strong buy-in from, and coordination between, the Costa Rican government and UNHCR. UNHCR Costa Rica was in charge of creating and delivering a recommended list of beneficiaries to CCSS and providing documentation to individuals who did not already hold a refugee ID. CCSS determined the final list of beneficiaries after ensuring that UNHCR's proposed candidates were actually eligible—that is, that they were not already eligible to enroll in or benefiting from other social schemes.⁵⁷⁰

UNHCR and the Costa Rican government split the costs of the program. The USD 1.8 million provided by UNHCR covered the estimated cost of the monthly insurance premiums per person over the year-long program.⁵⁷¹ Meanwhile, the government funded the majority of the expenses as it was responsible for paying the medical bills (i.e., covering any difference between the fixed insurance rate paid by UNHCR per beneficiary and the actual cost of medical care provided).⁵⁷²

Between June and July 2020, the list of beneficiaries was finalized, with 5,982 refugees and asylum seekers enrolled in the Costa Rican healthcare system under the agreement. In June 2020, more than 69 percent of refugees and asylum seekers benefiting from the agreement were Nicaraguans, 12 percent Cubans, more than 10 percent Venezuelans, and around 5 percent Salvadorans, and almost 55 percent of all beneficiaries were female (this distribution may have shifted somewhat as some beneficiaries found jobs and exited the program and others joined). Around 700 households benefiting from the agreement had members age 60 and above.⁵⁷³

Although no evaluation of the initiative is yet available, beneficiaries reported that it allowed them to undergo surgeries and interventions that they could not have otherwise afforded or accessed.⁵⁷⁴ The negative impact of COVID-19 on the Costa Rican economy jeopardizes, however, the long-term plans set out in the agreement, even as need remains high as many refugees are facing increased difficulties in finding a job, especially one that would allow them to enter an employer-sponsored health insurance program (in comparison, all nationals have full access to healthcare). The agreement, initially valid for a year, was extended until March 2021 using funds that had already been set aside for program implementation and that were still available.⁵⁷⁵ In addition, UNHCR Costa Rica has indicated they are in the process of negotiating a new agreement that allows them to maintain medical insurance coverage for the original number of beneficiaries under the program (6,000) and extend it to 4,000 new beneficiaries for nine more months (April–December 2021).⁵⁷⁶

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

1



ENSURE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE BENEFICIARY SELECTION

- Selection criteria should be clearly defined and communicated to refugees from the inception of a program.
- Program design should take into account the amount of time that will be needed to lay the groundwork for its implementation and to organize the selection process.

Setting clear criteria for healthcare access and communicating them to potential beneficiaries is important to ensure the selection process is quick, transparent, and that people understand it and do not feel discriminated against if they are not selected.⁵⁷⁷ For example, under the Costa Rican agreement, pregnant women were not enrolled because they were already eligible for maternity assistance; this had to be clearly communicated to ensure they knew from whom they could receive support.⁵⁷⁸ In order to disseminate information about the program, a call center refugees and asylum seekers could reach out to was set up, and online news as well as refugee networks played an important role in reaching potential beneficiaries.⁵⁷⁹

Given the sensitivities around selection and the importance of raising awareness among potential beneficiaries, it is important that program design allots sufficient time for these foundational steps. In Costa Rica, the initial selection process took more than four months to complete. UNHCR had to ensure that beneficiaries met the selection criteria, after which the CCSS crosschecked them against social welfare databases to confirm whether they were already benefiting from or eligible for healthcare under other programs.⁵⁸⁰ While this initially delayed refugees' access to essential services and reduced the number of months refugees would benefit from the agreement, in the end, the extensions signed by UNHCR with the CCSS to guarantee access to insurance until March 2021 addressed this issue.

In hindsight, UNHCR acknowledged it would have been better to negotiate a 12-month insurance period that would start from the moment a beneficiary was enrolled instead of following the calendar year.⁵⁸¹ In the Syrian refugee context, the swift implementation of similar agreements could be complicated in some countries by the lack of formal registration of refugees as well as by the lack of rigorous assessments of their socioeconomic and health conditions. These gaps would make it more difficult to accurately target the eligible populations and even register them in the national healthcare system. Still, existing vulnerability assessments and targeting mechanisms used for social assistance could be a good source of information for similar health programs in the region until more systematic assessment systems can be put in place.

2



INCREASE AWARENESS ON REFUGEES' ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

- Communicating with the staff at health centers about the conditions of healthcare agreement as well as how to identify beneficiaries can help ensure refugees can access services open to them.
- Designing measures to counter anti-refugee sentiment can help reduce tensions between host communities and refugees that might arise from the latter's inclusion in healthcare systems.
- Raising awareness among refugees of their rights and opportunities to access healthcare can improve program uptake.

When new populations and categories of people are granted access to healthcare, workers throughout the health system need to be informed of these changes to ensure smooth rollout and implementation of coverage. Shortly after the UNHCR-CCSS agreement was signed, the CCSS (supported by UNHCR) started issuing guidelines and launched a mass communication campaign to educate its staff and support their capacity to (1) recognize the new documentation issued for refugee and asylum seeker beneficiaries of the initiative, (2) acknowledge refugees' rights and their benefits under the agreement, and (3) understand how the agreement works in practice and the steps to follow.⁵⁸² By raising awareness among its staff, CCSS aimed to prevent refugees from being inappropriately rejected at CCSS's health centers or being asked to pay for services that should be free. In the Syrian refugee context, especially given the various shifts in refugee assistance that have taken place over the duration of the crisis, it is imperative that those involved in distributing program benefits, such as staff at primary healthcare centers, are informed of the most recent developments and that potential tensions between care providers and beneficiaries are carefully managed.

Refugees and other migrants in countries around the world often encounter xenophobia, which can hinder their access to programs and services for which they qualify. Recognizing that this could keep some Nicaraguans in Costa Rica from seeking or effectively accessing healthcare services, the CCSS and UNHCR decided to add a public communication component to the program.⁵⁸³ This took the form of leaflets distributed at health centers explaining the agreement to help beneficiaries understand how it works and locals understand the scope of the project (this is, that there was a limited number of beneficiaries, and, most importantly, that it was being supported by UNHCR).⁵⁸⁴ The agreement also benefited from the existing #TodaslasVocesCuentan campaign led by UNHCR to humanize refugees in Costa Rica, which shared stories of beneficiaries to promote solidarity. The education of CCSS staff, through the release of guidelines, proved effective as it reduced the chances of program beneficiaries being rejected at health centers, whether due to staff ignorance of the new agreement (and some beneficiaries lacking UNHCR-issued health credentials as a result of the pandemic) or, in some cases, as a result of negative attitudes towards refugees and migrants.⁵⁸⁵

Countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees and considering implementing similar health policies could learn from these efforts to counter anti-refugee attitudes and tensions between refugees and nationals.⁵⁸⁶ In Lebanon, for example, there were tension at the beginning of the crisis, when the international community started providing and subsidizing access to healthcare for Syrian refugees, while vulnerable Lebanese communities living in the same geographical area were also in need of healthcare assistance.⁵⁸⁷ In Jordan, anti-refugee sentiment has been triggered, at least in part, by reports that Jordanians awaiting elective surgery were turned away so that hospitals could treat the war injuries and other urgent medical conditions of refugees.⁵⁸⁸ Training for healthcare center staff and outreach to local communities could help ease such tensions and improve refugees' access to care.

3



ENSURE LONG-TERM IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY WITH A CLEAR EXIT STRATEGY

- This transition requires sustained support and funding from international partners to increase refugees' access to employment and, as a result, their enrolment in an employer-based insurance system, and/or to grant the most vulnerable refugees who are not able to find a job by the end of the program continued access to healthcare.

By providing refugees and asylum seekers with access to healthcare through the national system, the UNHCR-CCSS agreement not only helped them address their most pressing needs (particularly given its coincidence with the COVID-19 pandemic) but also laid the groundwork for the initiative to have a more durable impact on beneficiaries' lives by helping refugees stay enrolled in the healthcare system.⁵⁸⁹ As beneficiaries have already been integrated in the CCSS (and have provided the required documentation to do so, facilitated by UNHCR),⁵⁹⁰ the expectation is that it should be easier for them to continue to benefit from national healthcare, as compared to other newcomers who are missing documentation or face barriers to enrollment due to a lack of information or misinformation.⁵⁹¹

Building continuity and sustainability into the design of healthcare programs can take on two forms. First, donors, the government, and international partners can support livelihoods projects to enhance refugee employment and, once they are employed, help them enroll in the employer-based insurance system, as UNHCR did in Costa Rica.⁵⁹² Implementing this exit strategy requires working closely with employers and the government to provide beneficiaries with better access to jobs in the formal sector in order to ensure they can stay in the health insurance system after the program's end through the co-payment system.⁵⁹³ This might be challenging to implement in countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees, where many refugees face substantial barriers to accessing job opportunities that would enable them to keep up their enrolment in health insurance. For example, in Jordan, despite employers being required to enroll their employees in social security irrespective of their nationality,⁵⁹⁴ a 2018 study found that only 20 percent of Syrian workers holding work permits

were covered by social security.⁵⁹⁵ In the same vein, another study found that some Syrian refugee respondents in Turkey lacked sufficient understanding of social assistance system procedures to feel comfortable trying to upgrade their residency cards so that they could access healthcare.⁵⁹⁶

The second approach to creating long-term impact is to integrate those refugees who had not found a job before the end of the program into the host country's unemployment insurance scheme (where there is one) or to use donor-provided funds to at least cover their monthly insurance premiums. Such long-term support could help increase the pool of financial resources that go into the national healthcare system and support capacity-building within the system, thereby benefiting host communities as well as refugees. Where the finances of the host country's government are already stretched thin, this type of ongoing support will likely only be possible with continued support from international donors, as in Costa Rica and Lebanon (see below).

Recommendations

National governments:

- Work towards providing comprehensive access to healthcare for refugees, potentially through integrating them into national insurance schemes to ensure their access to primary, secondary, and tertiary care, where financially and politically viable.
- Prepare a budget plan that accounts for the additional costs resulting from service delivery for refugees.
- Issue guidelines to staff of health centers and hospitals to ensure they are familiar with the terms under which refugees can access health services (e.g., which forms of documentation are required).
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns about the rights of refugees and host communities to access healthcare, to both diffuse potential tensions and increase use of services.

Implementing partners:

- Collect and regularly analyze data on refugees' health and socioeconomic conditions.
- Set clear selection criteria to help refugees understand whether a program is open to them, and start the selection process as soon as possible and with a clear timeline for when service access will begin.
- Help raise awareness among refugees about their rights and the conditions under which they can access health services.

Donors:

- Provide long-term support to host countries in their efforts to fund healthcare for the most vulnerable refugees and members of host communities.

3. INVESTING IN THE RESILIENCE OF HEALTH SYSTEMS IN HOST SOCIETIES

Syrian refugees who live outside of camps in KRI,⁵⁹⁷ Jordan,⁵⁹⁸ Turkey⁵⁹⁹ and Lebanon receive their healthcare through the same primary healthcare centers (PHCC) and hospitals as members of their host communities. In Lebanon, international actors, including the European Union and the World Bank, have supported several initiatives that aim to benefit refugees' health by strengthening the capacity of national systems and subsidizing care for refugees and low-income Lebanese. The outcomes of and challenges faced by these programs, leading to the Lebanese government's development of the Immediate Response Model (IRM) following the August 2020 explosion in Beirut that killed hundreds and injured thousands more as well as the creation of a long-term primary healthcare subsidization protocol, provide important lessons for implementing similar approaches throughout the region.

INVESTING IN LEBANON'S PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Country	Lebanon	
Donor/Lender	European Union	World Bank
Years active	Reducing Economic Barriers to Accessing Health Services (REBAHS) I: 2018–20 REBAHS II: Since 2020	Emergency Primary Healthcare Restoration Project (EPhRP): 2015–19 Lebanon Health Resilience Project (LHRP): Since 2017
Key objectives	Increase access to quality primary healthcare, mental healthcare and psychosocial support, and support for persons with disabilities	Increase access to quality health services, particularly at primary healthcare centers and public hospitals
Target population	REBAHS I: More than 635,000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese REBAHS II: 860,000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese ⁶⁰⁰	EPhRP: 150,000 vulnerable Lebanese LHRP: 250,000 vulnerable Lebanese (eligible for subsidized packages) and 250,000 Syrian refugees (indirect beneficiaries) ⁶⁰¹
Budget	REBAHS I: EUR 31,852,672 REBAHS II: EUR 42 million ⁶⁰²	EPhRP: USD 15 million from the Lebanon Syrian Crisis Trust Fund (grant) LHRP: USD 120 million financing credit from the World Bank (including USD 24.2 million in concessional loans from the Global Concessional Financing Facility), USD 30 million from the Islamic Development Bank) ⁶⁰³

CONTEXT AND DESIGN OF THE PROJECTS

Ensuring that refugees have access to health services is a critical component of both emergency responses to forced displacement crises and of pathways towards durable solutions. While UNHCR and other humanitarian actors usually provide immediate healthcare to refugees in low- and middle-income countries,⁶⁰⁴ refugees' inclusion in national health systems generally leads to more sustainable outcomes. Therefore, UNHCR and other humanitarian and development actors have repeatedly advocated for the strengthening of national health systems in refugee-hosting countries, an objective also promoted by the Global Compact on Refugees.⁶⁰⁵

Since the beginning of the Syria crisis, Syrian refugees in Lebanon have relied on the Lebanese healthcare system and used the same PHCCs and public hospitals as Lebanese citizens.⁶⁰⁶ This has come, however, with increasing pressure on health providers,⁶⁰⁷ all within a system that already largely failed to keep up with local needs. Lebanon's healthcare system has historically been a fragmented mix of public and private providers, with many Lebanese not enrolled in insurance schemes and unable to afford care in private institutions.⁶⁰⁸ The system's lack of regulation has led to wide variations in quality of care, and the fee-for-service model often increases the costs for patients.⁶⁰⁹ As a result, those who cannot afford quality care tend to delay treatment, exacerbating their health issues. The high costs of care affect Lebanese as well as Syrians, who have in certain cases returned to Syria for free non-life-threatening secondary care.⁶¹⁰

In 2013, Lebanon announced it was moving to a universal healthcare system that would cover all citizens, with a specific emphasis on poor and vulnerable Lebanese.⁶¹¹ In order to build towards this goal, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) launched the pilot project Emergency Primary Healthcare Restoration Project (EPHRP) in 2015, funded by a USD 15-million grant by the World Bank. The project aimed to subsidize preventive care⁶¹² for 150,000 vulnerable Lebanese and to strengthen the capacity of 75 PHCCs frequented by vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees.⁶¹³ In 2018, the European Union, through the EU Trust Fund for Syria, supported the Reducing Economic Barriers to Accessing Health Services (REBAHS I) project.⁶¹⁴ REBAHS I introduced a holistic subsidization model under which patients, both Lebanese and non-Lebanese, could receive consultations, tests, and medications for LBP 3,000, with the remaining LBP 7,000 covered by the project (at the time, roughly USD 2 and USD 4.6, respectively) at supported PHCCs, some of which were also supported under EPHRP.⁶¹⁵ REBAHS I also provided financial, in-kind, and capacity-building support for targeted PHCCs and helped improve the MoPH's health information system. Shortly after the project's inception, REBAHS I introduced a complementarity component to allow Lebanese patients who had finished the preventative package under EPHRP to take advantage of REBAHS support and its additional curative package.⁶¹⁶

Lessons learned from these projects were incorporated into their successors: the European Union's REBAHS II and the World Bank's Lebanon Health Resilience Project (LHRP). REBAHS II has been designed to build out the components of REBAHS I, including an increased focus on strengthening the Lebanese health system, capacity-building, and assisting PHCCs in attaining certificates of quality standards, as well as integrating mental health, psychosocial support, and care for persons with disabilities into services at PHCCs.⁶¹⁷ The project, which has been fully operational from since March 2020, continues to subsidize care for vulnerable Lebanese and refugees, supporting 70,000 primary healthcare consultations in December 2020 alone.⁶¹⁸ The LHRP, learning from the fact that many of its vulnerable Lebanese beneficiaries wanted curative rather than preventative care, expanded on the number and types of packages offered under EPHRP⁶¹⁹ and aimed to monitor the specific impact of the capacity-building aspects of the program on Syrian refugees as part of its results framework.⁶²⁰ The implementation of the project has, however, been significantly delayed due to contractual, operational, and political issues,⁶²¹ and it was restructured in March 2020 to strengthen the MoPH's capacity to respond to the needs that emerged with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, including by providing for medical equipment and goods, testing and coverage of coronavirus-related service fees.⁶²² In January 2021, funds were reallocated under the LHRP to support the procurement and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines.⁶²³

Box 4. Building a Uniform Model

Following the August 4, 2020, Beirut explosion, the Primary Healthcare Department of the MoPH introduced an Immediate Response Model (IRM) to subsidize and streamline the provision of primary healthcare in the 21 PHCCs treating patients directly affected by the explosion.⁶²⁴ The model, which is based on experiences from REBAHS and EPHRP, is a simplified version of the holistic subsidization model: it subsidizes all provider consultations, with no limit as to how many consultations a beneficiary can receive, as well as specified diagnostic tests.⁶²⁵ While some of the PHCCs were already part of REBAHS and thus had experience with this model, the IRM is new for others and represents a shift in how care is funded. Different international NGOs support each PHCC, with funding coming from international donors.⁶²⁶ The MoPH coordinates these actors through a common portal and health information system.⁶²⁷

Building on this model, the MoPH is in the process of designing a long-term primary healthcare subsidization protocol, which is intended to serve as a uniform model for the entire MoPH network. A task force, comprising the actors involved in the IRM and the MoPH, is working to revisit the subsidization packages developed for the EPHRP, LHRP, and REBAHS interventions, as well as payment mechanisms and costing strategies. Already, packages such as wellness and neonatal care have been finalized, a results framework has been identified, and conversations are ongoing about the inclusion of support services for mental health and persons with disabilities.⁶²⁸

The EU- and World Bank-supported interventions have succeeded to differing degrees in expanding access to primary healthcare. REBAHS I reached more than 635,000 beneficiaries (59 percent Syrian and 40 percent Lebanese), provided more than 190,000 diagnostic tests, nearly 190,000 vaccination visits, nearly 112,000 antenatal care consultations, and postnatal care to more than 8,500 women.⁶²⁹ Uptake of REBAHS support by vulnerable Lebanese has increased over time, a product both of the worsening economic situation in Lebanon as well as community outreach efforts built into the project.⁶³⁰ While the latest data available show EPHRP nearing its 150,000-beneficiary target, lessons learned include the need to move beyond a model focused solely on preventative care and the inadequacy of the system used for targeting beneficiaries. And given the shift in LHRP's focus to COVID-19 response, it remains to be seen whether the World Bank will play a significant role in supporting primary healthcare under the current funding model.

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY FOR THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

1



BUILD INCLUSIVE HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS FOR HOST COMMUNITIES AND REFUGEES

- Ensuring equity of care between refugees and host communities can help defuse social tensions.
- Subsidized care brings health and economic benefits to host communities and refugees, building resilience for both..

The Lebanese experience indicates that including refugees in national health systems can be critical to promoting social cohesion in host regions, but it requires emphasizing equity of care for all populations.⁶³¹ In the first years of the Syrian refugee crisis, tensions rose between host communities and Syrians because while international actors covered primary healthcare for Syrians, vulnerable Lebanese had to pay for care under the expensive fee-for-service model.⁶³² The EPHRP began to address these tensions by subsidizing preventive care for those identified by the Lebanon's vulnerability targeting system as most in need of care. Meanwhile, the REBAHS model took a broader approach by subsidizing primary care for all who sought it at the targeted PHCCs, including both Lebanese and non-Lebanese patients.⁶³³ Over time, the REBAHS model's broader targeting proved effective at ensuring equity of care and popular amongst beneficiaries, and the Beirut blast

provided the incentive for the MoPH to use this strategy for the IRM and as the basis for the long-term uniform model. Importantly, subsidizing care for both vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees set a precedent,⁶³⁴ and by implementing a model based on equity, it would be difficult to later shift course and exclude previously supported populations. At the same time, this will require long-term support from donors to ensure that the Lebanese healthcare system can maintain this inclusive approach.

By guaranteeing equity of care for both refugees and vulnerable members of host communities, these interventions ensure that their economic and health benefits are enjoyed by all. Subsidized care allows patients to use the money they would spend on healthcare for other purposes, helping reduce household debt and negative coping mechanisms.⁶³⁵ And by providing access to both preventative and curative healthcare, these interventions improve patient health, which reduces the need for more expensive care down the road. While other countries hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees do not have healthcare systems with the same complexity as Lebanon, ensuring that vulnerable members of host and refugee communities have access to the same subsidized care can help defuse social tensions, improve health and economic outcomes, and foster continued trust in the primary healthcare system.

2



IMPROVE OPERATIONS FROM THE TOP DOWN AND THE BOTTOM UP

- Capacity-building interventions need to address both systemic issues facing primary healthcare as well as the ability of individual PHCCs to provide care.
- Improving the capacity of individual PHCCs builds the community's trust in the quality of care they will receive there, which can lead patients to continue to access care at the centers even after donor interventions cease.

The capacity-building initiatives built into the various interventions in Lebanon have addressed both the primary healthcare system and the care provided at individual PHCCs. At the systems level, investments by NGOs and the MoPH in improving Lebanon's health information service have been particularly useful as the service helps coordinate the care administered throughout the MoPH network and ensures that efforts are not being duplicated. At the PHCC level, NGOs are working with individual PHCCs to strengthen the quality of care provided, integrate mental health services and services for persons with disabilities, and engage in community outreach—efforts that promise to build trust between PHCCs and their communities. If the community sees that the PHCCs can be relied upon for quality care, and if PHCCs commit to ensuring that the cost of care is transparent, their relationship with the community may continue even if support from international donors is withdrawn.⁶³⁶ Additionally, building the capacity of PHCC management will have a longer-lasting impact for improving future management decisions.⁶³⁷ Across the Syrian refugee context, capacity-building efforts for healthcare systems can similarly take these two approaches. By effectively partnering with local actors and national systems, implementers can more effectively work towards sustainability.

3



ENHANCE COOPERATION BETWEEN KEY PARTNERS

- Actors and their interventions should complement rather than duplicate each other's efforts, a goal that can be facilitated by improving coordination.

Throughout the Syrian refugee crisis, a plethora of international actors have implemented interventions in Lebanon's healthcare system. These programs have often overlapped in terms of their targeted populations, the healthcare centers involved, and services provided. This has sometimes led to tensions between partners as they compete to include different interventions within their remit or are compared to each other.⁶³⁸ In contrast, the complementarity model added to REBAHS, following discussions and coordination between implementing partners and with the MoPH, helped ensure that EPHRP beneficiaries (who were all Lebanese) received continuity of care.⁶³⁹ The ongoing implementation of the IRM and the development of the long-term uniform model shows that with sufficient coordination from the relevant government bodies and effective information-sharing technology, multiple actors can come together to support a uniform healthcare strategy even in a highly fragmented system. These collaboration and coordination mechanisms could be used in other sectors and in other countries hosting Syrian refugees to ensure that efforts complement each other and are guided by an overarching government strategy.

Recommendations

National governments:

- Strengthen local health facilities to improve quality of care for both host-country nationals and Syrian refugees, for instance by investing in capital improvements, integrating mental health services and support for persons with disabilities into primary healthcare, and improving management and monitoring tools such as information-sharing systems.
- Ensure equity of care by providing subsidized healthcare to refugees and members of host communities on the basis of common vulnerability criteria.
- Coordinate the actions of implementing partners to ensure complementarity, for example through the development of a coordination platform. This also promotes government ownership of the collective efforts, which can help improve and sustain the government's commitment to the process.

Implementing partners:

- Build the operational and management capacity of local healthcare centers to ensure quality care, for instance by prioritizing effective service delivery.
- Align humanitarian interventions in the health sector with the host-country government's national health strategy and with development interventions.
- Conduct effective outreach to ensure potential beneficiaries (host communities and refugees) are aware of the health services available to them and to build trust in the quality and affordability of that care.

Donors:

- Secure long-term funding for healthcare interventions in host countries and ensure that refugees are included as beneficiaries alongside host communities.
- Work with host governments to coordinate funding and project implementation so they develop greater ownership over the delivery of health services for all populations on the basis of their needs.

4. SUPPORT FOR SPECIALIZED CARE FOR REFUGEES (MATERNAL AND NEONATAL CARE)

Providing specialized healthcare poses specific challenges in refugee contexts, especially maternal and neonatal care. In the Middle East, Syrian refugees often have limited access to care before, during, and after a child's birth, as well as limited knowledge about essential newborn care.⁶⁴⁰ UNHCR's Saving Newborn and Maternal Lives in Refugee Situations programs, which have been implemented in various countries hosting large numbers of refugees, provide several lessons learned that can help inform this type of intervention in the Syrian refugee context.

UNHCR'S SAVING NEWBORN AND MATERNAL LIVES IN REFUGEE SITUATIONS PROGRAMS

Countries	Phase 1: South Sudan, Kenya, Jordan Phase 2: Extension to Chad, Cameroon, Niger
Years active	Phase 1: 2016–18 Phase 2: 2018–20
Key objectives	Improve newborn and maternal care in refugee situations; enhance access to infrastructure and services for women and newborns; counsel women during and after pregnancy; improve health facilities and staff capacity through the provision of equipment and training
Target population	Mothers and newborns in refugee situations, with host communities benefitting from investments in referral district hospitals
Budget	Phase 1: USD 1,003,704 Phase 2: USD 2,979,135 The two interventions are funded through grants by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. ⁶⁴¹

CONTEXT AND NATURE OF THE PROGRAMS

In countries affected by crisis or conflict, maternal and neonatal (newborn) health outcomes are often poor. In such countries, an estimated 1 in 54 women die during pregnancy or childbirth, compared to 1 in 5,400 in high-income countries.⁶⁴² Similarly, more than half of the countries with the highest neonatal mortality rates (≥ 30 per 1,000 live births) are affected by conflict and displacement.⁶⁴³ The leading causes of these deaths are the lack of capacity to provide emergency obstetric care⁶⁴⁴ and restricted access to essential services before, during, and after pregnancy.⁶⁴⁵

UNHCR, through funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has allocated nearly USD 4 million since 2016 to address these challenges in refugee settings across six countries in Africa and the Middle East. In 2016, UNHCR launched the first phase of the Saving Newborn and Maternal Lives in Refugee Situations program⁶⁴⁶ in South Sudan, Kenya, and Jordan. These countries were chosen mainly due to the large number of refugees living in camps.⁶⁴⁷ Following an initial assessment, UNHCR developed tailored action plans and clinical training packages aimed at improving health workers' knowledge of and skills in providing essential newborn and maternal healthcare.⁶⁴⁸

In the second phase, launched in 2018, UNHCR expanded the program to Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (for two years, until 2020) and sought to apply and consolidate lessons learned from the initial pilot phase. While the objectives remained largely the same, the second phase placed greater emphasis on maternal care and family planning.⁶⁴⁹ UNHCR selected these three countries because of their poor reproductive health outcomes and weak health systems, which had come under greater strain following large arrival of refugee populations (with the three countries collectively hosting more than 1 million refugees and asylum seekers).⁶⁵⁰

Box 5. Saving Newborn and Maternal Lives in Refugee Situations Programs

The first phase of the Saving Newborn and Maternal Lives in Refugee Situations program was structured around three main components in the three chosen countries:

1. Strengthening community-based interventions, with a network of local health workers receiving training on how to provide health advice;
2. Enhancing care for low-birthweight newborns, including through methods that can be easily applied in refugee settings;⁶⁵¹ and
3. Improving essential infrastructure for the care of sick or small newborns, for example through the construction of a newborn care unit in South Sudan.⁶⁵²

In its second phase in three newly selected countries,⁶⁵³ UNHCR focused on the following elements:

1. Providing equipment to health centers in refugee sites and referral district hospitals to improve, for example, routine childbirth and emergency obstetric and neonatal care as well as care for sick or small newborns;
2. Developing clinical guidelines and implementing training for health workers (e.g., on family planning, skin-to-skin methods, home visits, and women-centered and respectful maternity services), mainly through the training of “master trainers” in each health facility who would then pass on knowledge to their peers; and
3. Monitoring and data collection on, for example, neonatal mortality and stillbirth rates among refugee mothers and newborns to better address factors contributing to negative outcomes.⁶⁵⁴

A 2019 evaluation⁶⁵⁵ of the first phase of the program showed that, prior to the intervention, many good practices in newborn and maternal care were known in theory by staff in health facilities in refugee camps, but that they were not rigorously applied, either due to a lack of training or medical supplies. The evaluation reported that health workers’ skills and knowledge improved in areas such as newborn resuscitation and essential newborn care following the intervention.⁶⁵⁶ The second phase has not yet been evaluated, but a handful of related studies have reviewed some of the program’s outputs.⁶⁵⁷ Overall, the initiative had significant coverage, delivering training and medical supplies to 29 health facilities, 21 health centers in refugee sites, and eight referral district hospitals across Chad, Cameroon, and Niger.⁶⁵⁸ According to a 2020 study, the on-site training delivered to health workers was deemed particularly successful in the second phase of the program.⁶⁵⁹ However, the overall limited funding available to build adequate health infrastructure in humanitarian settings remains a key barrier to providing even basic medical supplies and quality healthcare.⁶⁶⁰ For this reason, UNHCR mainly focused on interventions adapted to local constraints to address newborn and maternal health.⁶⁶¹

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY TO THE SYRIAN REFUGEE CONTEXT

1

**DESIGN AND ADAPT PROGRAMS TO RESPOND TO LOCAL NEEDS**

- Newborn and maternal health interventions are not “one-size-fits-all” programs; they need to be adjusted to the local context in low-income or middle-income countries.
- Taking stock of the equipment available and assessing healthcare techniques used across different country contexts are critical steps to designing an intervention tailored to the level of resources, technical know-how, and customs in a target location.

The Saving Newborn and Maternal Lives program was implemented in six low- and middle-income countries during two separate phases. To ensure that the intervention could effectively address local needs in these different contexts, UNHCR first assessed existing gaps and priorities in each country. This included taking stock of the equipment available at local health facilities and asking maternity staff to demonstrate certain healthcare techniques, such as neonatal resuscitation.⁶⁶² The evidence gathered helped program designers better understand the local healthcare systems and adapt training packages and the provision of equipment according to the level of existing resources, technical know-how, and cultural practices.⁶⁶³ As a result of the assessments, resource constraints in countries such as Chad and Niger led UNHCR to focus on promoting practices (e.g., skin-to-skin care and breastfeeding) that do not require high and sustained resource investments. By contrast, in middle-income countries, such as Jordan, UNHCR identified a preference among the refugee population for higher-tech interventions (e.g., placing a newborn in an incubator). However, this preference is not always the most appropriate approach for healthcare initiatives in a displacement context. Studies show that various low-cost health interventions, such as maternal kangaroo care, can be at least as safe and effective.⁶⁶⁴ Such low-tech approaches can also often be more widely applied in displacement situations and can dramatically reduce the cost of care, pointing to the need to raise awareness among program beneficiaries of the benefits of low-cost health interventions.⁶⁶⁵

This is relevant throughout the Syrian refugee context. For example, in Turkey, caesarean sections are often performed without a medical reason, as per WHO clinical guidelines, despite their increased risk to the health of mother and child compared to vaginal births.⁶⁶⁶ Caesarean section rates are currently 30 percent above the global average in Turkey, with higher rates reported in metropolitan areas where most refugees in the country settle.⁶⁶⁷ Increased training of health practitioners on routine childbirth care might therefore be particularly useful in this context, with studies showing that midwife care can reduce uses of unnecessary caesarean sections.⁶⁶⁸

2

**USE LOCAL RESOURCES TO IMPROVE NEWBORN AND MATERNAL HEALTH IN REFUGEE CONTEXTS**

- Involving national and local NGOs and health practitioners with a presence on the ground can limit the need for international consultants and trainers to travel to program locations, which is particularly useful in remote refugee settings.
- Linking district hospitals to health facilities in refugee camps helps integrate these health systems and ensure refugees’ access to ongoing or specialized care, provided long-term donor support can be secured at both the local and district levels.

Early on in the program, UNHCR faced challenges delivering essential medical supplies and services to targeted health facilities located in refugee camps in remote regions.⁶⁶⁹ In Niger, for example, the agency was at times unable to deploy staff to the field given the security and travel restrictions in the country.⁶⁷⁰ As a result, UNHCR shifted its approach and sought to draw more on local resources to mitigate the need for travel and also to help facilitate linkages between refugee interventions and local health systems. This meant involving national NGOs with a local presence as implementing organizations as well as investing heavily in the training of local doctors and midwives rather than international consultants.

Although this approach required significant upfront investment in training equipment in local health facilities and put some pressure on midwives and doctors to effectively balance their clinical duties with their training commitments, it also helped to facilitate more regular practice as the necessary equipment and expertise were all readily available within the target communities.⁶⁷¹ In addition, it also led the program to work closely with national health ministries to better link primary health centers in refugee camps with district hospitals in the surrounding region (e.g., through referrals). However, as investments in medical equipment and the training of health workers mainly took place in local health facilities, district hospitals benefited less from these measures. In order to reach the growing number of refugees settling outside camps, as well as to support the broader communities in which they live, similar interventions could be scaled up at the district level.⁶⁷²

In the Syrian displacement context, refugees often settle outside camps in urban settings, which means they tend to access public health facilities. Still, in Lebanon studies have found that distance to health centers can pose a challenge for accessing maternal and neonatal healthcare.⁶⁷³ To increase coverage, it is important to strengthen local health facilities and advocate for care close to home, such as via postnatal home visits to reach mothers, as promoted under the Saving Newborn and Maternal Lives program.⁶⁷⁴ It is also important to train local health staff in regions where higher levels of insecurity and measures to combat the spread of COVID-19 might restrict travel and threaten refugees' access to primary healthcare.⁶⁷⁵ Finally, effectively linking new health interventions to public health services, for example through referrals to district hospitals, depends on the functioning of these health systems. The room to do so may be limited in countries such as Lebanon, where overall access to specialized services such as emergency obstetric care is limited.⁶⁷⁶

3



ADOPT A COMMUNITY-LED AND COMPETENCE-BUILDING APPROACH

- Training “master trainers” who can pass on their knowledge to others is a low-cost, high-impact approach to increasing knowledge about newborn and maternal health.
- Using online communications channels, such as WhatsApp, with trainers can facilitate improved guidance, peer support, and knowledge exchange.

A large part of the UNHCR program centers around developing innovative competence-building approaches to train community health workers. Specifically, UNHCR has trained refugees who are familiar with local languages and customs as community health workers.⁶⁷⁷ Among other topics, the trainings covered how to conduct home visits, call an ambulance, and offer basic services when professional health staff are not available.⁶⁷⁸ The program also trained so-called “master trainers,” usually doctors or midwives from the host community who are already working in local health facilities, and who then share their knowledge with other health practitioners. This was done through a low-dose, high-frequency approach, which includes on-site short teaching lessons (low dose) followed by longer practice sessions (high frequency).⁶⁷⁹

Despite some challenges in the selection and training of master trainers, including limited proficiency in the instruction language and a lack of motivation among some participants, this approach presented a low-cost option for improving newborn and maternal health competencies in the targeted facilities. In the first phase of the program, a total of 45 master trainers were trained, who then trained a number of health workers in their own facilities in Chad (309), Cameroon (425), and

Niger (100).⁶⁸⁰ In addition, the use of WhatsApp groups to maintain ongoing communication and support for master trainers enabled the program to provide further guidance and facilitated peer-support between master trainers.⁶⁸¹

While countries such as Jordan and Turkey have implemented community-led health training in the past,⁶⁸² such approaches could still be scaled up to ensure a more widespread understanding of good maternal and neonatal healthcare practices. A 2015 survey by UNHCR, for example, found that only 23 percent of Syrian women in Jordanian refugee camps were aware of the reproductive health services available to them.⁶⁸³ The Saving Newborn and Maternal Lives program provides a blueprint for implementing trainings and fostering a community of peers to address these needs, both in low- and middle-income countries.

Recommendations

National government:

- Increase cooperation with UNHCR and implementing partners and link health facilities in refugee camps to district hospitals to help integrate these health systems.

Implementing partners:

- Conduct thorough needs assessments to inform intervention design and adjust for the level of resources, technical knowledge, and cultural practices in the target community.
- Work with national NGOs that have a local presence and with health practitioners on the ground to limit the need for external actors to travel to target locations.
- Use the cascading “master trainer” model to disseminate knowledge and leverage online communications channels, such as WhatsApp, to enable better and ongoing guidance and to facilitate peer support and knowledge exchanges between participants.



By: DRC

5. CONCLUSIONS

Across the globe, refugees face significant barriers to accessing healthcare, whether as a result of not being included in national insurance schemes, an inability to afford primary as well as specialized care, a lack of capacity in local health systems to care for refugees (and at times, other residents as well), or a dearth of data on refugee health needs. While the major countries hosting Syrian refugees have all attempted to provide healthcare to refugees, the protracted crisis has led to reductions in support in some countries while others have been able to maintain relatively robust inclusion of refugees in health systems.

The approaches, policies, and programs analyzed in this chapter provide a number of lessons that should be applied in the Syrian context. First, inclusive healthcare policies require comprehensive, holistic considerations, including how to ensure the policy is implemented smoothly; planning for refugees' long-term access to healthcare, such as through a national or employer-based system; and improving services for host communities as well as refugees to ensure adequate care for all. Second, capacity-building measures, for both general and specialized care, should target local actors and be rooted in an understanding of the local context. Local actors are often best suited as partners in providing healthcare and understanding the local health context in which they operate, assets that will improve the efficacy of an intervention.

As the COVID-19 pandemic puts immense pressure on each country's healthcare system, it also presents an opportunity to better understand systemic issues and address them head on to improve care now and in a post-pandemic world. When rebuilding health systems, refugees' needs must be taken fully into consideration and included as a key objective.

Main Recommendations

National governments:

- Work toward integrating refugees into national insurance schemes to ensure they have access to primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare.
- Carefully consider how to ensure long-term, sustainable refugee inclusion in and access to healthcare during the planning phase of programs to ensure a smooth, predictable transition once program activities end.
- Invest in local health facilities to improve the quality of care for both host-country nationals and Syrian refugees.
- When possible, link health facilities in refugee camps to district hospitals to support the integration of these health systems.

Implementing partners:

- Conduct thorough baseline assessments to inform the design of interventions and adjust for the level of resources, technical knowledge, and cultural practices in the target community.
- Work with national NGOs that have a local presence and with health practitioners on the ground to limit the need for external actors to travel to program sites. This includes working closely with refugee communities to ensure needs are reflected in program design and operation.

Donors:

- Ensure that funding for public health projects is designed with refugees as a key beneficiary in mind, and that serving them is as part of the results framework.
- Support host-country efforts to fund access to healthcare for the most vulnerable refugees, while also providing support for improvements in the overall healthcare system in host countries, by making health services more effective and inclusive of all residents.



CONCLUSION

In the past decade, the humanitarian and development sectors have demonstrated their ability to innovate, cooperate, and facilitate pathways towards durable solutions for refugees. The Syrian crisis has presented a catalyst for many new developments, as have the adoption of the Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration and the engagement of donors in this area. Across five thematic areas—protection, social assistance, education, livelihoods, and healthcare—this report has shown how different constellations of stakeholders in countries around the world are working to move the needle toward more inclusive policies and shared service delivery.

These efforts have not come without difficulties related to design and operation, from challenges integrating refugees into existing policy frameworks to managing public opinion and other sensitivities. The experiences of countries such as Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Peru, and Uganda show that these policies and programs are not straightforward to implement, and that it takes strong political leadership, cross-ministerial cooperation, and the engagement of civil society and non-governmental actors to implement them. This wide range of case studies also demonstrates that the success and sustainability of these policies and programs largely depend on the pledges and continued support of international donors, including when host-country governments have committed to bearing some of the costs of the interventions. Similarly, the ability of many programmatic innovations to scale up their activities and maximize their impact often hinges on the dedicated support of donors.

The policies and projects showcased in this report build on some common strengths; a good understanding of the specific needs of refugees and tools designed to address these needs. Crucially, they also acknowledge the benefits of an inclusive approach that benefits the communities in which refugees live, as well as the refugees themselves, enhancing social cohesion in the process. Some initiatives have promoted innovative tools, such as online platforms to deliver trainings and connect refugees to job opportunities, or invested in community-based interventions, relying on volunteers to deliver after-school support to refugee students.

There are also opportunities to continue to grow. Across the case studies, the need to invest in more monitoring and evaluation is clear, as many interventions still lack robust mechanisms to promote real-time learning and to draw rigorous conclusions about their impacts on refugees and host communities. Finally, many of the actors interviewed to inform this study pointed to the importance of better integrating policies and programming, as the absence of adequate policy frameworks sometimes prevents projects from fully reaching their objectives, especially with regards to livelihoods interventions.

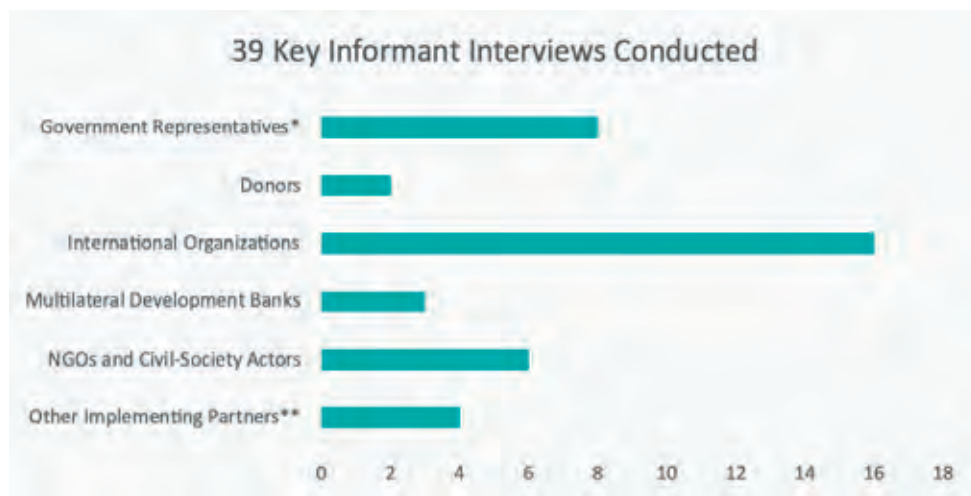
In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, the needs of refugees and host communities in the region have become even more acute. As of December 2020, as many as 4.4 million people in host communities in Jordan, Lebanon, and Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) as well as 1 million Syrian refugees had fallen into poverty due to the pandemic.⁶⁸⁴ Governments already unwilling to adopt inclusive policies are likely to demonstrate even more reluctance to include refugees into national policies or service provision. However, there is also a strong argument to be made for inclusive recovery measures that benefit both nationals and refugees,⁶⁸⁵ reflecting a lesson driven home by the twin health and economic crises: just how deeply intertwined these two communities are.

ANNEX. METHODOLOGY

The study began with desk research on the Syrian refugee context to identify gaps in policies and programming. This led to the identification of seven potential case studies for each of the five thematic areas: protection, social assistance, education, livelihoods, and health care. Three to four case studies per theme were then selected, based on five criteria: (1) relevance to the Syrian context; (2) efficacy and success; (3) replicability and adaptability; (4) respect for human rights; and (5) the level of participation, cooperation, and coordination between stakeholders. The availability of relevant literature and the willingness of key stakeholders to respond to requests for information, along with the sustainability of the interventions, were also considered. Case studies were subsequently presented to and validated by the study’s Research Reference Group (RRG),⁶⁸⁶ along with the gaps identified in the Syrian context, on July 13, 2020.

Following the initial validation process, Migration Policy Institute (MPI) researchers conducted desk research and key informant interviews for the case studies as well as to collect additional insight into the Syrian context. In total, 39 interviews were conducted with a range of key stakeholders, as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Types of Stakeholders Interviewed for the Study, July 2020–January 2021



* Government representatives include national and local government officials.

** Implementing partners include, for example, EU Member State agencies and private-sector actors.

Drafts of the case studies were circulated to the RRG and other external colleagues for feedback, and initial findings were presented at a validation workshop on November 4, 2020. Comments from the RRG and other colleagues were incorporated into the preparation of the final report.

ENDNOTES

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- 258 Basak Yavcan and Hana Addam El-Ghali, [Higher Education and Syrian Refugee Students: The Case of Turkey: Policies, Practices, and Perspectives](#) (Beirut: UNHCR, UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], and the American University of Beirut Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2017).
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- 265 Article 8 of Peru's National Constitution guarantees the right to quality education without discrimination to all. See Government of Peru, [Article 8 of Peru's National Constitution](#). Article 9 of ["Executive Decree No 1325"](#) recognizes that "foreigners are entitled to the same fundamental rights established in the Political Constitution of Peru as nationals, such as access to health, education and work under equal conditions as nationals, except for the limitations established in the regulations in force."
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- 267 Author interview with Angélica Zevallos, Project Manager, Lima Aprende, Peru's Ministry of Education (MINEDU), September 15, 2020.
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- 270 The outreach strategy included disseminating promotional materials through social media, radio, TV, official websites, information booths at Peru's National Migration Agency, delivering pamphlets in supermarkets, public transportation, and more. MINEDU launched an online registration portal on its website so parents could register their children's information to assess the number of parties interested.
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- 272 DRELM ["Más de 6 mil niños culminaron su año escolar 2019 gracias al programa Lima Aprende,"](#) Peru Ministry of Education, February 28, 2020.
- 273 Author interview with Angélica Zevallos, Project Manager, Lima Aprende, Peru's Ministry of Education (MINEDU), September 15, 2020.
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- 281 In 2016, Peru's Migration Agency went through a complete restructuring in 2016 and upgraded its technology capacity significantly.
- 282 UNICEF and UNHCR provided 75 percent and 15 percent each of the financial resources needed to hire enough staff to conduct the qualitative survey of 500 schools in Lima during a ten-day period. Author interview with Daniel Contreras, Education Specialist, UNICEF, October 5, 2020.
- 283 Cindy Huang and Nazanin Ash, [Refugee Compacts: Addressing the Crisis of Protracted Displacement](#) (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development and International Rescue Committee, 2017).
- 284 Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and Columbia Program on Forced Migration and Health at the Mailman School of Public Health, [In My Own Hands: A Medium-Term Approach Towards Self-Reliance and Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan](#) (Amman: Columbia University and DSP, 2020).
- 285 Author interview with Daniel Contreras, Education Specialist, UNICEF, October 5, 2020.
- 286 MINEDU's Institutional Management Unit is responsible for overseeing the proposal, development, and evaluation of cross-sectoral policies that support the ministry's strategic goals, such as safeguarding and upholding Peru's constitutional duty of guaranteeing access to education for all and addressing gaps in efforts to do so. It would not have been possible without the conviction of members of the working group that are responsible for this mandate.
- 287 Local Education Management Units (Unidad de Gestión Educativa Local in Spanish, known as UGELs) are decentralized bodies of the Regional Bureaus in Peru that oversee the implementation of national and regional education policies. Lima has seven UGELs. Given its strategic importance as host of one-third of the total student population, the Regional Bureau for Education in Metropolitan Lima (DRELM), is the only regional bureau that is heavily dependent on the Ministry of Education in its strategic planning directions and budget allocation.
- 288 Author interview with Angélica Zevallos, Project Manager, Lima Aprende, Peru's Ministry of Education (MINEDU), September 15, 2020.
- 289 Human Rights Watch, ["Lebanon: Stalled Effort to Get Syrian Children in School,"](#) Human Rights Watch, December 13, 2018.
- 290 Maurice Crul et al., ["How the Different Policies and School Systems Affect the Inclusion of Syrian Refugee Children in Sweden, Germany, Greece, Lebanon and Turkey,"](#) Comparative Migration Studies 7, no. 1 (2019).
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- 292 Durable Solutions Platform and Program on Forced Migration and Health, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, ["In My Own Hands": A Medium-Term Approach Towards Self-Reliance and Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan](#) (Amman, Jordan: DSP, 2020), 12.
- 293 Theirworld, [Education for Refugees in Turkey.](#)
- 294 Crul et al., "Different Policies and School Systems Affect the Inclusion of Syrian Refugee Children."
- 295 DSP and Columbia Program on Forced Migration and Health, "In My Own Hands."
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- 297 Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, [Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda](#) (Kampala: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2018).
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- 299 Leah Rodriguez, ["Uganda Needs More Education Funding to Support Refugees, UN Says,"](#) Global Citizen, February 8, 2019; UNHCR, ["Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal,"](#) accessed 14 December, 2020.
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- 301 UNICEF, ["New fund launches to address global education crisis"](#) (press release, May 23, 2016); Education Cannot Wait, ["What You Need To Know: Engaging in Country Allocations for the First Response Window,"](#) accessed January 13, 2021.
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- 303 Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response Plan.
- 304 Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response Plan; Save the Children et al., ["The Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities in Uganda \(ERP\) - A call to action from NGOs to the international community"](#) (statement, Save the Children et al., September 2018).
- 305 The plan outlines three key output themes, each comprised of activities to achieve these goals: (1) Improved equitable access to inclusive relevant learning opportunities: This objective is focused on expanding access through skills training, academic materials, the construction of schools (both semi-permanent and permanent classrooms), and efforts to ensure the accessibility and safety of schools, including by recognizing the needs of disabled children. Other key features include double-shifting 30 percent of primary and secondary schools and segregating WASH facilities by gender. (2) Improved delivery of quality education and training: These activities include the improvement of teacher salaries, materials, recruitment, and training (including on refugee-specific needs), the enhancement of school governance and pedagogy, as well as resources for school clubs. (3) Strengthened system for effective delivery: This goal is centered around institutional development at the district and national level, comprised of activities including policy advocacy on refugee inclusion and teacher ceilings, support for planning and coordination in districts, data management and evaluations, and improved community participation. See Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response Plan.

- 306 This component seeks to address the need to train, register and licence refugee teachers who often serve as classroom assistants in Uganda since their qualifications are not recognised. See Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response Plan.
- 307 Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, “[ERP – Year 1 Brochure](#)” (brochure, Ministry of Education and Sports, December 2019).
- 308 Author interview with ERP Secretariat and Education Officer at UNHCR, August 2020; Ministry of Education and Sports, “ERP – Year 1 Brochure”; ERP 2020 Progress Report (not publicly available).
- 309 Author interview with Education Officer at UNHCR, September 2020.
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- 312 Level one equates to the first three years of primary school, level two to the 4th and 5th years, and level three represents the remaining 6th and 7th year. Local Ugandans and refugees attend classes together. See Oddy, Accelerated Education Programming; European Commission, “[The Accelerated Learning Program: improving integration through education](#)” (news release, March 23, 2018).
- 313 Oddy, Accelerated Education Programming.
- 314 Uganda Education Response Plan Steering Committee / Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, “[Global Refugee Forum Education Response Plan Good Practice](#)” (news release, Uganda Ministry of Education, Geneva, December 2019).
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- 317 Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response.
- 318 ERP 2020 Progress Report (not publicly available).
- 319 Ministry of Education and Sports, [Framework For Provision Of Continued Learning During The Covid-19 Lockdown In Uganda](#) (Kampala: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2020).
- 320 According to Education Cannot Wait, half of the primary school refugee children in Uganda have yet to receive home learning materials. And especially in Uganda’s largely informal economy, where many households face heightened risks of food insecurity due to the effects of COVID-19, early gains of the ERP might get lost as some children will need to work to support their families. See Education Cannot Wait, “[Education Cannot Wait Investments Reach Refugee and Other Vulnerable Children and Youth in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic](#),” accessed January 6, 2021; Maintains Programme, “[Meet Connie – Coordinator at the Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities Secretariat](#),” updated July 1, 2020.
- 321 Wambi Michael, “[Uganda’s School Plan for Refugee Children Could Become a Global Template](#)” (news release, December 21, 2020).
- 322 Thomas Calvot, [Hidden victims of the Syrian crisis: disabled, injured and older refugees](#) (Beirut and Amman: HelpAge International and Handicap International, 2014).
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- 328 UNHCR, “[Education Dashboard](#),” September 2020.
- 329 Wannes Carlier, [The Widening Educational Gap for Syrian Refugee Children](#) (Amsterdam: Kids Rights Foundation, 2018); Khawaja, “Growing Up Without an Education.”
- 330 Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response Plan.
- 331 Maintains Programme, “[Uganda](#),” accessed December 12, 2020.
- 332 Other advocacy efforts are described in more detail in the ERP Plan. See Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response Plan.
- 333 ERP 2020 Progress Report (not publicly available).
- 334 Some countries in the region, such as Jordan, already have experience with this by developing an annual monitoring and evaluation framework under the Education Strategic Plan. However, recent reports have pointed to concerns among Syrian caregivers that schools in Jordan are not sufficiently monitoring and evaluating learning outcomes, instead focus on registering attendance rates. See Small, “I Want to Continue to Study”; No Lost Generation, “[Syria Crisis Education Strategic Paper - London 2016 Conference](#)” (strategic paper, No Lost Generation, London, 2016); Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Education, Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022.
- 335 Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Response Plan.
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- 341 Lucie Cerna, "[Refugee Education: Integration Models and Practices in OECD Countries](#)" (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] Education Working Paper No. 203, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2019).
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- 346 REPP, *The Education Needs of Young Refugees*.
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- 348 At the time, the organization was called Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYi).
- 349 Author interview with Adamu Tefera, My Education Project Officer, Center for Multicultural Youth (CMY), September 28, 2020.
- 350 Centre for Multicultural Youth, "[Learning Beyond the Bell](#)," accessed January 4, 2021.
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- 358 Centre for Multicultural Youth, "[Case Study: Dixon House Homework Club](#)," accessed January 5, 2021.
- 359 Centre for Multicultural Youth, [A Coordinator's Guide to Out-of-School-Hours Learning Support Programs](#) (Carlton, Australia: Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2016).
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- 364 Dhingra, "Worsening Gaps in Education for Syrian Refugees."
- 365 Author interview with Adamu Tefera, My Education Project Officer, Center for Multicultural Youth (CMY), September 28, 2020.
- 366 Foundation House, "[School's in for Refugees](#)," accessed October 13, 2020.
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- 368 Small, "I Want to Continue to Study."
- 369 European Commission, "[EU Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis: Higher and further education](#)," accessed January 13, 2021.
- 370 The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, [Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2020-2022](#) (Amman: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 2020).
- 371 Ibid.

- 372 European Commission, "EU Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis."
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- 375 DAAD, British Council, Campus France, and Nuffic, "[HOPES – Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians](#)" (fact sheet, 2018).
- 376 DAAD, "HOPES – Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians."
- 377 DAAD, Campus France, and Nuffic, "[The HOPES-LEB Project](#)," accessed January 13, 2021.
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- 379 EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, "[An Integrated Pathway for Higher Education in Turkey](#)" (fact sheet, EU Regional Trust Fund, Turkey, 2019).
- 380 EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, "[Higher Education and Vocational Training Program for vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian youth \(EDU-SYRIA II\)](#)" (fact sheet, Jordan, 2019).
- 381 European Union and Particip Consortium, [External Monitoring and Evaluation for the European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad Fund' – Evaluation of Madad-Funded Programmes/Projects for Higher Education](#) (Brussels: European Union, 2018).
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- 383 Author interview with Maxime Montagner, International Aid/Cooperation Officer, EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission, August 20, 2020.
- 384 Out of ten scholarships for Syrians, three or four were granted to Jordanians. Author interview with Dr Carsten-Michael Walbiner, Project Director, HOPES/HOPES-LEB, August 27, 2020.
- 385 Author interview with Dr Carsten-Michael Walbiner, Project Director, HOPES/HOPES-LEB, August 27, 2020.
- 386 Author interview with Maxime Montagner, International Aid/Cooperation Officer, EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, DG NEAR, European Commission, August 20, 2020.
- 387 Author interview with Dr Carsten-Michael Walbiner, Project Director, HOPES/HOPES-LEB, August 27, 2020.
- 388 Author interview with Dr Carsten-Michael Walbiner, Project Director, HOPES/HOPES-LEB, August 27, 2020.
- 389 Author interview with Dr Carsten-Michael Walbiner, Project Director, HOPES/HOPES-LEB, August 27, 2020. These links also allowed the HOPES partners to organize events directly involving policymakers from the region and EU Member States, including a conference HOPES contributed to organizing in 2018, hosted by the Germany Ministry of Foreign Affairs, about refugees and higher education.
- 390 European Union and Particip Consortium, External Monitoring and Evaluation.
- 391 Author interview with Maxime Montagner, International Aid/Cooperation Officer, EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, DG NEAR, European Commission, August 20, 2020.
- 392 The World Bank, "[Unemployment, youth total \(% of total labor force ages 15-24\) \(modeled ILO estimate\) - Lebanon](#)," updated September 20, 2020.
- 393 The World Bank, "[Unemployment, youth total \(% of total labor force ages 15-24\) \(modeled ILO estimate\) – Jordan](#)," updated September 20, 2020.
- 394 Anneleen Vos, "[A Decade in Search of Work: A Review of Policy Commitments for Syrian Refugees' Livelihoods in Jordan and Lebanon](#)" (brief, International Rescue Committee, Amman, Jordan, June 2020).
- 395 Vos, "A Decade in Search of Work."
- 396 In Jordan, for example, home-based businesses have been presented as a method to foster economic and labor integration. But these are limited to three sectors (food, handicrafts, and tailoring) and involve complex licensing requirements and high registrations costs. Refugees who do not possess needed capital need to rely on a Jordanian sponsor for a joint venture. See Durable Solutions Platform (DSP) and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, "[In My Own Hands": A Medium-Term Approach towards Self-Reliance and Resilience of Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan](#)" (Amman, Jordan: DSP and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, 2020). In Lebanon, most small- and medium-sized enterprises, whether Lebanese or Syrian owned, operate informally. Prohibitive costs and residency documentation requirements prevent business owners from formalizing their businesses. See American University of Beirut, *Under The Radar? How Syrian Refugee Entrepreneurs Adapt and Operate in Lebanon's Informal Economy* (Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2020). In Turkey, the regulatory framework is more open. Holders of Temporary Protection are allowed to work. Those seeking self-employment can access their work permits through an online portal. See The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), [Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-Ups in Turkey: Leveraging the Turkish Experience](#): Final Report—2018 (Ankara: EBRD, 2018). In KRI, Syrian refugees need to get approval from security authorities and get a license in order to open their own business. DSP, [Far from Home: Future Prospects for Syrian Refugees in Iraq](#) (Syria: DSP, 2019).

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- 413 International Labor Organization (ILO), "[ILO and Kurdistan Region of Iraq Pledge to Support Formal Employment for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities](#)" (news release, August 11, 2020).
- 414 Government of Lebanon and UNHCR Lebanon, "[Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020 \(2019 update\)](#)," updated January 31, 2019.
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- 416 Leaders for Sustainable Livelihoods, "[Dignity at Stake: Challenges to Accessing Decent Work in Lebanon](#)" (discussion paper, EU Regional Trust Fund, May 2019).
- 417 See, for example, Saja Al Zoubi, Aden A. Aw-Hassan, and Boubaker Dhehibi, "[Enhancing the Livelihood and Food Security of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon](#)" (working paper International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, Beirut, Lebanon, January 2019); American University of Beirut, Ministry of Labor of the Republic of Lebanon, ILO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and International Development Research Centre (IDRC), [Survey on Child Labour in Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees](#) (Beirut: Faculty of Health Sciences and Ministry of Labor of the Republic of Lebanon, 2019); Harry Brown, Nicola Giordano, Charles Maughan, and Alix Wadeson, [Vulnerability Assessment Framework: Population Study 2019](#) (Amman: UNHCR, 2019).
- 418 TEPAV and EBRD, [Syrian Entrepreneurship and Refugee Start-ups in Turkey](#).
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- 420 Nadja Nutz, [A Guide to Market-Based Livelihood Interventions for Refugees](#) (Geneva: ILO, 2017); UNHCR, "[Building Inclusive Markets for Refugees and Hosts in Ethiopia](#)," updated March 25, 2020.
- 421 UNHCR, "[Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion: 2019–2023 Global Strategy Concept Note](#)" (concept note, October 2018).
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- 425 UNHCR, [Ethiopia Summary: Pledge Progress Report 2019](#) (Ethiopia: UNHCR, July 2020); UNHCR, "[CRRF Ethiopia](#)" (briefing note, UNHCR, August 2018).
- 426 Sergio Carciotto and Filippo Ferraro, "[Building Blocks and Challenges for the Implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees in Africa](#)," *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 8, no. 1 (2020): 83–95.
- 427 Beneficiaries who get work permits will be granted permission to reside in rural and urban noncamp locations. UNHCR, Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan, 2020–2021; Tsion Tadesse Abebe, "[Promises and Challenges of Ethiopia's Refugee Policy Reform](#)" (policy brief, Institute for Security Studies, Addis Ababa, October 2018).
- 428 Supported by the World Bank, the Government of the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the European Investment Bank.
- 429 Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia, August 26, 2020.
- 430 It is very restrictive as national laws and labor and investment regulations apply. Basically, for those trying to get a work permit under self-employment, the window of opportunity is very narrow since refugees (as foreign nationals) need at least USD 200,000 to start a business. As a result, they cannot extensively benefit from this scheme. The second possibility is for wage employment, but this is also tightly protected as the government prioritizes Ethiopian nationals.
- 431 In the new proclamation, there are two articles that grant refugees equal treatment as Ethiopian nationals, representing the biggest opportunity for refugees. These are: Art. 26(4) for refugees participating in joint projects (including the Jobs Compact) that are implemented by the international community and the Ethiopian government, and Art. 26 (9) that establishes that no restrictive measures for foreign nationals should apply to refugees or asylum seekers married to an Ethiopian national or who have one or more child in possession of Ethiopian nationality. According to the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), a joint project refers to an urban or rural development project designed with the support of the international community and the agreement of the Ethiopian government to economically benefit both recognized refugees and Ethiopian nationals.
- 432 In December 2019, ARRA issued the Directive to Determine the Procedure for Refugees Right to Work (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Directive No. 02/2019).
- 433 Directive No. 02/2019.
- 434 This MoU should ease some of the procedures and documentation requirements (e.g., providing valid passport and other documentation that refugees may not have). Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia.
- 435 At the time of this writing, the MoUs are still in the process to being released. The MoU with the Immigration, Nationality and Vital Events Agency is expected to help coordinate the provision of residence permits for refugees. Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia.
- 436 The main opportunity for refugees is given by their possibility to work in joint projects (coordinated between the government and international organizations) and getting the same treatment as nationals. However, opportunities for refugees to enter other areas and project is limited given that there are parts of the Ethiopian markets that are only reserved for nationals and the fact that the conditions under which refugees can engage in wage-employment or self-employment are very restrictive as the same requirements as for foreign nationals apply yet, in most cases, refugees are not compliant.
- 437 Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia.
- 438 Interview with Tobias Erbert, Programme Manager at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), August 28, 2020. The total number of work permits issued so far is around 2,850. Out of these, 52 have been issued for refugees who benefited under the German Qualifications and Employment Perspectives for Refugees and Host Communities in Ethiopia Programme. Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS), "[The Right to Work Directive and Economic Engagement of Refugees in Ethiopia](#)" (ReDSS Policy Brief no. 1, Ethiopia, September 2020).
- 439 Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia.
- 440 The change of government slowed down the process when, in April 2018, Abiy Ahmed was selected as prime minister by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, following the resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn. While the new government confirmed its commitment to the CRRF and the nine pledges, limited concrete changes have taken place since then. The agenda somehow shifted priorities toward national issues (such as youth unemployment in Ethiopia) and refugees started to have lesser visibility in terms of discussions and policies. Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia, and with Jason Bell, ReDSS Ethiopia Manager, August 24, 2020.
- 441 Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia and Jason Bell, ReDSS Ethiopia Manager.
- 442 Interview with Jason Bell, ReDSS Ethiopia Manager.
- 443 Interview with Jason Bell, ReDSS Ethiopia Manager.
- 444 Interview with Jason Bell, ReDSS Ethiopia Manager.
- 445 Emma Pearce and Boram Lee, "[From Vulnerability to Resilience: Improving Humanitarian Response](#)," *Forced Migration Review* 57, February 2018.
- 446 This is because refugees usually don't meet the requirements stipulated for foreigners to engage in self- or wage employment, as specified under the labor and investment regulation of Ethiopia.
- 447 UNHCR, Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan, 2020–2021.
- 448 At least half of the over 2 million working-age Syrians work informally and have limited access to financial institutions to get loans. While some activities offering language training, systems for assessing skills, counselling, and job search assistance in Arabic have been made available, there is a need for better information to be provided to job seekers about how to obtain a work permit. Maha Kattaa and Meredith Byrne, "[Quality of Work for Syrian Refugees in Jordan](#)," *Forced Migration Review* 58, June 2018.
- 449 In the case of Ethiopia, the agreement between ARRA and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs relaxed some of the requirements, and also set ARRA to act as a sponsor in refugees' applications for job permits.
- 450 Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia.
- 451 Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia. The lack of capacity and experience is even higher at the regional level considering that the federal government used to coordinate most refugees' responses in the country.
- 452 Interview with Evelyn Aero, Regional ICLA Adviser, Norwegian Refugee Council, August 28, 2020.
- 453 Interview with UNHCR Ethiopia.

- 454 Sarah Tobin and Maisam Alahmed, "[Beyond the Work Permit Quotas: Corruption and Other Barriers to Labour Integration for Syrian Refugees in Jordan](#)," U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2019.
- 455 DSP and Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, *In My Own Hands*.
- 456 Jennifer Gordon, "[Refugees and Decent Work: Lessons Learned from Recent Refugee Jobs Compacts](#)" (Employment Working Paper no. 256, Employment Policy Department, International Labor Organization, Geneva, 2019), 4, note 21.
- 457 ILO, "[Decent Work](#)," accessed October 16, 2020.
- 458 There has been an increased focus on corporate responsibility including the development and adoption of the United Nations, Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect, and Remedy" Framework (New York and Geneva: United Nations, 2011).
- 459 Gordon, "Refugees and Decent Work."
- 460 Better Work Jordan, "[Home](#)," accessed January 5, 2021.
- 461 ILO, "[ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard—Project Finder, Jordan, 2020, Better Work](#)," accessed January 8, 2021.
- 462 Better Work, "[Better Factories Cambodia: Our Program](#)," accessed October 16, 2020.
- 463 Better Work, "[About Us](#)," accessed October 16, 2020.
- 464 ILO, "[Decent Work for Migrants and Refugees](#)" (brochure, September 19, 2016).
- 465 ILO Labor Migration Branch, "[The Access of Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Persons to the Labour Market](#)," (background paper and draft ILO guiding principles for discussion at the ILO tripartite technical meeting, ILO, Geneva, July 5–7, 2016).
- 466 The Jordan Compact linked development and humanitarian funding to specific targets, including issuing 200,000 work permits for Syrian refugees in specific sectors. The European Union agreed to relax trade regulations for factories where at least 15 percent of employees were Syrians. Veronique Barbelet, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, and Dina Mansour-Ille, "[The Jordan Compact: Lessons Learnt and Implications for Future Refugee Compacts](#)" (policy brief, ODI, London, February 2018). Decent work has increasingly become a part of the global discussion on refugee issues, as it was included in the Global Compact for Refugees and ILO Recommendation 205.
- 467 ILO, "[EU-ILO Collaboration in the Monitoring of Labor Aspects in the Implementation of the EU's Rules of Origin Initiative for Jordan \(Phase II\)](#)," accessed January 8, 2021.
- 468 Author interview with Tareq Abu Qaoud, Program Manager, Better Work Jordan, October 7, 2020.
- 469 Better Work Jordan, "[Influence and Action](#)," December 15, 2016; author interview with Tareq Abu Qaoud, Program Manager, Better Work Jordan.
- 470 Maha Katta, Meredith Byrne, and Alaa Al-Arabi, [Decent Work and the Agriculture Sector in Jordan: Evidence from Workers' and Employers' Surveys](#) (Jordan: ILO Regional Office for Arab States, 2018); Zeynep Şahin Mencütek and Ayat J. J. Nashwan, "Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan: Challenges and Opportunities," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, April 27, 2020.
- 471 ILO Regional Office for Arab States, *Work Permits and Employment of Syrian Refugees in Jordan*.
- 472 Better Work, "[Our Approach](#)," accessed October 16, 2020.
- 473 Better Work, "Our Approach."
- 474 Author interview with Tareq Abu Qaoud, Program Manager, Better Work Jordan; Better Work Jordan, "[Our Program](#)," accessed October 16, 2020.
- 475 Better Work Jordan, [Annual Synthesis Report 2020: An Industry and Compliance Review](#) (Geneva: ILO, April 2020).
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- 477 Better Work, [Progress and Potential: How Better Work Is Improving Garment Workers' Lives and Boosting Factory Competitiveness: A Summary of an Independent Assessment of the Better Work Program](#) (Geneva: ILO, 2016).
- 478 Better Work Jordan, *Annual Synthesis Report 2020*, 52–53; Better Work, *Progress and Potential*.
- 479 Better Work, *Progress and Potential*, 51.
- 480 Better Work Jordan, *Annual Synthesis Report 2020*, 8.
- 481 Better Work Jordan, "[End of Year Newsletter](#)" (newsletter, December 2020), 2.
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- 483 See Better Work Jordan, [Guide to Jordanian Labor Law for Garment Industry](#), 3rd ed. (Jordan: ILO, 2019).
- 484 Author interview with Tareq Abu Qaoud, Program Manager, Better Work Jordan; Gordon, "Refugees and Decent Work," 19–20; DSP, "[Building Back Better: Lessons Learned and Medium-Term Strategies on Livelihoods in Jordan](#)" (summary report, DSP, Amman, Jordan, June 2020), 3–4.
- 485 Human Rights Watch, "[Lebanon: New Safeguards for Migrant Domestic Workers](#)" (news release, September 18, 2020); Leaders for Sustainable Livelihoods, [The Labor Sector in Lebanon: Legal Frameworks, Challenges, and Opportunities](#) (N.p.: EU Regional Trust Fund MADAD, 2019); Leaders for Sustainable Livelihoods "Dignity at Stake." The State Shura Council suspended implementation of the standard unified contract, which would have given additional protections for migrant workers under the kafala system. Human Rights Watch, "[Lebanon: Blow to Migrant Domestic Worker Rights](#)" (news release, October 30, 2020).
- 486 Leaders for Sustainable Livelihoods, "Dignity at Stake," 2; Leaders for Sustainable Livelihoods, [The Labor Sector in Lebanon](#), 36.
- 487 Better Work Jordan, *Annual Synthesis Report 2020*, 15; Better Work Jordan, "[2019 End of Year Newsletter: A Year in Review](#)," updated December 18, 2019.
- 488 ILO, [Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices of ILO's Syria Crisis Response in Jordan and Lebanon](#) (Geneva: ILO, 2018).

- 489 ILO, "[Decent Work Country Program for Lebanon: 2017–2020](#)," accessed October 19, 2020, 9.
- 490 Better Work, "[Brand and Retailer Engagement](#)," accessed January 13, 2021; ILO, *Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices*, 37.
- 491 Despite the hopes placed on the Jordan Compact and the EU's relaxed Rules of Origin to create a significant number of jobs for Syrian refugees in the garment sector, few have materialized. For a detailed analysis of this failure, see Gordon, "Refugees and Decent Work," 12–17.
- 492 For an analysis of the costs of steps such as the formalization of labor, see Luis Pinedo Caro, [Syrian Refugees in the Turkish Labor Market](#) (Ankara: ILO, 2020), 22–36.
- 493 The ILO is implementing programming to facilitate the transition to formal labor, which includes providing financial and administrative support. ILO, "[Promoting Decent Work for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Turkish Citizens](#)," accessed October 19, 2020.
- 494 Kirişçi and Kolasin, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey Need Better Access to Formal Jobs"; Kemal Kirişçi, [How the EU and Turkey Can Promote Self-Reliance for Syrian Refugees through Agricultural Trade](#) (Washington, DC, and New York: Brookings and Tent Partnership for Refugees, 2020).
- 495 Leaders for Sustainable Livelihoods, "Dignity at Stake," 28; Renad Amjad et al., "[Examining Barriers to Workforce Inclusion of Syrian Refugees in Jordan](#)" (Better Work discussion paper no. 21, ILO, July 2017); ILO, [Lessons Learned of ILO's Refugee Response Program in Turkey: Supporting Livelihoods Opportunities for Refugees and Host Communities](#), (Ankara: ILO, 2019), 36.
- 496 DSP, "Improving Self-Reliance and Resilience in Jordan," 3.
- 497 While refugees have the right to join unions under international law, these rights are not necessarily guaranteed by host countries. In Jordan, migrant workers, which includes refugees, have been able to join trade unions since 2010. Jonathan Kalan, "[Migrant Workers in Jordan Are Making Their Voices Heard](#)," ILO, December 12, 2012. In Lebanon, foreigners with work permits can join trade unions but cannot vote in union elections. Domestic workers, including migrants under the kafala system, have attempted to form their own union, which is prohibited. See Article 92, "Code of Labor: A Comprehensive English Translation of the Lebanese Code of Labour," *The Argus of the Lebanese Legislation* 56, no. 1 (first quarter 2010); Carla Chan Unger, "[Protecting the Rights of Migrant Domestic Workers: Good Practices and Lessons Learned from the Arab Region](#)" (brief, ILO, 2015), 6; and Human Rights Watch, "[Lebanon: Recognize Domestic Workers Union](#)" (news release, March 10, 2015). In Turkey, migrants with work permits have the same rights as nationals to join trade unions. It is unclear whether this extends to Syrian refugees working under the temporary protected status system. Seyhan Erdoğan and Nazlı Şenses, "[Irregular Migrant Labor, Trade Unions, and Civil Society Organizations in Turkey](#)," in *Migration, Precarity, and Global Governance*, eds. Carl-Ulrik Schierup, Anders Neergaard, Branka Likić Brborić, and Ronaldo Munck (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 177–96. Cooperatives are active throughout the region and have helped facilitate refugee access to work permits in Jordan. ILO, [Employment and Decent Work in Refugee and Other Forced Displacement Contexts: Compendium of ILO's Lessons Learned, Emerging Good Practices and Policy Guidance](#) (Geneva: ILO, 2020).
- 498 Research in Turkey shows that national trade unions and their members may be wary of the impact of Syrian refugees entering the labor market while also espousing solidaristic rhetoric. See Seyhan Erdoğan, "[Syrian Refugees in Turkey and Trade Union Responses](#)," *Globalizations* 15, no. 6 (2018): 838–53.
- 499 Dr Salem Ajluni and Dorsey Lockhart, [The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Its Impact on the Jordanian Labour Market](#) (Amman: West Asia-North Africa Institute, 2019).
- 500 World Bank, "[Despite Challenges, Venezuelan Migration into Colombia Can Boost Its Growth](#)," World Bank, November 6, 2018.
- 501 IDB, "[Migration](#)," June 2020.
- 502 IDB, "[Migration](#)."
- 503 Data indicate that 34 percent of Venezuelan migrants and refugees do not have regular status (IDB, "Migration"); on the different status Venezuelans have been granted in the region, see Marissa Esthimer, "[Protecting the Forcibly Displaced: Latin America's Evolving Refugee and Asylum Framework](#)," *Migration Information Source*, January 14, 2016.
- 504 IDB, "Migration"; UNHCR and Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), [Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela, January–December 2019](#), (N.p.: R4V, 2018); ILO, "Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean, ILO Response COVID-19 Update" (brochure, July 2020).
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- 506 IDB, "[Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle](#)," accessed January 22, 2021.
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- 508 IDB, "[Research Network](#)," access February 9, 2021. See, for instance, this analysis on the impact of Venezuelan workers on the Colombian economy: Jimmy Graham, Martha Guerrero Ble, Daphne Panayotatos, and Izza Leghtas, [From Displacement to Development: How Colombia Can Transform Venezuelan Displacement into Shared Growth](#) (Washington, DC: Refugees International and Center for Global Development, 2020).
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- 510 IDB, "Migration Unit."
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- 677 Gee, Vargas, and Foster, "We need good nutrition but we have no money to buy food."
- 678 UNHCR, "Saving Newborn Lives in Refugee Settings: Evaluation Summary."
- 679 Michelle Willcox et al., "[Incremental cost and cost-effectiveness of low-dose, high-frequency training in basic emergency obstetric and newborn care as compared to status quo: part of a cluster-randomized training intervention evaluation in Ghana](#)," *Globalization and Health* 13 (2017). During the second phase of the program, UNHCR trained 45 master trainers, who in turn delivered more than 100 trainings on a range of modules related to newborn and maternal care. These included Helping Mothers Survive (e.g., bleeding after birth) and Helping Babies Survive (e.g., resuscitation) as well as integrated management of childhood illnesses (for ages 0–2 months). See Amsalu et al., "Lessons Learned From Helping Babies Survive."
- 680 Amsalu et al., "Lessons Learned From Helping Babies Survive."
- 681 The WhatsApp group included trainers, local UNHCR public health officers, and a UNHCR reproductive health officer in Geneva. See Amsalu et al., "Lessons Learned From Helping Babies Survive."
- 682 For example, see Jordan Red Crescent, "[Community Health and First Aid](#)," accessed January 25, 2021.
- 683 UNHCR, "[Health Sector Humanitarian Response Strategy: Jordan 2014-2015](#)" (manual and guideline, UNHCR, June 2015).
- 684 World Bank, "[Deepened and Prolonged Poverty Affects Syrian Refugees and Their Hosts, Requiring Bold Action](#)" (press release, December 17, 2020).
- 685 Along the lines of what Lebanon has started to experiment with for its health system in Beirut after the blast; see the case study on this in the health care chapter of this study.
- 686 A Research Reference Group (RRG) was set up for this research project, composed of primarily regional technical experts in the thematic areas covered by this study. The RRG was primarily composed of colleagues working for UN agencies and non-governmental organizations. The RRG's role was to provide technical guidance and review across the full research cycle.

