Social protection for migrants and refugees

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List of abbreviations

ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BMZ The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BPC Beneficio de Prestação Continuada
CNIC Computerized National Identity Card
CRRF Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CVA Cash and voucher assistance
ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States
ESSN Emergency Social Safety Net
EU European Union
GCM Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GCR Global Compact on Refugees
GIZ German Organisation for International Cooperation
HLP High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing
IDA18 International Development Association – funding window 18 (for refugees)
ICRMW The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, 1990
IDP Internally Displaced Person
ILO International Labour Organization
IOM International Organization for Migration
IRC International Rescue Committee
LMIC Low- and Middle-income Countries
MENA Middle East and North Africa
MSFR Ministry of States and Frontier Regions
NADRA National Database and Registration Authority
NGO Non-governmental Organisation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>NPTP</td>
<td>National Poverty Targeting Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSER</td>
<td>National Database and Registration Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OECD-DAC</td>
<td>OECD Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>P4P</td>
<td>Partnership for Prospects Initiative</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Social Protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPE</td>
<td>Servicio Público de Empleo</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCWP</td>
<td>Urban Cash for Work Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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</table>
Migrants and refugees

Migrants who crossed an international border but are not forcibly displaced can have an irregular immigration status (also referred to as undocumented migrants) or a regular immigration status, with legal status that allows them to reside in their host country.

- **Migrants with irregular immigration status** include persons who never had regular immigration status as well as those who violate the terms of their immigration status. For example, people whose immigration status is tied to employment but who have become unemployed and those who were unable to renew their visa or another permit after it expired. Workers with irregular immigration status mostly work in informal employment.

- **Migrants with regular immigration status** are those that have the legal right to remain in a country, often through permits granted based on education or work. This includes migrant workers and their families. Migrants may have regular immigration status but still work informally, i.e. without a contract or outside a registered business.

Forcibly displaced people across borders groups several categories:

- **Refugees** include individuals who are forcibly displaced and recognized under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the refugee definition contained in the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees as incorporated into national laws, those recognized per the UNHCR Statute, individuals granted complementary forms of protection, and those enjoying temporary protection (UNHCR 2021a).

- **Venezuelans displaced abroad** are persons of Venezuelan origin who are likely to need international protection under the criteria contained in the Cartagena Declaration, but who have not applied for asylum in the country in which they are present. Regardless of status, Venezuelans displaced abroad require protection against forced returns, and access to basic services (UNHCR 2021a).

- **Asylum-seekers** are individuals who are forcibly displaced and have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined (UNHCR 2021a).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are people or groups of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural- or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border (UNHCR 2021a).

General note on migrants and refugees as categories: These categories are not fixed, and people can move between them. For example:

- A refugee may find their host country does not offer long-term options for residency and may move to another country and become a migrant with irregular immigration status.

- A migrant may be unable to afford the renewal of their visa and their immigration status will become irregular.

- A migrant with irregular immigration status may be able to benefit from a pathway to residency or regular immigration status, such as temporary work permits, and be allowed to stay in their host country.

Social protection

Social protection refers to the set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, throughout their life cycle placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups (ILO and World Bank 2018). These measures are triggered when a set
of needs is present (ILO and ISSA 2004). Social protection consists of Social assistance, Social insurance, Labour market interventions and Social care services.

**Humanitarian assistance**

Humanitarian assistance is intended to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur. Humanitarian assistance should be governed by the key humanitarian principles of: humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. (GHD 2003). Humanitarian interventions now increasingly aim to link crisis response to long-term development initiatives – such as social protection (in line with the OECD DAC Recommendations and the Grand Bargain/New Way of working).
1. Introduction

This paper describes the current practice of providing social protection to refugees and migrants with regular immigration status in low and middle-income destination countries. While informal social protection provided by family or community members is important, especially in contexts of low state capacity, this paper’s focus is on formal providers of social protection, such as state institutions and development and humanitarian actors. Development and humanitarian actors often complement government-provided social protection with cash assistance or livelihood programmes targeted especially at refugees. While reference to some high-income countries will be made, the paper focuses on low- and middle-income countries.

An estimated 272 million people live in a country other than their birth, which amounts to 3.5% of the global population. Two-thirds of them are labour migrants and 13% are refugees\(^1\) (IOM 2019b; UNHCR 2021b\(^2\)). As for labour migrants, India, Mexico and China are the largest sending countries, while the USA is the biggest recipient country. Two-thirds of migrant workers live in high-income countries and just under a third in middle-income countries. Hardly any labour migrants live in low-income countries. Labour migration to upper-middle-income countries is increasing faster than to high-income countries (IOM 2019b). In terms of geography, half of the migrants stay in their region, while the other half migrate further afield. Migrants from Europe largely stay in European countries (70%), 63% of sub-Saharan Africans stay in sub-Saharan Africa and about half of all migrants from the MENA region remain in their region. In South- and East- Asia as well as the Americas and the Caribbean, migrants mostly move outside their region. As for people forcibly displaced across borders, 86% live in developing countries (UN DESA 2020). Of the ten countries hosting the largest number of refugees, only Germany is a high-income country, while Turkey, Colombia, Iran and Lebanon are higher-middle income, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sudan are lower-middle-income, and Uganda with Ethiopia, low-income countries. About two-thirds of refugees in 2020 came from five countries: Syria, Venezuela\(^3\), Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar (UNHCR 2020; 2021b).

While there is agreement on SDG 1.3.1 that everyone should be entitled to social protection, there is less agreement on whose duty it is to provide social protection for refugees and migrants. The detailed social protection entitlements of non-nationals vary by country and immigration status. Migrants and refugees face several vulnerabilities and risks (IOM 2019a), which social protection can help tackle. Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups (ILO and World Bank 2018). Governments more readily provide social protection towards their citizens than fulfil social protection obligations to refugees and migrants they host. Citizenship and residency are often twin eligibility requirements for national social protection programmes (ILO 2015b), potentially excluding refugees and migrants. Recipient countries make regulatory choices about what type of social protection entitlements are granted. Entitlements are linked to the type of immigration and residency status refugees and migrants can obtain, such as formal refugee status and work or residence permits.

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\(^1\) Out of these 34.4m internationally displaced people, 26.4m have refugee or refugee like immigration status, 4.1m are seeking asylum and 3.9m are Venezuelans displaced abroad.

\(^2\) In addition, 5.7 million Palestinian refugees are under the mandate of UNRWA.

\(^3\) Only a minority of Venezuelan displaced have formal refugee status. Though they would technically meet the regional South American refugee definition recommended by the Cartagena Declaration, many have not applied for refugee status. The Cartagena Declaration requires that displacement be a consequence of a threat to life, safety or freedom due to violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order. Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru have limited the definition of refugee to persons that are ‘forced’ or ‘obligated’ to leave their country (Reed-Hurtado, 2013). The Brazilian National Committee for Refugees did apply the Cartagena Declaration to asylum claims made by Venezuelans. https://revistas.uniandes.edu.co/doi/10.29263/iar05.2020.06. In Colombia, Venezuelan migrants and asylum seekers are entitled to 10 year temporary protection https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/8/colombia-to-grant-temporary-protection-to-nearly-1m-venezuelans.
1.1 Scope of the paper

This paper focuses on refugees and migrants with regular immigration status. It includes people with temporary or complementary protection status in the term refugee. The narrowest definition of refugee would only include those people forcibly displaced who have also received formal refugee recognition. In practice, many forcibly displaced persons do not have refugee status but have another regular immigration status formalising their stay. They may have temporary protection status (such as Syrian refugees in Turkey or many Venezuelans in Colombia). These groups are included in this paper.

This paper excludes IDPs from the discussion since IDPs have not crossed a border and are thus legally under the duty of care of their government. However, for a variety of reasons some IDPs may no longer have access to social protection under their government system. This may be either by design (i.e. the government refuses to provide social protection) or as a consequence of conflict and disaster (the government is not able to take on the provision of social protection). However, the fact that the duty of care lies with the government is rarely disputed. In the case of refugees and migrants with regular immigration status, the question of who should provide social protection is more debated and forms part of the discussions of this paper.

This paper also excludes migrants with irregular immigration status. From the perspective of host governments, migrants with irregular immigration status are contravening immigration laws and government support is not usually provided to them. Though there is a human right to social protection, there is no designated duty bearer of that right and social protection support migrants with irregular immigration status. The practical implications of having irregular immigration status can differ tremendously, depending on the individual situation and country-specific regulations. In many contexts, migrants without regular immigration status fall between the cracks of government social protection programmes and humanitarian cash-based interventions. They may have access to basic education or emergency health care, but rarely have access to regular social protection and rely on informal provisions such as by civil society organisations or informal safety nets. For migrants with irregular immigration status access to services is tied largely to status regularization. Amnesties are a way to regularise migrants’ status and open avenues to social protection. The focus of this paper is not on status regularisation but on formal social protection, from which migrants with irregular status are unfortunately mostly excluded.

The needs of and social protection services offered to refugees and migrants with regular immigration status are often discussed separately. This paper discusses them jointly. The social protection programmes to which migrants with regular immigration status have access differs from that available to refugees. For instance, refugees are more likely to have access to cash assistance, while migrants with regular immigration status are more likely to be enrolled in social insurance. However, social protection systems face similar challenges when offering these services to refugees and migrants with regular immigration statuses, such as language and awareness barriers or coherence between immigration regulation and social protection systems.

The remainder of this paper will discuss these issues in the following sections:

- Section 2 provides definitions of different types of social protection programmes and humanitarian assistance. It discusses how social protection and humanitarian assistance are linked and presents a summary of international agreements that establish minimum standards and guiding principles.
- Section 3 discusses current practices of providing different types of social protection to refugees and migrants with regular immigration status.
- Section 4 reviews practical implementation-related challenges faced by migrants and refugees when accessing social protection

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4 Through for example the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*, which includes essential levels of social security provision for all members of society.  
5 Thailand regularised over a million migrant workers through the National Verification process opening access to social insurance (Seyfert et al. forthcoming). The Government of Colombia created the Special Permit of Permanence for the Promotion of Formalisation (PEPFF), which allows irregular Venezuelan migrants to regularise their status through formal employment contracts, opening access to social protection (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021).
• Section 5 offers policy recommendations.

2. Definitions, linkages and entitlements to humanitarian assistance and social protection

This section first defines what social protection and humanitarian assistance are, before discussing how both are connecting for service delivery and outlining international minimum standards and entitlements to social protection.

2.1 Social protection

Few low and middle-income countries provide comprehensive social protection coverage to their citizens. Under half the global population is covered by at least one social protection benefit. This average hides regional inequalities, while most high-income countries have coverage rates of above 80%, those in South East Asia, and most of the MENA region are much lower. In sub-Saharan Africa, less than 20% have access to one social protection benefit (ILO 2017a). These figures exclude efforts from humanitarian and development agencies, which are supporting many programmes in fragile contexts, such as Yemen, Afghanistan or the Sahel region. Development agencies also support the strengthening of national social protection systems in non-fragile contexts such as in Kenya, Ghana or Indonesia.

Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, throughout their life cycle, and placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups (ILO and World Bank 2018). The social protection system consists of the following components (Long and Sabates-Wheeler 2017; Costella et al. 2021; ILO 2017c):

• **Social assistance** are cash, in-kind or voucher benefits aimed at alleviating poverty. Social assistance is non-contributory and tax-financed. In fragile and low-income contexts it is often supported by donor contributions.

• **Social insurance** provides insurance for livelihood shocks and old age. Individuals, employers and the state make contributions that are paid out when certain triggers or conditions are met (such as a disability pension or an old-age pension).

• **Labour market interventions** are focused on increasing employability, integrating beneficiaries into the labour market or helping them set up a business. This is done for example through job matching schemes, entrepreneurship support or wage subsidies. Labour market interventions can be tax-financed or require contributions from beneficiaries. In low-income contexts, they are often supported by donor contributions.

• **Labour protection laws** are an important component of social protection, especially for migrant workers. These laws commonly refer to workplace safety standards and working conditions, including minimum wage and rest times, which form the basis of decent work. Often these laws include social protection type provisions, such as compulsory workplace accident and injury insurance.

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• **Social care services** aim at supporting and protecting the most vulnerable members of society, such as children, the elderly or people with disabilities. They include social work and care services and are mostly tax-financed, though family members may be asked to pay contributions (O’Brien et al. 2018). In many contexts, charities and civil society organisations complement the provision of social care services. In fragile and low-income contexts social care services are also supported by donor contributions.

Cash for work or public works programmes fall under the social assistance heading since their main objective is to provide a level of basic income security, even though some of them also have labour market intervention objectives, such as building skills and employability.

**Figure 1. Social protection objectives and instruments.**

Source: Authors, adapted (World Bank 2018a; Costella et al. 2021).

### 2.2 Humanitarian assistance

An international humanitarian response is activated in the context of a crisis, which can be caused by conflict, disaster or a health emergency. It consists of material and logistic assistance, such as food, shelter, medical care, cash assistance, communication links or transport, to people in need, such as refugees or those affected by natural disasters. The purpose of humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity in the aftermath of a crisis and increasingly, support crises prevention and recovery.

While humanitarian assistance is designed to be short-term, some crises are protracted. For instance, most refugees live in protracted displacement and have been displaced for more than five years (Devictor 2019). Refugees live either among host communities or in refugee camps and settlements. Refugees living in settlements and camps are more easily reached by assistance programs provided by international actors. Reaching refugees living among host communities requires different delivery mechanisms, which respect host communities and local government structures.

More recently humanitarian assistance programming, aimed primarily at meeting short term basic needs, has been combined with longer-term livelihood programming. The ‘resilience agenda’ refers to the ambition to reduce and eventually end humanitarian needs by offering income-generating
activities and graduation programming\textsuperscript{7}. The resilience agenda has received criticism for placing an unreasonable responsibility on refugees without putting the onus on international and national actors to first provide adequate tools and opportunities for self-reliance (i.e. safety, freedom from discrimination, freedom of movement, access to the formal labour market, etc) (Collyer 2021).

While humanitarian actors lead in humanitarian responses, the distinction between what is the responsibility of humanitarian actors and development actors is blurred, especially in contexts of displacement since displacement often becomes long term and requires structural solutions, where development partners play an increasing role. Hence assistance to refugees can be provided by humanitarian as well as development actors and should be coordinated between the actors.

Humanitarian assistance should be delivered using the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, especially in contexts of conflict where the rules of the Geneva Conventions to protect civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities apply. In conflict settings, national governments are rarely part of the humanitarian relief effort since they may be a party to the conflict and these humanitarian principles cannot be guaranteed.

\section*{2.3 Linking social protection and humanitarian assistance}

Linking humanitarian assistance and national social protection programmes is important to avoid setting up parallel systems. Both have comparative advantages: national social protection systems often have a wider reach and are more cost-effective, while humanitarian actors have expertise in mobilising quickly in adverse conditions. By working together, they can ensure better outcomes in terms of timeliness, cost-effectiveness, accountability, predictability and sustainability compared to working in parallel (Longhurst et al. 2020).

Some elements of social protection have very clear counterparts in humanitarian assistance, while other programming approaches differ. For instance, cash assistance and labour market or livelihood programming exist in both social protection and humanitarian assistance. In contrast, there are common programming approaches in social protection, which do not have a clear counterpart in humanitarian assistance, such as social insurance. This is intuitive: social insurance is based on long term contributions by individuals and employers often underwritten by the government, and hence is not an appropriate programming tool in a humanitarian setting, though it could play a useful role in settings of protracted displacement if the regulatory environment allows it. Social care is a programming approach within social protection similar to what humanitarians would call protection services, though with important differences (see bottom row of Table 1 for details).

Existing experience in linking social protection and humanitarian assistance varies by programming approach. While there is extensive literature on how to link cash assistance across humanitarian assistance and social protection, the literature on linking labour market interventions is more limited and there are hardly any sources discussing how to link social care programming. Table 1 below describes the similarities in programming approaches as well as available literature in more detail.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{7} Graduation programmes are a package of support over 1-3 years, often consisting of cash transfers, capital inputs or grants for productive assets as well as training and mentorship. They aim to ‘graduate’ households or individuals into financial independence.}
### Table 1: Programming approaches in social protection and humanitarian assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programming approach: Social Protection</th>
<th>Programming approach: Humanitarian Assistance</th>
<th>Comments on differences in objectives and modalities</th>
<th>Existing approaches for linking sp and ha? and resources</th>
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| **Social assistance:** cash transfers, vouchers, public works programmes, subsidies and fee waivers | **Cash and voucher assistance (CVA):** same as for social assistance | Same modality, slightly different objectives:  
*Social assistance:* Alleviate (chronic) poverty and smooth idiosyncratic shocks. Respond to co-variate shocks by adapting programmes and scaling up assistance.  
*Humanitarian cash and voucher programming for refugees:* Meeting basic needs on a short-term basis to a population affected by the crisis | There is an emerging consensus on ‘linkage’ strategies, noting more than one strategy may be employed (adapted from Longhurst et al. 2020):  
Aligning design elements of humanitarian interventions to social protection programmes and systems (i.e. targeting criteria, transfer values, monitoring)  
Coordinating humanitarian and social protection programming to enhance coverage, adequacy and comprehensiveness (i.e. coordinate coverage of geographic areas and target groups, deliver different forms of assistance to the same household in a complementary manner)  
Reciprocal leveraging and building on each other’s systems (‘piggybacking’) (i.e. using humanitarian capacity or social protection data to deliver elements of a response)  
(resources include: Longhurst et al. 2020; Gentilini, Laughton, and O’Brien 2018; Seyfert et al. 2019; SPAN 2019; Coll-Black 2018; REDLAC 2021; Smith 2020; SPIAC-B 2015) |
| **Social insurance** | Does not have a counterpart in humanitarian assistance. | n/a | |
| **Active Labour market interventions:** job matching, training programmes, wage subsidies, entrepreneurship etc. | **Livelihood programming:** as for labour market interventions but also including income-generating activities. | Same objective: financial independence, economic inclusion and support in becoming more self-reliant | In contrast to social assistance and cash programmes, there is less documented practice on linking livelihood programming to national labour market interventions. In the context of refugees, there are emergent country experiences from Turkey, where humanitarian and development partners work with the government (UNDP 2020; UNHCR 2018). The Jordan Compact is an example not so much of linking but of coordination and regulatory change (Buffoni 2018; Huang and Gough 2019; Hagen-Zanker, Barbelet, and Mansour-Ille 2018). Ethiopian interventions under the CRRF began with large hopes but are currently stalled (Graham and Miller 2021). |
| **Social care services:** provision of specialised, | **Protection services:** as for social care but also interventions | Both have similar objectives but there are additional protection activities that humanitarian actors carry out, not normally | There is hardly any literature beyond a small number of case studies. Turkey comes up again as an example (Maunder et al. 2020) as well as a |
| professional, non-medical services for especially vulnerable groups. | designed to reduce risks to violence, exploitation, abuse, and rights abuses | included in social care services, i.e. legal protection, protection of trafficked persons and smuggled migrants, refugee protection | forthcoming publication on fragile and conflict-affected situations (Longhurst forthcoming) |

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8 The term ‘protection’ is used differently among social protection actors and humanitarian actors; for a discussion on the different forms of protection, including humanitarian protection and social protection, see IOM (2019) Handbook on Protection and Assistance for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse.
This paper will use social protection to encompass all programmes described in Error! Reference source not found.. Social assistance is understood to also refer to humanitarian cash and voucher assistance. The term 'labour market interventions' will also include livelihood interventions. Social care services will refer to non-medical and non-legal specialised services for vulnerable people.

2.4 Social protection entitlements according to international conventions

2.4.1 Social protection entitlements and funding provisions for refugees

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees accords refugees access to ‘public relief’, ‘labour [protection] legislation’ and ‘social security’ alongside citizens (Articles 23 and 24). Article 17 on wage-earning employment calls for the inclusion of refugees in the labour market. In some cases, such as for basic education, refugee entitlements are equivalent to those of nationals. However, in most cases, refugees are to receive ‘the most favourable treatment as possible’, and ‘not less favourable than any other migrant’. Many states have lodged formal reservations against these articles (17, 23 and 24) since they are deemed too onerous. Even in signatory countries where a reservation is not in place, these obligations are not honoured in practice and refugees face restrictions in accessing the labour market or social protection services (Long and Sabates-Wheeler 2017).

Many countries (i.e. Turkey, Colombia or Germany) have set up legal statuses that offer international protection but less than full refugee status. These statuses are intended to cover people in need of international protection but who do not fall under the national refugee definition. For instance, in Turkey, only asylum seekers from Europe are legally named refugees. Asylum seekers from countries outside Europe may apply for ‘International Protection’ status, ‘Temporary Protection’ or a humanitarian residence permit. Syrian refugees in Turkey can receive the status of “Syrian people under Temporary Protection” (Maunder et al. 2020). UNHCR has pointed out that temporary or subsidiary statuses may undermine the generous provisions of the 1951 Refugee Convention and may mean that forcibly displaced persons with temporary or subsidiary status have less generous access to social protection (UNHCR 2005).

In many low and middle-income countries, social protection for refugees is provided by a combination of national, humanitarian and development agencies. While in countries signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, subsequent protocols and regional refugee frameworks, persons with recognised refugee status should have access to national social protection systems. In practice, few low- or middle-income countries hosting large numbers of refugees provide access to national social protection systems. In cases where host governments cannot or will not take on all social protection responsibilities towards refugees, humanitarian actors and development partners are filling the gaps, such as done through the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (BMZ) Partnership for Prospects Initiative (P4P). P4P offers short-term cash for work opportunities as well as providing access to vocational training and start-up support, to provide longer-term perspectives. The P4P also finances teacher salaries in Jordan and Turkey and is funding salaries for Syrian healthcare professionals, who support fellow healthcare professionals in the host regions.

UNHCR is the UN organisation mandated to coordinate the provision of assistance to refugees on behalf of the international community. Most governments hosting the largest numbers of refugees complement

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9 Turkey has ratified the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol of the Geneva Refugee Convention. People under all three protection regimes can apply for the cash assistance programme (the ESSN). In Turkish documents the term ‘refugee’ is not used, instead Syrian refugees are referred to as asylum seekers or by their protection status.

10 In countries hosting Palestinian refugees this role is played by UNRWA.
assistance provided by international agencies by allowing refugees access to basic education in public schools and access to public primary health care.\footnote{Out of the 10 countries hosting the most refugees in 2020 (Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, Germany, Sudan, Iran, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Ethiopia), Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, Germany, Iran and Lebanon allow refugees to access public basic education. Sudan and Ethiopia (as well as Uganda) have committed to integrating refugee children under the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education (2017). In 2020 Bangladesh has allowed refugee children aged 11-13 to attend public schools. Access to education in Lebanon is to second shifts in public schools. Turkey, Colombia, Germany and Iran also allow access to basic health care.}

**International agreements have reinforced the call for refugees to be able to access national social assistance programmes and for the inclusion of host communities in programmes for refugees.** The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (2016) called for the development of “national strategies for the protection of refugees within the framework of national social protection systems” (UNGA 2016). The Declaration led to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and later to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in 2018. The GCR acknowledges that mass influx situations can be a burden on host countries and that sharing that burden among countries is necessary. It calls for an international response that includes the provision of financial and in-kind assistance to refugee populations alongside host communities.

To support this agenda, the World Bank opened a funding window (IDA18) under which middle income countries hosting refugee populations were eligible for concessionary funding. Low-income countries are eligible for grant funding. The inclusion of middle-income countries is justified by Grand Bargain arguments that aid should “follow the people in need and not the income levels […] of the [host] countries” (HLP 2016). The funding intends to support “commitments by host governments to enact policy change and address the social and economic dimensions of refugee situations” (World Bank 2018b). Existing funding has been used to integrate refugees in national programmes, such as in the Republic of Congo (see section 3.1 below).

### 2.4.2 Social protection entitlements for migrants with regular immigration status

The duty-bearer responsible for the provision of social protection for migrants with regular immigration status can be either the sending or destination country. Due to the presumed voluntary nature of the international movement of migrants, migrants with regular immigration status can theoretically avail themselves of protection from their country of origin and may, depending on local legislation, be able to enrol into social protection systems of their destination country.

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, 1990 (ICRMW) regulates the rights of migrant workers including the rights to social security (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021). The ‘equality of treatment principle calls for migrant workers to have access to social protection systems on the same level as nationals. It challenges governments not to restrict access to social protection to citizens and is embedded in the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (1949) and the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention (1962).\footnote{In addition, a number of additional Conventions call for equality of treatment at the workplace (e.g. with respect to minimum wage, working hours and work safety.}

The Convention on Social Security (Minimum Standards), from 1952, sets global minimum standards for social security and Article 68 is devoted to equality of treatment of non-national residents (ILO 2015c).

The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006) calls for social security entitlements to be portable across borders, to ensure that entitlements accumulated in one country can be transferred to another. However, the equality of treatment principle, stipulating that migrant workers should have the same rights as national workers, is more important than the call for portability. (ILO 2015c).

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) calls for better international coordination on migration as well as support to countries receiving large numbers of migrants and calls for the integration of migrants in humanitarian and development assistance frameworks and planning.

There are international agreements and conventions in place calling for both refugees and labour migrants with regular immigration status to have access to social protection and for countries hosting...
large numbers of refugees or migrants to receive support in doing so. The following section will describe how social protection is provided to refugees and migrants with regular immigration status in different contexts.

3. Providing social protection to refugees and migrants with regular immigration status: current practice

This section will review current practice in making social protection accessible to refugees and migrants with regular immigration status, by first discussing current practice in social assistance, followed by social insurance, labour market interventions and social care services. This provision includes a mix of government, humanitarian and development partner providers. While social assistance and labour market programming is the predominant social protection approach to refugees, social insurance is the most common social protection programming available to migrants with regular immigration status.

3.1 Access to social assistance

Box 1. Summary on social assistance

In many LMICs migrants with regular immigration status only have limited access to national social assistance schemes. Refugees are also often excluded, though the fact that they are under international protection means that international agencies take an important role in providing humanitarian cash assistance. Recent developments have broadened refugees’ and migrants’ access to national social assistance programmes. In Morocco for example migrants with regular immigration status have recently gained access to national social assistance programmes and Brazil allows refugees to access its social assistance programmes, though coverage in both cases remains very low.

In most cases national social assistance programmes for citizens remain distinct from humanitarian cash and voucher schemes for refugees. However, both systems are increasingly connected in a variety of ways:

- Humanitarian actors may provide only the financing, while registration and data management is carried out by the national system(s). To help a national programme scale up quickly, translation, case management, outreach and mobilisation support can be provided by humanitarian actors (Turkey).
- When there is an effort to align, transfer amounts are frequently the first element that is aligned (i.e. Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon). Programmes can also share the same targeting mechanism or payment provider (Lebanon).
- The issuing of national refugee IDs can be a first step to connect the national and humanitarian social registries (Turkey and Pakistan).
- A humanitarian cash programme can prompt the creation of a national social assistance programme (Lebanon).
- Humanitarian cash and voucher assistance can include separate programmes for host communities (Bangladesh).

High-income host countries are more likely to grant refugees and migrants regular immigration status access to social assistance, while in LMICs, refugees and migrants with regular status cannot usually receive social assistance. This is mostly due to nationality being an eligibility criterion. For example, in Jordan, only citizens have access to the Takaful social assistance programmes. The same is true for Egypt, where migrants or refugees cannot access the Takaful or Karama programmes. Similarly, in Thailand, non-nationals cannot access the State Welfare Card Programme aimed at providing basic need subsidies for Thai people living under a given income threshold. Migrants with regular immigration status can however register for child benefits. In Morocco, recent changes in legislation mean that between 2017–2018, more than 2,500 migrants benefited from social assistance offered by the Entraide Nationale. This is a tiny proportion of non-nationals resident in Morocco (0.4 % of the estimated 700,000 migrants in the country) (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021).
While access to social assistance remains limited for migrants with regular immigration status in many LMICs, this is changing for refugees.

3.1.1 Diversity of approaches to link humanitarian, development and national social assistance programmes for refugees

Cash assistance provision to refugees frequently involves a collaboration between the humanitarian and government delivery system. Initiatives such as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework or the Global Compact on Refugees as well as funding windows, such as IDA18, encourage humanitarian, development and national actors to strengthen national social protection systems and build on them when providing cash assistance to refugees.

The linkages between humanitarian and national social assistance programmes targeted at refugees are diverse and not easily categorised. They range from completely parallel systems, where humanitarian actors assist refugees while national social assistance programmes focus on citizens and residents, to situations where both caseloads are fully integrated into the same system. The rationale for closer linkages and various options for linking humanitarian assistance and national social protection systems have been presented elsewhere (Longhurst et al. 2020; Seyfert et al. 2019; Gentilini, Laughton, and O’Brien 2018). There have also been detailed design discussions on how to link various elements of social protection programmes, such as information systems (Shoemaker 2020), transfer values (McLean et al. 2021), value for money (Wylde and Cabot Venton 2020) and coverage gaps (Wylde 2020).

The following paragraphs will present brief case studies of social assistance provided to refugees in countries with a large refugee caseload. The case studies range from integration of refugees into national programmes (Brazil); creating a programme for refugees which is donor-funded but largely implemented by national actors (Turkey); the humanitarian and national systems borrowing elements from each other or ‘piggy-backing’ (Pakistan and Lebanon); and completely parallel provision (Bangladesh, Jordan).

- **Brazil, a host country of displaced Venezuelans is an example of integrating refugees (and migrants with regular immigration status) into national systems.** The constitution allows nationals and nonnationals the same access to social assistance. Venezuelan families can receive either Bolsa Familia or Beneficio de Prestação Continuada (BPC), the two key national social assistance programmes. However, coverage is very low. In 2020, only 4% of Venezuelans benefitted from Bolsa Familia and 160 Venezuelans from BPC as of October 2019. Access to these programmes is application based and nonnationals can enrol in the Single Registry of Social Programmes (Cadastro Único de Programas Sociais), which identifies eligible persons. As of February 2019, 6,470 families with at least one Venezuelan member were included in the Registry. Low coverage in the registry indicates that despite the legal entitlement, implementation barriers keep Venezuelans out of the system (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021).

- **Turkey’s Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) is delivered by a coalition of humanitarian actors and government agencies.** It has a much higher coverage of refugees than Bolsa Familia and BPC in Brazil, with 1.8 million people. More than half of registered Syrian refugees applied to the programme and 59% of applicants are eligible to receive the transfer, making it the largest humanitarian cash transfer programme globally (Cuevas et al. 2019). The programme is entirely funded by humanitarian aid but relies on existing Turkish social protection registration and data management infrastructure, involving ministries in charge of social protection as well as migration. The registration process for Turkish and Syrian social assistance applicants is the same, transfer amounts between the ESSN and national programmes are aligned, though the targeting approaches differ. Refugee IDs are issued by the same authority as national ones and are interoperable with the national social registry. The Turkish Red Crescent supports national actors with translation services, case management, beneficiary communication and partner coordination, which has played an important role in supporting national actors to achieve scale (Maunder et al. 2018).

While the ESSN is often cited as an ideal case, it relies on two pre-conditions that are not always in place in refugee-hosting countries: very strong national registration and data management capabilities and a (single) committed donor willing to exert influence on the
government. In addition, while administered through the same delivery structures, the ESSN remains a programme available only to refugees, while Turkish citizens have access to different social assistance programmes. Effectively, the same national system delivers different programmes for refugees and citizens, with the refugee programme being internationally funded.

- **Pakistan’s federal social assistance programme, Ehsaas, supports vulnerable citizens but is not available to refugees.** Though it still receives donor support, it is a mature programme and key pillar of national social policy. Humanitarian assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan is in parallel, though in coordination with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (MSFR). The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to closer align humanitarian and national programmes. The emergency cash transfer set up to support 75,000 Afghan refugee and asylum seeker households used the same transfer value as the Ehsaas COVID-19 emergency programme for citizens. Refugees and asylum-seekers hold Proof of Registration (PoR) cards issued by NADRA, the same authority issuing national CNIC ID cards (Lone et al. 2021). Since the same authority issues both IDs, this should facilitate making the two registries interoperable. Further, UNHCR is advocating for refugees to be included in the federal social registry (NSER) alongside citizens. Currently, community targeting is used to identify vulnerable refugee households, while the NSER is used for the identification and enrolment of Pakistani citizens.

- **Lebanon has a much lower state capacity in social protection and its national social assistance scheme learned from the humanitarian system by adopting the same targeting approach, payment system and transfer value.** The only social assistance programme in Lebanon, the National Poverty Targeting Program (NPTP) is financed by the World Bank and began after transfers for Syrian and Iraqi refugees, run by WFP and UNHCR, had already been in place for several years. The national programme runs in parallel but builds on the experience of the humanitarian cash assistance programme and aligns with it. It uses the same transfer amount and same proxy means testing targeting method, but with an amended formula adapted to the different target population. Both systems use the same payment mechanism and financial services provider, though the card for both programmes is a different colour.

- **In Bangladesh, the social protection sector developed out of disaster response for citizens, but support for refugees and host communities runs in parallel through the humanitarian system.** Social protection is a fragmented system, with a wide variety of programmes under the social protection umbrella. In addition to government provision, humanitarian actors implement a range of cash and food transfers to support host communities in Cox’s Bazaar (Hebbar, Muhit, and Marzi 2021). The Bangladesh government limits distributing cash to refugees, (Ahmed 2019) though World Vision runs a cash for work programme for refugees inside camps. UNICEF also has cash transfer programmes inside the camps and is about to start one for host communities. Unlike in Turkey, Lebanon and Pakistan, Rohingya refugees have no freedom of movement outside of the camps, where 80% receive food through e-vouchers. Bangladeshi host communities receive cash transfers from humanitarian assistance alongside refugees (ISCG 2020). Bangladeshi internal migrants and slum dwellers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic receive cash support from development actors, the GIZ. The wide variety of cash transfers and cash actors raises coordination challenges. Though the recipients of the COVID-19 response measure must explicitly not be recipients of any other governmental or non-governmental safety net programme in relation to COVID-19, the national, development and humanitarian cash assistance landscape remains fragmented.

- **The Bangladeshi situation illustrates that the need for closer cooperation and coordination between humanitarian and development assistance is particularly acute in situations of protracted displacement.** This also holds in the Lebanese context or Jordan. Jordan hosts 17 social assistance programmes: six benefiting Syrian refugees and six benefiting Jordanians, while five benefits both nationalities. They are not always complementary, for instance, many cover basic needs and use parallel registries. In addition, transfer levels within humanitarian programmes are not aligned. The High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing (HLP 2016) advocates for a “move away from inter-agency competition towards a model of collaborative efficiency”, to “reduce overhead and procurement costs”. This aim of collaborative efficiency was a motivating factor behind DG ECHO’s decision in Turkey to award funds for a humanitarian cash programme to only one implementing

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agency for the ESSN programme, rather than several. Maunder et al. (2018) discuss that the increase in operational efficiency of having one implementing agency comes at the cost of reduced specialist expertise, which a menu of agencies would offer.

### 3.1.2 Increasing access in low and middle-income countries to national social assistance for refugees

The increased funding availability, such as the World Bank’s IDA18 window as well as other GCR motivated initiatives, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to several recent national social assistance programmes in LMICs which also include refugees.

- The Republic of the Congo received IDA18 investment in its Lisungi Safety Net project. The funding aimed at including refugees alongside host communities but stalled due to COVID-19. Instead, an urban emergency safety net was put in place, which included urban refugees and asylum seekers. According to UNHCR, this inclusion can be attributed to long term advocacy, coordination and preparatory work by the World Bank and UNHCR under the IDA18 funding (UNHCR, IFRC, and UNICEF 2020).

- In Uganda, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia national social assistance programmes which plan to include refugees were set up in response to COVID-19. In all three counties, national social protection programmes are heavily donor-supported, running in parallel to humanitarian cash and voucher assistance. The COVID-19 crisis prompted increased collaboration. In Sierra Leone an emergency window of the routine Ep Fet Po cash transfer was launched (Yusuf et al. 2021) and in Uganda and Ethiopia urban cash for work programmes were set up, the Urban Cash for Work Programme (UCWP) in Uganda (Doyle, Hudda, and Marzi 2021) and the Urban Productive Safety Nets and Jobs Project in Ethiopia (Bischler, Asheber, and Hobson 2021). All three are donor-supported and plan to include refugees. The exact modalities of inclusion remain unclear. For instance, in Uganda, according to the ILO, the UCWP plans to include 20% refugees, though official eligibility criteria for the programme includes having a Ugandan digital ID, which refugees do not possess (Doyle, Hudda, and Marzi 2021).

### 3.2 Access to social insurance

**Box 2. Summary on social insurance**

Access to social insurance is tied to formal employment. Since refugees are exclude from formal employment in most LMICs, they rarely access social insurance. Migrant workers with regular immigration status are more likely to be enrolled in social insurance, provided they are in formal employment. Fewer migrant workers than those that would be eligible are usually enrolled in social insurance. Broadening the access of migrants with regular immigration status to social insurance schemes would likely substantially increase social protection coverage of that group.

Other constraints to accessing benefits include:

Accumulated benefits are not always portable and especially high-income receiving countries are reluctant to sign bilateral social protection agreements with LMIC sending countries.

Tiered migration regimes exclude seasonal workers or those in specific professions, especially domestic work, from social insurance by either prohibiting enrolment or by making enrolment voluntary. This disproportionately discriminates against low skilled workers and women.

To protect their workers, some sending countries have set up migration welfare funds, contributory schemes to which migrants contribute. Since contributions are per trip rather than monthly and exclude an employer contribution, the benefits are less generous compared to destination country schemes.

**Contributory social insurance schemes, such as maternity benefits or old-age pensions, are tied to formal employment.** The employer, the employee and in some cases the government make
contributions. Social insurance is the most widely used and largest form of social protection available to migrants with regular immigration status. An ILO (2017c) mapping of 120 countries showed that more than half have legal provisions granting migrants with regular immigration status access to contributory social protection on an equal basis to citizens. Migrants working in the informal economy are rarely covered by contributory schemes.

Refugees often do not have access to formal employment and cannot access contributory social insurance programmes. Based on a sample of 20 countries hosting 70% of the world’s refugees, Zetter and Ruaudel (2016) find that refugees’ right to work is restricted in most countries. In some countries refugees explicitly acquire the right to work with refugee status (for example, in Uganda or the United States). Sometimes the right to work is restricted to certain sectors. In Iran, refugees can work in only one of 16 professional categories. In other countries, such as Chad, Ecuador, and India, refugee access to the formal labour market is covered by provisions applicable to any non-national. This implies that refugees do not acquire the right to work with refugee status but require sponsorship and a work permit from a potential employer. The paperwork and additional cost involved can reasonably constitute a barrier to employment. For instance, in Turkey refugees can work with a work permit, but in 2018 only 3% of refugees had a work permit, while a little more than half of the adult refugees (54%) were working in informal employment (Maunder et al. 2020).

Given the restrictions refugees face in accessing formal work and hence social insurance, the remainder of this section will focus on migrants with regular immigration status.

3.2.1 Formal employment opens access to social insurance

Migrants are net contributors to social insurance schemes. In OECD countries migrants (including those with irregular status) contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in individual benefits (Hennebry 2017). Only those formally registered in a social insurance scheme can take advantage of its benefits. A significant proportion of migrants are unlikely to be registered, even though they should be. For instance in Thailand, only 40% of migrant workers from Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar with regular immigration status are registered in the national social insurance scheme (Seyfert et al. forthcoming).

The reason for low registration is low compliance, even when employers are compelled to register migrant workers into social insurance schemes. In Malaysia, even though insurance coverage is a pre-condition for the employment of migrant workers and is to be paid by the employer, most migrant workers do not have insurance, according to a report by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (2018). Similarly, employers are required to register the migrant worker into the social insurance and work accident insurance schemes in Thailand, but only 60% of potentially eligible migrant workers are insured. Existing monitoring and inspection mechanisms are not sufficient and effective enough to ensure compliance. While Thai workers can check their status online, migrant workers cannot verify easily if contributions are being made on their behalf by the employer (Seyfert et al. forthcoming).

In the absence of portability agreements, migrants may not be able to receive pensions and other benefits they paid into. International legal frameworks and bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) are a tool to regulate social protection and portability entitlements between countries. For instance, in response to accounts of abuse of Filipino migrant workers by Saudi employers, the 2013 Saudi Arabia-Philippines BLA outlines parameters for paid leave, and provides some reference to social protections (Hennebry 2017). As for multi-lateral agreements, the 2012 General Convention on Social Security regularises the portability of social security rights of migrant workers within the ECOWAS region (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021).

Some migrant-sending countries are reluctant to enter into such portability agreements. Bi- and multi-lateral agreements do not necessarily cover the most important migration corridors and there is evidence that recipient countries may be slow to ratify them. For example, Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia do not have social security agreements with the Gulf States, key destination countries for

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14 Such as in plaster-, lime- or brick-making, in stone masonry, road construction and mining; working as farm laborers, in poultry or animal husbandry, working in tanning, gardening, garbage removal or sewage.

15 This applies to migrants from Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam and Myanmar with MoU or national verification of immigration status.
migrants from the MENA region. Further, Italy is an important destination country for Egyptian and Moroccan workers but no bilateral social security agreement has been ratified. The UK, Switzerland and the US are another three important recipient countries of Moroccan migrants, “unwilling to engage in negotiations on social security of migrant workers” (Center for Migration and Refugee Studies 2017).

**Sending countries can set up social insurance schemes for migrant workers, though these exclude employer contributions and benefits tend to be lower.** The Filipino migrant welfare fund is one of the largest in the world, collecting mandatory membership fees before departure. The migrant worker insurance covers compensation in the case of death or disability, as well as providing cover for non-work-related accidents, early contract termination, unpaid wages, and costs linked to a worker changing employer. The insurance has to be in place before departure is approved (Olivier 2018; Rodrigues 2019). Beyond the Philippines, migrant-sending countries such as Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Pakistan, and Nepal have set up welfare funds (ILO 2015a). However, in terms of adequacy, these funds do not offer benefits on similar levels as enrolment in destination country social insurance systems would. They also do not include compulsory employer contributions.

### 3.2.2 Tiered migration regimes discriminate against seasonal migrant workers with low skill levels by excluding them from social insurance

**Immigration status may differ by employment duration and skill level, creating a tiered system. This can have discriminatory outcomes for seasonal and woman migrant workers and risks undermining universal enrolment in social insurance schemes.** Several countries have created labour migration statuses that are exempt from obligatory social insurance contributions. These often apply to seasonal or short-term migrant workers. For example, in Germany, the UK and Canada, employers do not have to register seasonal workers into the social insurance scheme. In Germany, employers can hire seasonal workers for 115 days without making social insurance contributions (IWW Institut 2021). In Thailand, the Border Pass scheme allows employers to hire temporary workers in border provinces for up to 90 days without compulsory social security contributions. These passes can be easily renewed by crossing the border.

**Workers in different professions, in particular low-skilled or domestic work, can also be excluded from social insurance.** Singapore’s labour migration regulations are based on a system of tiers, based on skill and income level, with high-earning and highly skilled labour migrants granted longer-term work permits. In contrast, low skilled workers are considered ‘seasonal’ or ‘short-term’ workers, eligible for short-term work permits valid for two years. Only migrant workers from the top tier, who have permanent residence status, are entitled to contribute to the Central Provident Fund, which is the core of the Social Security Fund (Center for Southeast Asian Studies 2018; Olivier 2018). In Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, domestic workers are excluded from both social insurance as well as labour protection legislation. These exclusions discriminate against workers with low skill levels as well as women who are disproportionately employed in domestic work.
3.3 Labour market interventions

Box 3. Summary on labour market interventions

Refugees and migrants with regular immigration status are mostly excluded from national active labour market interventions. International agencies take a prominent role in providing livelihood programming to refugees, with the objective that they will lead to improved income generating opportunities and increased self-reliance.

Refugee employment rates are lower compared to host communities. Refugees face a myriad of barriers to employment and income generation. Labour market interventions aim at alleviating these constraints, though their effectiveness still lack rigorous evidence. Vocational, business or skills training programmes are common and deal with the skill mismatch, but they are likely ineffective in promoting (longer term) employment. Language training has a positive effect on labour market participation, as does coaching and individualised assistance. Many programmes use the above approaches combined with small grants and capital inputs for entrepreneurship or subsistence. Labour market interventions that aim at creating an inclusive labour market, such as issuing work permits or land titles, have a positive effect on long term employment or investments by refugees.

Irrespective of their effectiveness, most labour market interventions for refugees are short term and have limited coverage. The value for money of these programmes is unclear. More complex programmes, such as individual coaching or programmes combining elements, are more costly to deliver but also show more promise in generating employment and income.

Successful integration of refugees in a national labour market requires very large-scale investment sustained over a long period. This is better done with the support of national systems and job centres. The approach to livelihood programming should be similar to that of social assistance: where possible strengthen and support national systems and work through them rather than setting up small scale parallel programmes with limited reach and duration.

The objectives of active labour market interventions are varied and include increasing employability, economic inclusion and financial independence as well as job creation and increased resilience. Refugees and migrants (including those with irregular status) cannot usually access national active labour market interventions in LMIC host countries. Many LMICs do not run active labour market policies for their citizens, though there are exceptions. Colombia is guaranteeing displaced Venezuelans, who may be refugees or migrants with regular or irregular immigration status, the right to access services provided by the Public Employment Service (Servicio Público de Empleo—SPE). The services include management and placement services, occupational guidance and referral services. However, only a small number of Venezuelan migrants take advantage of the services provided by the Public Employment Service. The majority of Venezuelans look for jobs using informal channels such as social networks (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021).

International development and humanitarian actors are increasingly providing labour market interventions, or livelihood programming, to refugees. This is motivated by the observation that international displacement can be protracted and by a desire to build refugee livelihoods that are independent of cash assistance. The following sections will focus on livelihood programming for refugees.

3.3.1 Livelihood programming for refugees by international agencies are diverse

In the short term, refugees lag behind citizens in employment rates, even in settings that allow them to work. These negative labour market outcomes apply to IDPs as well, indicating that forced displacement itself affects labour market outcomes. Although these employment differentials close in the long term, in the medium term, refugees face barriers in accessing the labour market, entrepreneurship and self-employment (Schuettler and Caron 2020).

In many LMICs refugees face a myriad of constraints: They face legal restrictions, such as restrictions on the right to work, to own property, to open a bank account or move and settle freely, following economic opportunity. They often do not have assets to invest and there is likely to be a skill
mismatch between their skills and the needs of the host community labour market. In addition, refugees’ education has likely been disrupted due to displacement and they have gone through long periods of economic inactivity. Refugees’ qualifications are unlikely to be recognised in their host country and they may lack language proficiency. They may be in poor health, especially mental health. Refugee households have higher dependency ratios than many host communities, often as a result of displacement, increasing the care burden. Uncertainty around their ability to stay, resettle or return affects motivation to invest in country-specific skills, like a language.

Labour market interventions aim at alleviating these constraints. They are mostly run by development or humanitarian agencies as stand-alone projects. Examples of this type of livelihood programming include: the provision of training, internships in the private sector and start-up business promotion offered to refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities in Iraq. In Kenya GIZ supports refugees and host communities in and around the camps of Kakuma and Dadaab, by providing training or advice on agricultural growing methods to support vegetable gardens. Note that refugees are not allowed to work formally or own land in Kenya. In Mali UNHCR offers vocational training in hairdressing, baking and tailoring allowed to work formally or own land or a refuge. Refugees and asylum seekers in Israel are allowed to work formally or own land or a refuge. Refugees who own livestock benefit from agricultural inputs, equipment and a land access programme. On the livestock front, support for cattle feed and integration into the national vaccination programme are offered. The programmes are usually small, for instance, participation numbers in the programmes cited above are in the hundreds.

The impact of labour market interventions on the financial independence of households is still unclear, especially when compared to the clear evidence available on the positive impacts of cash transfers (Bastagli et al. 2019). Schuettler and Caron (2020) have reviewed the evidence on livelihood projects in a forced displacement setting. Their findings are summaries in the following bullet points:

- **Vocational, business or skills training programmes are common but evidence of their effectiveness is not promising.** Qualitative studies from Egypt, Jordan and Mozambique, indicate that the training offered does not always match needs and that having time to attend the training is a key constraint. Initiatives on IT and coding training show some promise but are still small scale and restricted to refugees with access to the required infrastructure and with already high education levels. **Integrating training with job placements and work experience is more effective.**

- **Literature** outside refugee settings points to the fact that **soft skills training might be more important than technical skills training.** Language training has a positive effect on labour market participation in high-income countries, though the effect on employment rates is not always clear. There is little evidence from low-income countries other than the observation that more of it is needed.

- **Coaching/mentoring and individualised assistance improve labour market outcomes** but are costly to deliver – shown by evidence from urban refugees in Rwanda, South Africa, and Tanzania.

- **Psycho-social care interventions have a positive impact on mental health scores.** Better mental health has a positive effect on employment outside refugee settings (OECD 2012), even if the eventual impact of better mental health on employment and entrepreneurship in the context of displacement is unclear.

- **Inclusive labour market policies (i.e. work permits) have a positive effect on formal employment,** according to evidence from Switzerland. Evidence from Germany shows that allowing refugees and asylum seekers to work straight after arrival increases employment rates in the long run, indicating that long periods of inactivity negatively affect employment outcomes. Certainty around prospects increases investment as shown by evidence from Uganda where refugees with more secure prospects plant different crops and invest more in the land they hold.

- **Job search and matching interventions have a positive effect on employment rates.** According to evidence from Germany and Sweden. **Evidence from LMIC is rarer and less convincing** (i.e. Uganda and Jordan), in Jordan matching jobs to refugees is less effective, since the location and employer were highly restricted. The Jordan Compact includes the provision of work permits in Special Economic Zones to refugees, therefore job matching programmes are common in that

16 The authors cite McKenzie and Woodruff 2013; McKenzie 2017; Acevedo et al. 2017
context. Job matching and brokerage programmes are less common in for example Kenya, where refugees do not have the right to work.

- **Wage subsidies are effective in creating short term employment in OECD countries**, but effects on long term employment and in LMICs is unclear.
- **Value chain interventions and programmes dealing with information asymmetries** seem promising. These involve supplying inputs and mentoring along a value chain, for example providing animal feed and vaccinations as well as supporting livestock markets and abattoirs. Qualitative evidence points to a positive impact, but rigorous evaluations are lacking, even though these interventions are common and well established, especially in low- and middle-income countries.
- **Several programmes use combinations of training programmes, coaching and the distribution of small grants and capital inputs for entrepreneurship or subsistence**. These are also called graduation programmes. There are few evaluations in forced displacement settings, but early evidence, such as qualitative studies from Egypt, Costa Rica and Niger, show promise. There is strong evidence of the success of graduation type approaches from vulnerable and conflict-affected but non-displaced populations. Since refugees often face restrictions and are unable to own businesses, land or open bank accounts, these programmes can be challenging to implement in many forced displacement settings.

3.3.2 Livelihood programming by international agencies is usually short term and small in scale

Irrespective of their effectiveness, the interventions delivered by international agencies are mostly short term. A forthcoming study reviewing 109 livelihood interventions in six countries (Barberis et al. forthcoming) found that interventions targeted at refugees had an average duration of 3.5 years, with most projects lasting 2 years or less. This means that livelihood projects only support a limited number of beneficiary cohorts. While they usually do provide a basic income during that period, livelihood interventions likely take several years to show sustainable long-term results. Learning a skill or a language may take years and some interventions, such as market systems development, take 4-5 years until they show results (Davies 2016).

Livelihood interventions delivered by international agencies have limited coverage. Out of 13 livelihood projects examined in Kenya, Mali, South Sudan, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq, nine had beneficiary numbers in the hundreds, three in the thousand and one just over 12 thousand (Barberis et al. forthcoming). Compared to the total number of refugees, these are small figures.

The value for money of livelihood programmes is unclear. They are likely less cost-efficient compared to cash transfer programmes, but their effects are hoped to be long term. The cost of creating a job in Barberis et al. (forthcoming)’s sample is often a multiple of the salary eventually earned. It takes 2-5 years for the benefits generated to cover the cost of the project. The authors find that more complex programmes combining several approaches are more expensive, spending about four times as much per beneficiary as programmes with simpler designs. Though Schuettler and Caron (2020) find that more complex designs may also have more impact. Unsurprisingly given the higher levels of vulnerability, Baberis et al. find that interventions targeting refugees may be more expensive than livelihood interventions targeting citizens.

3.3.3 Linking refugees to national labour market interventions would improve scale and sustainability

Successful integration of refugees in a national labour market requires very large-scale investment sustained over a long period as shown by evidence from Germany. By the end of 2019, five years after their arrival, just under half of the refugees in Germany were in employment, 80% in jobs

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17 The authors cite Banerjee et al. 2015; Bandiera et al. 2017; Blattman, Fiala, and Martinez 2013; Blattman et al. 2016.
18 This figure is based on 14 observations. The study includes interventions targeted at refugees as well as citizens. The 14 observations refer to project working with refugees where data was available.
19 This refers to the two complex value chain projects and compares it to simpler ‘grants-only’ projects.
with social insurance contributions. This was supported by active labour market policies: while less than 1% of refugees had good German language abilities on arrival, this figure was 40% in 2019, several hundred thousand refugees took employability and language courses (IAB 2020). This level of investment is not affordable to many LMICs.

**Linking humanitarian and development livelihood programming to national labour market policies is likely to result in more sustainable and larger-scale programming.** It may also be more likely to connect refugees to jobs that mandate social insurance contributions. For instance, the KfW and EU have supported the Turkish employment agency, ISKUR to provide the job matching support for 12,600 refugees in Turkey (ILO 2017b) and jointly with the ILO provide on-the-job training, incentivised by taking on social insurance and work permit related costs to incentive employers to hire refugees and vulnerable Turkish applicants. KfW is also working with 50 existing vocational schools to include Syrian refugees. This scale of programming is large for livelihood programmes and builds on existing labour market intervention infrastructure.

### 3.4 Access to social care services

**Box 4. Summary on social care services**

National social care systems in LMICs often have low capacity unable to provide the required volume of social care services even to citizens. Civil society organisations and private providers play a large role, for citizens as well as migrants and refugees. UN agencies often support organisations providing services to refugees. But overall service provision still falls short to meeting needs.

Little research on the entitlements, quality, coverage and timeliness of social care services for refugees and migrants exists. There is also little experience or research on how to link service provision for refugees and migrants to existing national social care systems.

 Refugees and migrants (including those with irregular status) face a variety of vulnerabilities that require specific social care services different from the needs of citizens, such as counselling, advice or translation services. Not only are refugees and migrants more likely to be poor, they may be at risk of exploitation and struggle to get help due to language and bureaucratic barriers. Refugees may have an increased need for psycho-social services (Long and Sabates-Wheeler 2017).

Social care services refer to the provision of specialised, professional, non-medical services for especially vulnerable groups. Most social care work is not paid but supplied within the family unpaid. For refugees, there are additional protection activities that humanitarian actors carry out, and that are not normally included in social care services, such as legal protection or support of trafficked persons and smuggled migrants (IOM 2019a). Literature on social care services is still comparatively scarce and this section will therefore present a more cursory review compared to the previous ones.

**NGOs and private companies play a prominent role in many countries’ social care landscape, often acting as sub-contractors to the government or international agencies.** For instance care to the elderly in many European countries is delivered by private companies but publicly funded (such as HC-One Ltd and FSHC in the UK or Home Instead in Germany). In LMICs, as is the case for labour market interventions, social care is often still in the early stages of development. However, with the expansion of female labour market participation and weakening traditional family support systems, social care is moving out of unpaid family work into a social care sector, especially in Asia (Peng 2012; ADB 2016).

There is little documented evidence on the degree to which refugees or migrants with regular immigration status can access national social care services. There is a perception that migrants with regular immigration status should not need social care to support children or family members with a chronic illness or a disability since migrants with regular immigration status are not always allowed to bring dependents and must themselves be able to work.

**Irrespective of their immigration status, civil society organisations typically step in to meet the specific social care needs of migrants.** For example, in Thailand, Migrant Resource Centers or Community Volunteers provide outreach services and advice to migrants on how to navigate the Thai
social protection system. Both programmes are supported by the ILO (Seyfert et al. forthcoming). In Colombia, a network of community radio stations are working to meet the information and communication needs of Venezuelan migrants, supported by UNHCR and GIZ (WACC 2021). In Singapore, civil society organisations like the Association of Women for Action and Research, which run a sexual assault helpline and care centre, and the Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics, explicitly include migrants in their services and advocate on behalf of migrant domestic workers (AWARE 2020).

In the case of refugees, NGOs and civil society organisations frequently receive support from UN agencies to provide child protection services, support to survivors of gender-based violence or care for people with disabilities. Refugees in need of social care services are called protection cases. Identification of protection cases commonly takes place alongside the status assessment if carried out by UNHCR. In Turkey, identification of protection cases also takes place through routine ESSN programme activities by frontline staff. **Error! Reference source not found.** presents an example typology of protection needs faced by refugees in Turkey. Once identified, protection cases are referred to specialist providers. These can be government or civil society providers. However, referrals take time and key capacity gaps include women’s shelters, child protection including services for unaccompanied children, specialized health services and education for children with special needs (Maunder et al. 2020).

Table 2: Typology of Protection Needs for refugees for the ESSN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protection Case</th>
<th>Examples of Protection Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to the ESSN</td>
<td>Programme registration issues, obtaining a disability health report needed for eligibility; support for illiterate persons, persons who can't travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse or mistreatment</td>
<td>Verbal abuse; physical abuse; sexual abuse; sexual exploitation; indecent proposals in any process of the ESSN by any person officially working on the ESSN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to other services</td>
<td>Education; health – including hospital appointments, physical aids, medicine, treatment; legal services; any other services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee protection</td>
<td>ID issues (migration registration); detention; refoulement (forced return); family unityation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual &amp; Gender-based violence</td>
<td>Domestic violence; rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child protection</td>
<td>Child labour; child marriage; unaccompanied and separated children; neglect; exploitation; abuse (sexual/emotional); adolescent pregnancy/child parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material assistance needs</td>
<td>Food; furniture; blankets; clothes; baby items; hygiene kits; poor living conditions including dilapidated shelters, poor sanitation etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host community tensions</td>
<td>Individuals or groups face abuse, discrimination or other ill-treatment by the host community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable ESSN ineligibles</td>
<td>Materially vulnerable persons not eligible for the ESSN who still require basic needs assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security issues</td>
<td>Crowding at ESSN project sites; safety and security issues in travelling to or accessing project sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from (Maunder et al. 2020)

Capacity constraints of both social care and protection services are the Achilles heel even of mature systems, where services are often overloaded and waiting times can be long.

4. Design and implementation barriers

Where refugees and migrants with regular immigration status do have access to social protection, they often face similar barriers when accessing them. These may be policy, capacity or operational. Policy
and capacity barriers may be more relevant in a refugee context, whereas operational barriers apply to the same degree to refugees and migrants with regular immigration status.

**4.1 Policy and capacity barriers**

National governments may be reluctant to grant refugees or migrants with regular immigration status full access to their social protection programmes, since it is deemed to be the first step towards national integration and adds to the national caseload of vulnerable people. This is especially applicable to the case of refugees, where the caseload is often large and very vulnerable, though governments are also reluctant to allow migrants with regular immigration status full access to social assistance schemes (see section 3.1). The global refugee caseload is distributed very unequally with few mostly LMICs hosting most refugees. Host countries that struggle to finance adequate social protection for their citizens, may baulk at the prospect of being the long-term hosts to a large number of refugees, just by proximity to a crisis. In addition, humanitarian funding is short term, which means that even host countries that receive donor support to integrate the refugee caseload into their (national) social assistance systems may be reluctant to do so for fear that funding might eventually be withdrawn and host countries are left to care for refugees with their own limited resources.

In a refugee context, capacity constraints of national social protection systems, the rapid scale-up required and the need to uphold the humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence, and neutrality, may mean that stand-alone humanitarian assistance is required. For instance, states may be parties to the conflict, raising concerns around the humanitarian principles of neutrality and independence and the ability to reach all populations in need. Gentilini et al. (2018) argue that many constraints limit the ability of humanitarian cash assistance to link with government provisions, such as a risky operating environment; time-pressure for ensuring life-saving delivery of aid; a possible lack of government sovereignty; legislation preventing some cash assistance to non-citizens; low government capacity or donor concerns about transparency and accountability of resources.

The political will, as well as the capacity of the existing system in respective countries, do influence the possible approaches that stakeholders can take when aiming to expand social protection for refugees. The matrix below illustrates the different strategies.

**Figure 2: Summary - policy and capacity barriers**

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20 Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, Sudan, Iran, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Ethiopia
4.2 Operational barriers once access is legally possible

Box 5. Summary on operational barriers

- Firstly, refugees or migrants may not be aware of entitlements or if they are, they may not know how to enroll.
- Secondly, providers, especially if they are new to working with migrants and refugees, may not be equipped to deal with many applicants who may not speak the local language.
- Thirdly, even when refugees and migrants are aware of when and how to apply, national immigration systems are often poorly coordinated with social protection providers, requiring migrants and refugees to provide duplicate information to several agencies.
- Fourthly, and more applicable to migrants in contributory social insurance schemes, employers may not comply with national social insurance legislation and may not enroll migrants or not pay contributions.

Apart from the last one, these barriers are faced by refugees as well as migrants with regular immigration status.

When migrants with regular immigration status or refugees have access to national social protection programmes, coverage rates remain low. In Morocco, only 0.4% of migrants are covered by national social assistance, and in Brazil 4% of displaced Venezuelans benefitted from social assistance. This may indicate that there are barriers related to programme implementation, which keep migrants and refugees from accessing social protection interventions.

Last-mile, hands-on support to beneficiaries is important to raise awareness of entitlements and include the most vulnerable migrants and refugees. In Thailand, many migrants have no experience of social protection and do not expect, or are not aware of, the kind of support to which they may have access. Migrant Resource Centres offer support and awareness-raising supporting migrants in accessing these services (Seyfert et al. forthcoming). In Turkey, during the early stages of the ESSN programme, the Turkish Red Crescent provided last-mile support and handholding to potential refugee applicants. Outreach teams staffed by social workers actively sought out vulnerable households. An escalation process was in place to regularly raise specific barriers encountered in the field, which resulted in tweaks to operating procedures (Maunder et al. 2018).

National systems tasked with enrolling a large number of migrants or refugees will need support to scale up enrolment. In Brazil, the Bolsa Família programme does not have sufficient translators and registration offices are difficult to reach for Venezuelans wanting to apply to the programme. Furthermore, proving compliance with Bolsa Família’s conditionalities can be difficult for migrants (Andrade, Sato, and Hammad 2021). To deal with a large number of Syrian refugee applicants, the Red Crescent offered translation support, crowd management and case management to national social protection offices tasked with registering refugees into the ESSN. To support national capacity, the Turkish Red Crescent temporarily opened and staffed 18 additional registration centres, which have now closed once refugees were registered or repurposed to outreach centres (Maunder et al. 2018).

National immigration systems are often poorly coordinated with social protection providers. Migrants and refugees often deal with several authorities: immigration authorities might issue IDs, labour authorities issue work permits and social protection authorities register applicants, often requiring IDs from immigration authorities. Depending on the country, each authority may have its own registration process requiring its own set of documents and potentially issuing its own set of IDs. From the migrant and refugee perspective, this is confusing and from the perspective of ministries, there is no coherent overview of the status and entitlements of refugees and migrants in-country. For instance, in Thailand, migrant workers under the MoU migration scheme must be registered into social insurance, however, there is no easy way to verify if a migrant issued with an MoU immigration document is also registered in social insurance.
Common ID documents are often the first step to more coherence between immigration and social protection. In Turkey or Pakistan, government agencies issue ID documents, which in Turkey are interoperable with the national social registry and in Pakistan UNHCR is lobbying for that to happen (IRC 2019b; Maunder et al. 2018). In Cameroon, IDA18 investments supported negotiations between UNHCR, WB and the government, which led to the government committing to issuing biometric IDs and birth certificates to refugees (IRC 2019a). A Thai example illustrates the benefit of interoperable IDs: a Thai national can register for unemployment benefits by completing an online form that requires Thai IDs. In contrast, a migrant worker in Thailand has to register as unemployed in person.

5. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, the table overleaf summarises key findings.

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21 NADRA in Pakistan is a quasi-governmental organisation, owned by the government but operating at arms-length.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration status</th>
<th>Social protection entitlements</th>
<th>Type of social protection programming commonly provided</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunity for policy actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refugees (incl. temporary protection of subsidiary status)</td>
<td>Refugee Convention and related protocols signatories should grant access to social protection.</td>
<td>Access to social assistance, social care and labour market interventions is mostly provided by international agencies, often in more or less close coordination with the government. Access to social insurance is contingent on the right to formal employment, which refugees do not have in most countries or only in specific sectors. There is thus very little access to social insurance.</td>
<td>Governments are often reluctant to broaden access to social protection schemes and to include refugees. In addition, social protection systems in many LMICs are nascent and themselves donor supported. Humanitarian and development actors’ provision of cash assistance is often fragmented. Humanitarian principles need to be maintained even when linking humanitarian cash programming to national social protection. Livelihood programming is often small, short term and not well evaluated. Social care and protection services are often inadequate to meet multiple needs.</td>
<td>There is an opportunity to strengthen national social protection systems alongside running humanitarian and development cash programmes. There is now emerging literature on lessons learned from linking humanitarian programming to national social protection systems which offer useful learnings for policy formulation. Collaborations between national employment agencies and humanitarian livelihood programming are recent and could be a promising avenue to reach scale and sustainability. Promote communication and handholding support to refugees to facilitate access to existing services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants with regular immigration status (includes those that migrate for work, study, family reunification or family sponsorship etc.)</td>
<td>Covered by labour laws and laws on workplace protection (health and safety, rest times etc. accident/ injury) as well as laws on social insurance contributions No clear entitlements to non-contributory social protection schemes</td>
<td>Access to contributory social insurance (accident, injury, pensions, child benefits) Rarely access to social assistance or labour market interventions. Some access to (emergency) social care services</td>
<td>Enrolment and contributions to social insurance are poorly enforced. Difficult access to programmes (language barriers, complicated registration process) Labour laws are often not enforced (i.e. payment below minimum wage, work safety violations, longer working hours than legal ones etc.) Limitations on portability of benefits</td>
<td>Support interoperability of migration and social protection (at the level of data, IDs, processes etc.) Communication and handholding support to migrants to facilitate access to existing services Support portability of benefits (i.e. EU good example, ASEAN efforts interesting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration status</td>
<td>Social protection entitlements</td>
<td>Type of social protection programming commonly provided</td>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Opportunity for policy actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants with irregular immigration status (never had legal immigration status or are in breach of conditions of their permit/visa)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Informal support from civil society organisations and NGOs</td>
<td>Due to the lack of legal entitlements, there is no duty bearer to guarantee service delivery. The key hurdle is documentation.</td>
<td>Make regularisation of status easier: (i.e. lobby for amnesties for undocumented workers) In case of informal work: set-up low-cost contributory scheme Work towards a form of functional ID (i.e. phone numbers, health cards) that can be used to access services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Opportunity for policy actions

This section is structured along with the four components of social protection: social assistance, social insurance, labour market interventions and social insurance. It closes with operational recommendations applicable across all four components.

6.1 Social assistance

- Strengthen national social protection systems alongside running humanitarian and development cash programmes. There is now emerging literature on lessons learned from linking humanitarian programming to national social assistance systems, which offer useful learnings for policy formulation.

- Advocate relaxing nationality and residence restrictions on national social assistance. This is likely a long-term advocacy project. Be mindful of national debates hostile to migrants with regular immigration status or refugees which may impede relaxing these criteria. Experiences from the Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Jordan during COVID-19 show that long term advocacy for the inclusion of refugees in social protection can bear fruit. Recall that long term advocacy in the Republic of the Congo on the inclusion of refugees in the national social assistance scheme, pre-dating the COVID-19 epidemic, paved the way for the inclusion of refugees during COVID-19.

- Prioritise meeting immediate needs when considering a response linking humanitarian cash assistance to a national system, while seeking out alignments or linkages of humanitarian cash assistance to national systems, wherever possible.

- Opportunistically identify entry points for coordination and alignment of systems. Collaboration on small aspects of the design (i.e. transfer amounts or payment mechanisms) can pave the way for further alignment (see Longhurst et al. 2020 for practical guidance).

- Carry out conflict analyses and ensure stakeholders’ incentives and interests are well understood when setting out to link humanitarian and development programming to national systems.

6.2 Social insurance

- Advocate national governments for the inclusion of all migrant workers, no matter how short their stay, into compulsory contributory schemes. Create short term insurance schemes within the formal social insurance system if that is more suitable than long term enrolment schemes. Relatedly, support efforts to allow for more flexible contributions into contributory systems also for informal workers (Alfers 2021).

- Advocate for bilateral agreements on social protection to allow for portability. For example, IOM’s and ILO’s support to countries in the ASEAN region on portability agreements, similar efforts can be replicated.

- Advocate national governments for the harmonisation of immigration and social protection legislation to ensure migrant workers can access social insurance benefits. For instance, ensure that migrant workers with entitlement to unemployment insurance can stay in the country long enough to benefit from them and look for a new employer.

6.3 Labour market interventions

- Linking livelihood programming and labour market interventions could be a promising avenue to reach scale and sustainability. Collaborations between national employment agencies and humanitarian livelihood programming are recent but promise better outcomes in terms of scale and
sustainability compared to stand-alone livelihood programmes run by humanitarian and development partners.

- Invest in national labour market intervention systems and support their development.
- Invest in pilot programmes and exploratory evaluations to learn from emerging experience in linking humanitarian and development labour market programming to national systems, as is happening in Turkey. Build a body of literature similar to that which exists for social assistance.
- Ensure that labour market interventions create jobs that mandate social insurance contributions.

## 6.4 Social care

- Investigate current provision of social care services to migrants and refugees, to establish what are existing standards and entitlements. Support more research into and evaluations of social care provision to refugees and migrants.
- Strengthening and developing national structures in social care alongside provision for refugees should be a guiding principle as it is in the context of social assistance. This should include civil society organisations and other non-state providers, which likely play an important role in providing social care services.

## 6.5 Operational barriers

- Provide handholding support (i.e. translation, registration support, awareness-raising), to allow national systems to better work with a new and unfamiliar caseload,
- Invest in technical assistance along the delivery chain, to support shortfalls in capacity or nascent social protection systems alongside humanitarian and development provision,
- Include specialised, local refugee and migrant organisations capable of reaching and providing services to migrants and refugees. Migrants and refugees can be hard to reach and their expertise is valuable. Civil society organisations can also support accountability and monitoring, by providing hotlines to ensure that target groups are involved.
- Support initiatives to ensure that migration, labour, social protection authorities’ registries and MIS are interoperable. Also support interoperability of IDs, for instance, ensure that the IDs of migrant workers with regular immigration status have similar functionality across the social insurance system as national IDs. Recall that migrant workers in Thailand cannot use their ID to check their social insurance status. In contrast, in Turkey, the refugee ID has many of the same functionality as the Kimlik ID number of Turkish citizens.
References


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