

An analysis and
compilation of
15 case studies



**Advancing protection outcomes
through Humanitarian-
Development Cooperation:
What can we observe so far?**

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Advancing Protection Outcomes through Humanitarian-Development Cooperation:

What can we observe so far?

Initial Findings and Reflections based on 15 Case Studies
collected by UNHCR Regional Bureaus

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Introduction

This report was developed by UNHCR in the context of the 2022 High Commissioner’s Protection Dialogue which had a focus on development cooperation. The Dialogue provided an opportunity to i) put protection more explicitly at the center of humanitarian-development collaboration, and ii) better monitor the protection outcomes of such collaboration. A 2021 Evaluation on UNHCR’s development engagement found that improvements needed to be made on both accounts. Member States have repeatedly stressed this too.

The protection benefits from UNHCR’s collaboration with development actors¹ are often demonstrated from a socio-economic perspective. And this perspective is important. Development actors engage in displacement and statelessness situations because of their aims to reduce poverty and increase prosperity for all. Communicating from this perspective helps UNHCR to connect and collaborate. It also speaks to Governments’ priorities. More and better infrastructure, national social services and economic opportunities in areas affected by displacement and statelessness can also yield important protection dividends. However, this is not a given. The socio-economic focus might also result in missing out on protection results. Recognizing that poverty reduction is unlikely to be sustainable and meaningful if it takes place in the absence of justice, security, equality and accountable institutions, development actors do work on issues that are not socio-economic in nature. As such they can bring benefits to legal, administrative, and physical protection.

This report seeks to analyze the protection benefits more explicitly from the perspective of UNHCR’s specific protection mandate and responsibilities. The report consists of two parts: Part 1 includes findings and reflections based on an overarching analysis of 15 case studies. Part 2 includes 15 case studies which set out a) the development cooperation, b) the protection benefits, c) UNHCR’s catalytic role and, d) lessons learned.

The report does demonstrate clear protection benefits from UNHCR’s development engagement but also reveals challenges - both in terms of the actual protection dividends obtained as well as in our ability to monitor and present them. UNHCR’s “Focus Area Strategic Plan on Mainstreaming Development Engagement in UNHCR responses from the outset” sets out a key milestone to monitor and present the protection impact of UNHCR’s engagement with development partners in 20 countries in 2024. This requires a clear vision on the protection outcomes that UNHCR aims to achieve. It also requires a methodology for monitoring and communicating results that is realistic for operations at the present time of limited resources. Furthermore, protection staff have emphasized that such efforts should provide a honest picture of the ‘dividends’ - in other words the protection benefits that remain, when any risks related to development cooperation are accounted for.

The report also demonstrates that some operations exercised a pertinent catalytic role by providing protection advice from the start of development projects and ensuring meaningful complementary protection activities. These good practices could be reviewed on their applicability to other operations and pursued more systematically.

This report should inform discussions on how best to catalyze, monitor and communicate the protection outcomes of UNHCR’s development engagement.

¹ Development actors are defined in this report as: Bi-lateral development cooperation agencies, Multi-lateral and Regional Development Banks and International Financial Institutions, Private sector, Inter-governmental organizations and platforms [e.g. IGAD], UN development agencies, RCs and RCOs.

Initial Findings and Reflections from 15 case studies

a) Selection of the case studies

The case studies were selected by Bureaus based on their knowledge of protection benefits already achieved or their potential for doing so in the future. As such the case studies do not represent the full spectrum of UNHCR's development engagement.

b) People and situations

15 (all) case studies focus on protracted refugee situations

1 case study also references development engagement to reduce statelessness among refugees (Chad)

2 case studies also demonstrate development engagement on IDPs along with refugees (Niger, Mozambique)

1 case study also demonstrates a good practice of development engagement in a refugee emergency (ROC)

Despite efforts to ensure a variety across people and situations under UNHCR's protection mandate, the case studies have a disproportionate focus on protracted refugee situations. Yet protection challenges in internal displacement, statelessness, emergency and return situations do have development dimensions. These need to receive equal or at least equitable attention so that development action does not leave people behind.

c) Analysis

Protection results are analyzed against UNHCR's outcome areas and associated protection responsibilities as well as the principle of international responsibility sharing that underpins the Global Compact on Refugees.

PROTECTION POLICY AND LAW

- **6 out of the 15 case studies demonstrate law and policy improvements in support of refugee protection. 1 case study does so for statelessness. None of the case studies demonstrate policy improvements in support of IDP protection.** In Iraq a Refugee Education Integration Policy was adopted. Refugee teachers that met Iraqi qualifications did already have the right to access the labour market, but the policy reinforced and facilitated this right in practice. In Colombia, the Venezuela Migration Attention Strategy, the National Development Plan 2018–2022, Decree No 1288 and the Migration Policy Law 2136/201 contributed to legal and socio-economic integration of Venezuelan refugees. In Chad and Ethiopia, refugee laws were issued that firmly enshrined the civil, cultural, social and economic rights of refugees. In Niger, refugees and IDPs were given rights to use land and own it after 7 or 10 years of occupation. In Mauritania, social safety net policies were changed to lower the age of enrollment to 14. This made it possible to provide services to the many child-headed vulnerable households. Chad initiated policy reforms in line with commitments made at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness.
- **These policy changes cannot be attributed solely to development actors, but UNHCR colleagues observed that their engagement made a positive contribution.** Future monitoring efforts could reflect on how policy engagement by development actors has been or could be further reinforced by the engagement of other stakeholders such as parliaments, religious leaders, local civil society, and human rights organizations.
- **The Colombia case study illustrates how research done by development actors reinforced a positive political discourse.** Future monitoring efforts could aim to track both political and public discourse since the start of development engagement as an important indicator for potential positive legislative discourse and changes to laws, policies and practice.
- **Case studies do not always clarify to what extent policy changes were implemented in practice. Nor do they focus on how development partners or UNHCR accompanied the policy changes with support to institutions to deliver the policies.** Institutional reform or strengthening to facilitate policy implementation enhances the State's capacity to protect. It would be good to explore in more depth whether accompanying development support has been provided to implementing regulations, standard operating procedures, institutional capacity, civil service capacity and salaries, infrastructure, or equipment to ensure policy implementation.
- **UNHCR's technical assistance and sensitization on protection policy and law has been valuable but might need to take a stronger development approach itself.** In almost all case studies refugees as well as Government institutions responsible for the implementation of refugee inclusive development programmes received critical training and technical assistance from UNHCR on refugee protection policies and laws in their country. This support seems to have been delivered mostly by individual UNHCR staff without embedding it more sustainably in national systems (e.g. in entities responsible for training Government officials or national public information and awareness raising organizations). UNHCR teams could potentially make better use of development collaboration to scale up and improve the sustainability of its valuable technical support.



Democratic Republic of Congo. Burundian refugees' children and asylum seekers are biometrically registered
©UNHCR/Antonia Vadala

ACCESS TO TERRITORY AND ASYLUM, CIVIL REGISTRATION AND DOCUMENTATION

- **None of the 15 case studies demonstrate improvements to access to territory through development partner engagement. Meanwhile, there are known examples of successful engagement in the past.** Development actors, the Government of Cameroon and UNHCR engaged in 2018 for instance in a policy dialogue which reduced refoulement. Access to territory and non-refoulement are critical protection responsibilities for which development actors' support should be explored and prioritized.
- **A considerable number of case studies indicate that development programmes enhanced collaboration between the Government's refugee agency and other line ministries.** This is an important contribution towards an improved and strengthened institutional framework for asylum that is conducive to facilitating refugee access to national services and economic opportunities in line with their rights.
- **In Ethiopia, Pakistan and Turkey development programmes include support to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the asylum system in collaboration with UNHCR. Protection benefits are emerging in all three case studies, albeit not without challenges.** In Pakistan decentralized asylum services were supported via the establishment of dedicated refugee support offices at local levels. The offices are meant to provide information and specialized refugee protection services and to identify and

refer vulnerable refugees to relevant technical sectors. In Turkey similar objectives were pursued by strengthening and embedding refugee protection expertise in local social protection units. In Ethiopia, support was also provided to other asylum functions such as registration and the issuance of residence permits. Recognizing that effective asylum and refugee protection are critical to the projects' social and economic objectives, this support was provided as part of Employment (Ethiopia), Education and Health (Pakistan) and Social Protection (Turkey) programmes respectively. Further analysis is recommended to identify lessons and good practices that could be used to inform operational protection advice to other development programmes.

- **Civil registration and documentation are supported by UNHCR in cooperation with development actors in Chad with some results.**
- **Case studies also revealed that there are many unmet needs for development contributions to asylum system strengthening as well as to civil registration and documentation.** All 7 countries² participating in Regional Response Framework in Central America (MIRPS) made commitments in these areas. Multilateral development banks and bilateral development agencies participating in the MIRPS have relevant expertise in public administration and have a role to play. But they have not engaged on these issues yet. Also, in Rwanda and Chad, the Government would benefit from sustained development financing and assistance to increase the delivery of refugee identity documentation, civil and travel documentation.

SAFETY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE, CHILD PROTECTION AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

- **The Jordan and Niger case studies are excellent demonstrations of how social services and economic opportunities, provided with development support, resulted indirectly in greater safety and the mitigation of GBV and child protection risks.** The Mobile Wallet for Refugees in Jordan contributed to reductions in risk of refoulement and detention when encountering law enforcement and the mitigation of child marriage, child labour, and gender-based violence risks. It increased freedom of movement and facilitated payment of legal aid fees. Similarly, the Social Housing Project in Niger increased feelings of safety by reducing risks of eviction and gender-based violence and by increasing protection from climatic hardship.
- **It is also likely that refugees and their children experienced more safety in Iraq, Pakistan, ROC and Mauritania case studies** because of the safety provided by schools and the use of social safety cash benefits to improve safe living conditions. This was however not measured or evidenced with concrete examples data or (concrete data or examples).
- **The case study on youth engagement in Eastern Horn of Africa demonstrates promising results in community safety because of UNHCR interventions. But the link with development is weak.** UNHCR implemented interventions as part of a larger partnership with development actors but the comparative advantage of working in this partnership was unclear. UNHCR interventions are not complemented by the Government or development actors, or upscaled by them, or sustainably embedded in local governance systems.

² Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama

- **None of the case studies highlight development engagement to strengthen national capacity for child protection, GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response, or safety and access to justice. There are three (small) exceptions:** The MIRPS case study refers to a large USAID programme on access to justice and violence reduction, but no results were highlighted. This confirms a finding from the 2021 Evaluation that UNHCR has not fully exploited collaboration with bilateral and UN development partners that have large programmes on these issues. In Chad, birth registration was supported with some results. In Turkey, social protection desks were established. While not explicitly mentioned, social workers at these desks would normally identify, refer and support families and individuals with specific GBV and child protection needs.
- **All 15 case studies state that development projects contributed to social cohesion or peaceful co-existence in hosting areas.** Only a few evidenced this with concrete examples.

PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

- **The Pakistan case study illustrates well how development engagement contributed to more refugee participation and voice.** Refugees were included in Parent-Teacher-Councils (PTCs) and Primary Healthcare Management Committees and contributed actively to the project. In some other case studies dedicated refugee-host community committees were set up to advance social cohesion but results were less clear.
- **The Bangladesh case study is a good example of accountability to affected people pursued by development actors. Programming was adjusted in response to refugee feedback to UNHCR.** Bangladesh and several other case studies note that refugees provided feedback about development supported Government programmes via UNHCR's feedback and response mechanisms. More reflection might need to be done on how best

Rwanda. Impact of sport in uplifting the spirit and hopes of refugees at Mahama refugee camp ©UNHCR/Anthony Karumba



to take this feedback forward. More attention to the Government's feedback and response systems might also be required to ensure that refugees are aware of their existence and can safely and effectively access them.

- **There were few concrete results or examples of adjustments made to development programmes to tailor for disability, older persons, children, women and others with specific needs.**
- **Some case studies highlighted issues related to exclusion of certain refugee groups from development programmes.**

ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS, SERVICES, AND ECONOMIC AND LIVELIHOODS OPPORTUNITIES

- **1 case study (ROC) illustrates advances in refugee access to basic needs in an emergency through development engagement.** Protection in emergencies is core to UNHCR's mandate but under strain due to the high number of emergencies and limited humanitarian resources. In ROC, UNHCR's development engagement focused on the inclusion of a protracted refugee situation in a World Bank supported national social safety net. However, during the 2021 emergency, 1600 new refugee arrivals could also be swiftly included and receive cash support that UNHCR was not able to provide due to budget cuts. The example demonstrates that focus might need to shift from *'development engagement from the start'* to development engagement *'before the start'*. When supporting inclusive national services and systems in protracted situations, UNHCR and development partners should integrate mechanisms allowing for swift action in emergency situations.
- **All 15 case studies report refugee access to or inclusion in national services and economic opportunities as a result of development engagement, sometimes evidenced with numbers. But the protection dividend was not always clear.** To better gauge the protection impact, more information is generally needed to answer questions such as: **1. Equity and non-discrimination** – how did the proportion of refugees that accessed services or economic opportunities with development support, compare to the proportion of the host community in the municipality? (in some cases it looked as if refugees were privileged above that of the local community which could negatively affect the protection dividend). Did refugees have access because development engagement helped address legal, discriminatory, or other obstacles that put them at a disadvantage from the host community, or because development actors helped lift development of the community as a whole? (Development actors can help with both, and both yield important protection benefits, but the former is a core protection issue, whereas the latter - aside from lifesaving circumstances - is predominantly a development issue.) **2. Safety and participation** – did refugees feel safer and more included in society as a result? **3. Humanitarian versus development system** – did refugees have access before through the humanitarian system? If so, did the shift to the development system lead to more sustainability or other benefits/challenges?

- **The Rwanda case study demonstrates good protection benefits from inclusion in Rwanda's community-based health insurance scheme. This gave urban refugees access to health care that they did not have before.** This was done by UNHCR itself without development engagement and would ideally be complemented and expanded with development support. The case study also provides a good illustration of remaining protection challenges (discrimination in fees).
- **The Jordan case study is a good example of how development engagement helped mitigate administrative obstacles that disadvantage refugees in opening bank accounts.**

COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS, LOCAL INTEGRATION, RETURN & REINTEGRATION

- **While all the above examples demonstrate advances towards inclusion in national services and opportunities, none of the case studies demonstrate results towards permanent solutions.** The Colombia case study comes closest with the Temporary Protection Status (TPS). The TPS grants more than 1.74 million Venezuelans currently in Colombia, as well as those arriving through official border points over the next two years a ten year residency with access to identification documents, formal employment and state services, including the COVID-19 vaccination. None of the case studies support return situations or support to making conditions for return more conducive, e.g. by development investment in peaceful areas of the country of origin.
- **Many of the case studies would lend themselves well for results on complementary pathways but this connection is rarely made.** At least 10 case studies include development support to refugee skills training but this is not complemented with development or UNHCR support to refugees to benefit from skills-based pathways such as labour mobility and education pathways.

EQUITABLE SHARING OF PROTECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

- **The Bangladesh case study demonstrates results in the equitable sharing of protection responsibilities.** Bangladesh is a lower-middle income country and would normally only be eligible for loans from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Acknowledging the need for global responsibility sharing, ADB decided however to offer grant support for medium-term infrastructure improvements benefitting refugees and host communities.
- **For all other case studies, it was not possible to meaningfully assess results against equitable sharing of protection responsibilities.** This is mainly because it is difficult to know if the development support referenced in the case studies was provided in addition to what would normally be provided to the respective countries.



Additional financing to expand access to social protection services for refugees and host communities in the Republic of Congo

a) The development collaboration

The Lisungi Safety Nets System (Lisungi is the Lingala word for “assistance”) was launched by the Government of the Republic of the Congo in 2014 to set the cornerstone of a national social safety nets system and to pilot a cash transfer programme to improve access to health, education and productivity for the national population. The project was originally financed by the World Bank, with further support from the French Development Agency. It targets the poorest and most vulnerable households in its areas of coverage.

In 2017, the World Bank approved additional financing from the Refugee Sub Window to include refugee, asylum-seeker and host community households. This programme extension came in response to the Government’s Development Policy Letter setting out commitments to promoting self-reliance within the refugee and host communities in line with the 2016 New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, and the 2019 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The additional financing was used to roll out the Lisungi Safety Nets System in the country’s northern Likouala department, where 60 per cent of all refugees and asylum-seekers in Congo live. Beneficiaries in refugee-hosting areas in Brazzaville and Pointe Noire have also been included. Overall, the additional funds will go towards providing an additional 8,000 households with cash payments in support of income-generating activities. A further 4,000 households will receive cash payments that the beneficiaries can spend according to their needs, on condition that they ensure that their children attend school and undergo regular health check-ups along with any pregnant women in their households. The additional financing also supports dedicated interventions in the Likouala department to improve skills training for young people and to raise the quality of education and health service delivery, including free medical care for the most vulnerable in certain cases.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action (MASAH) is responsible for implementing the Lisungi System. In addition, during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, it also set up an emergency project: the COVID-19 Emergency Response Project, financed by the World Bank to support the most vulnerable households with a one-off allocation to mitigate the effects of the shock caused by the pandemic. As a result of advocacy under the Lisungi System, more than 2,600 refugee households benefited, without earmarked funding.

b) The protection benefits

Before the Lisungi System expanded to include refugee-hosting areas in the remote Likouala department, these vulnerable populations had limited possibilities to work or become self-sufficient. Hence, they had limited prospects to socioeconomic integration into Congolese society. Likouala is an isolated department in the far north of the country, more than 700 km from the capital city Brazzaville, and is also difficult to access by air, road and river during its lengthy rainy seasons. This remoteness contributes to high levels of poverty and limited access to services for residents. Lisungi makes it possible for most vulnerable households to become economically active and self-reliant. Monitoring and evaluation has demonstrated that the additional funding contributes to the socioeconomic development of the area, lifting access to and quality of services, thereby creating conditions for greater absorption capacity. Lisungi also facilitates targeted support for highly vulnerable and marginalized indigenous Congolese populations who also live in the forests of Likouala. The project strengthened the network of social registry offices to include refugee and host community households, including the setting-up of a targeting system to identify the most vulnerable individuals and families. With a strengthened social registry, the Government will also be able to respond to new emergencies efficiently. Following post-electoral violence in the Central African Republic in early 2022, the village of Mougoungi welcomed over 1,600 refugees. The village had not previously hosted refugees and was therefore not part of the geographical coverage of the Lisungi System. However, the project implementation unit agreed to include the new refugee-hosting area. Mechanisms have been introduced to identify the most vulnerable households, enabling 551 households to receive cash transfers.

Antoinette, a refugee from the Central African Republic, has looked after six grandchildren since her daughter passed away. She uses the Lisungi cash transfer to meet their food, health, clothing, and education needs, complementing humanitarian aid she receives. Subsequently she used part of the money to replace the roof of the house she and her grandchildren live in, thanks to a host family's hospitality and generosity. Antoinette's eldest granddaughter, Louise, took the baccalaureate exams this year and hopes to go to university.

Monitoring and Evaluation exercises recently carried out by UNHCR demonstrated that the Lisungi System empowers refugee and host communities and increases their enjoyment of rights and access to basic socioeconomic services. They also recorded significant impacts on the well-being of beneficiary households.

Post-distribution monitoring also indicates that beneficiaries spent the cash mostly on food, clothing and health, but also invested in longer-term expenditure. Some households began to generate profits from their livelihood activity only nine months after receiving the first payment. The skills and savings obtained through these longer-term investments can help refugees to live dignified lives and contribute to the economic growth of the Congo. Refugees would not be able to achieve such investments through humanitarian aid, which can often be limited and unpredictable, particularly due to the shortness of the one-year funding cycle, changing donor priorities and the rise in global emergencies.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

At the request of the Government, UNHCR provides technical assistance to the Lisungi System under a technical agreement signed in April 2021. Activities implemented by UNHCR include: pre-identification of the most vulnerable refugee households via ProGrès (under a data-sharing agreement); capacity-building of local authorities and services providers on refugee law and management; sensitization of targeted populations to improve financial literacy, social cohesion and gender equality; the roll out of surveys to monitor and evaluate the impact of the cash transfers; and logistical support to transport medicines and school manuals to the local schools as well as facilitating access to fuel in the remote Likouala department. UNHCR also works closely with the Government to identify and resolve blockages arising in the field, for instance, families who did not come forward to register despite being eligible and assistance to the Government to identify, register and enrol beneficiaries. Finally, the World Bank and the Joint Data Centre on Forced Displacement funded the impact evaluation that UNHCR is implementing, in partnership with the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the Institute for Security and Development Studies in Berlin. The partnership assesses the impacts of the Lisungi System and contributes to the global quantitative literature on social protection in forced displacement contexts.

Finally, as part of its partnership with the World Bank in support of projects financed through the International Development Association (IDA) Refugee Sub-Window, UNHCR conducts regular Refugee Protection Assessments (RPA) and established the Refugee Policy Review Framework (RPRF) baseline as of June 2020. These serve as entry points for protection issues, development needs and policy gaps to be taken into consideration by the World Bank in its policy dialogue with Governments and for new programmatic interventions.³

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

The Lisungi System demonstrates that humanitarian and development collaboration can be an effective tool for refugee inclusion in national and local socioeconomic development programmes. This collaboration provides for protection dividends (increasing equal access to rights, improving resilience and encouraging durable solutions) as well as development results (lifting populations out of poverty). Furthermore, the Lisungi System shows that inclusion in national programmes can have more transformative effects than similar programmes implemented under humanitarian schemes. While humanitarian aid in the Congo provides limited cash to refugees and host communities, the one-year financing cycle and fluctuating priorities made the amounts too small to serve the majority of vulnerable refugee households and too unpredictable to make the long-term investments that can lead to self-reliance. Nor does humanitarian aid help to strengthen the national social safety nets system to enable refugee inclusion, which would help the Government to fulfil its protection responsibilities.

Moving forward and encouraged by the success of the Lisungi System, the Government has committed itself to including vulnerable asylum-seekers in the Plateaux department in the next phase of support for the social protection system, which has already been approved by the World Bank and the Government and will soon become effective. Approximately

³ The RPA is a cyclical assessment of the protection environment aimed at determining the adequacy of the refugee protection framework. The RPRF is an ongoing systematic review of refugee policy and institutional environments conducted by UNHCR that will provide the World Bank with the necessary information and analysis to facilitate consultation with host governments.



Antoinette with her granddaughter Louise ©UNHCR/Ibrahima Diane

8,000 citizens from the Democratic Republic of Congo living in a refugee-like situation since 2018 have not yet been included in the Lisungi System. The new allocation of \$88 million channelled through the COVID-19 Emergency Response Project, for activities similar to those of the Lisungi System, is mainstreaming the issue of forced displacement without specifically mobilizing the Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR) and should be able to increase the depth and spread of support for vulnerable populations, including refugees and asylum-seekers.

The Lisungi System is an example of how promotion of human rights and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are interlinked and illustrates that successful national safety nets require improved access to other rights and services. The Lisungi System cash transfers have thus removed barriers to accessing health care, education, and employment. However, full enjoyment of the right to health, education and work remains a challenge, because of the poor quality of health and education services, limited absorption capacity, long distances in remote areas, poor transportation networks and difficulties in accessing land for agricultural activity. These barriers need to be addressed to ensure full access to social protection and associated rights for all populations, refugees and hosts alike. Similarly, some refugees have used UNHCR feedback and response mechanisms to ask questions and raise concerns relating to the project. UNHCR has communicated these concerns to the Government and they are being addressed. However, more support might be needed for the Government's grievance redress systems to ensure that populations are aware of their existence and can effectively access them.

Finally, it is crucial that the increased refugee self-reliance obtained through the support offered by the Lisungi system is complemented with adequate refugee status determination procedures, options for local integration through permanent legal status, voluntary return for refugees who opt for it and resettlement for those at risk and with little or no prospect of local settlement.

The Ethiopian Economic Opportunities Programme

a) The development collaboration

The Ethiopia Economic Opportunities Programme (EOP) aims to provide economic opportunities for Ethiopians and refugees in an environmentally and socially sustainable way. It was launched by the Government in 2018 and will run until 2024, countrywide. The Programme, financed by the World Bank (WB), supports a subset of the Government's Jobs Compact, which commits to creating economic opportunities for refugees and Ethiopians. The economic opportunities include access to formal entrepreneurship, wage-earning employment and self-employment. Specifically, it contributes to enhanced protection and solutions for refugees by improving the broader investment climate, labour productivity and quality of jobs.

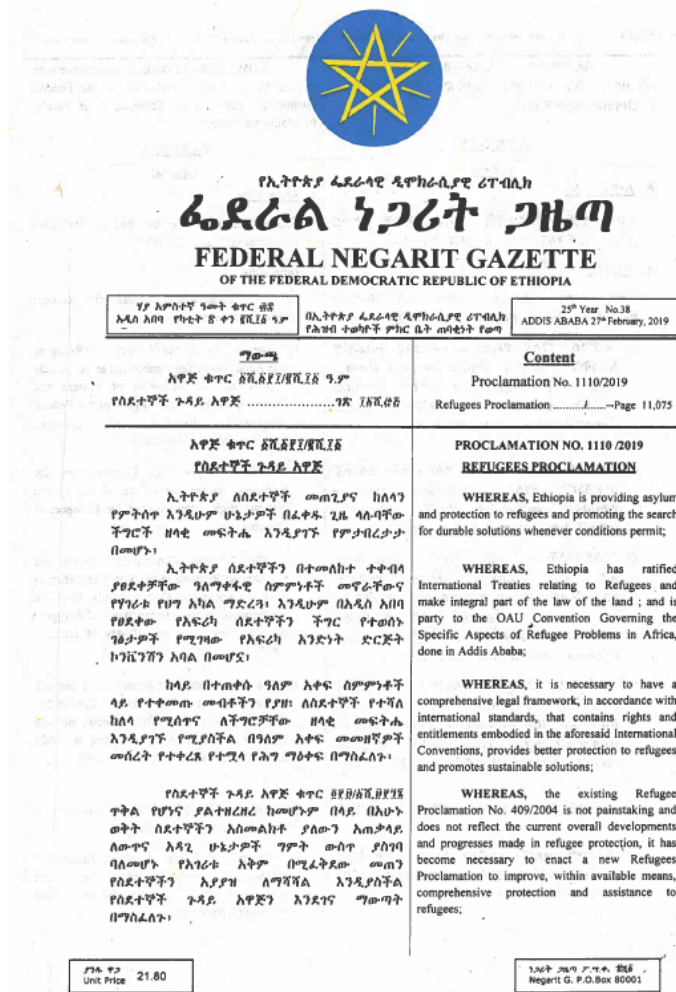
The beneficiaries are refugees and Ethiopians seeking economic opportunities. Under the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) coordinates the Project with other implementing Government agencies, which are the Ministry of Labour and Skills (MoLS), the Industry Parks Development Cooperation (IPDC) and the Refugees and Returnees Services (RRS).

b) The protection benefits

The Ethiopian Economic Opportunities Programme serves as a strategic advocacy tool for enhancing the enabling legal, policy and regulatory environments for refugee protection in Ethiopia. Its implementation has played a critical role in accelerating the far-reaching and progressive refugee policy reforms pledged by the Government during the 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees. Revision of the 2004 Refugee Proclamation was key to the effectiveness of the EOP and, following its approval by the WB Board and the Ethiopian House of Peoples' Representatives in 2018, the government promulgated a new refugee law in January 2019. The new law granted refugees the fundamental right to work and own property in Ethiopia, expanded the grounds for asylum protection, opened up opportunities for more freedom of movement and created opportunities to

Asmeret is an Eritrean refugee who came to Addis Ababa in 2017, fleeing forced conscription in Eritrea. Her primary source of income was remittances from relatives abroad, as she was not allowed to engage in economic activities in Ethiopia. Since 2020, her relatives could not send money as their financial condition was affected by the pandemic; hence, she suffered to sustain herself. Recently, she acquired hairdressing skills and obtained residence permits that enabled her to access employment opportunities., She currently works at a professional hair salon and earns a decent income like the Ethiopians working in the salon. She aspires to establish her own beauty salon leveraging the right to work

Ethiopia Refugee Proclamation,
Proc. No. 1110/2019



improve access to documentation, education, health and other essential and social services through national systems. The government has since developed subsidiary legislation in the form of three Directives that include the Directive to Determine Conditions for Movement and Residence of Refugees Outside of Camps (01/2019), the Directive to Determine the Procedure for Refugees Right to Work (02/2019) and the Directive on the Grievance and Redress Mechanism (GRM), and which aim to further strengthen the protection environment.

The Government commenced issuing residence permits, which also serve as work permits, to refugees engaged in joint projects in 2020. So far, it has issued 2,600 residence permits to refugees, who are given equal treatment to Ethiopian nationals. Therefore, these permits serve as the basis for accessing employment and self-employment opportunities with a wide array of benefits for refugees, including improved legal and physical protection, freedom of movement and equal pay for equal work.

Efforts have been made to develop systems and structures aimed at addressing protection-related risks and strengthening refugee-host community interactions. The project enabled the creation of local Refugee Returnee Services facilitation and support offices that provide protection services to refugees who move out of camp in pursuit of economic opportunities.

In addition to inclusion in the government’s grievance and redress mechanisms, refugees interact with their hosts through Neighbourhood Relations Committees (NRCs). These interventions strengthen the Government’s capacity to deliver protection services and, if effectively implemented, will mitigate protection risks and prevent protection concerns associated with their employment and residence outside of the refugee camps.

Furthermore, the project also fostered public sector collaboration and catalysed the design and implementation of development-oriented projects aimed at creating socioeconomic opportunities for refugees. In line with the Global Compact on Refugees, which calls for a whole-of-society approach, the project strengthened the collaboration between the government’s refugee agency and other relevant line ministries, thereby enhancing access to gainful employment opportunities and expanding access to basic and social services. As the first government initiative to directly benefit refugees, the project also laid the foundation and precedent for the design of other projects. Currently, three additional World Bank IDA 19 WHR-financed projects cover social protection, livelihoods and education sectors that will further enhance the protection and solution environment for refugees while supporting the host communities.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

UNHCR provided the World Bank with an assessment of the adequacy of Ethiopia’s refugee protection framework for the purpose of receiving development financing from the IDA Window for Refugees and Host Communities. An adequate protection framework is one of the eligibility criteria for accessing this financing instrument. The World Bank uses UNHCR assessments to decide whether the eligibility criteria have been met. The assessment also informs the World Bank about any refugee protection-related risks that might affect the adequacy of the protection framework and undermine the project’s success. Lack of progress on the legislative reforms committed to during the 2016 Leadership Summit was one such risk that was specifically addressed when designing the project and when the Government adopted the Refugee Proclamation.

During the project design stage, UNHCR supported the project by providing refugee data and protection advice and enhancing the government’s readiness and capacity. UNHCR supported the World Bank’s skills profile survey, provided tailored refugee socioeconomic data, prepared protection notes and participated in identifying risks and mitigation strategies. UNHCR also proactively engaged with the government’s refugee agency to enhance its understanding of the Global Compact on Refugees and the nature of the project, in order to improve its readiness to take part in project negotiations.

UNHCR provided extensive technical inputs towards achieving the project’s conditions for effectiveness and key disbursement-linked results. Most prominently, UNHCR supported the government of Ethiopia in drafting the revised Refugee Proclamation and its subsequent Directives. UNHCR also advised on the possible protection risks that might arise during implementation of the Programme and suggested some recommendations to mitigate identified risks. In addition, UNHCR participated in committees that were designed to address issues linked to delays in project delivery and provided the Government with tailored training and technical support in fulfilling its protection responsibilities under the project and beyond.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

The Government, and particularly its refugee agency, the Refugees and Returnees Service-RRS, needs to adapt to a fast-changing environment and to be able to provide protection to a refugee population that will be increasingly moving to out-of-camp settings. Furthermore, it will need to provide other Ministries, development partners and other relevant stakeholders with guidance on refugee protection. RRS should ensure the existence of better coordination among line ministries, Regional Bureaux and other stakeholders to help refugees to exercise their rights and improve their inclusion in national systems and services.

The Ethiopian Economic Opportunities programme demonstrates that development partners can play an important role in improving the protection and solutions environment for displacement-affected communities. Making the revision of the Refugee Proclamation a condition for the effectiveness of the EOP has proved to be an effective way to achieved tangible policy outcomes. Development partners should work more closely with RRS and UNHCR to understand protection gaps and jointly explore the best avenues for addressing them. While Refugee Protection Assessments (RPA)⁴ and the Refugee Policy Review Framework (RPRF)⁵ process are still effective, enhanced country-level consultations are critical from the onset of project design. UNHCR also needs to leverage the resources, mandates, networks and convening powers of development partners strategically in order to address protection issues.

The contribution of UNHCR to the success of World Bank-financed projects can be further enhanced through innovative protection mainstreaming and fit-for-purpose refugee data. UNHCR plays an important role in ascertaining the delivery of results, especially in providing refugee data, advising on protection and coordinating interventions, in line with its expected role under the Global Compact on Refugees. It needs to find new ways of working with development and governmental partners to mainstream protection considerations and integrate protection objectives into economic inclusion projects. More specifically, it should do this by adopting an approach of accompanying governmental or development counterparts through their project design and development processes and empowering them to apply a “refugee protection lens” throughout implementation of their projects. It should further strengthen its refugee data set in a way that is relevant and fit for purpose for development-oriented projects. UNHCR operations should generate evidence justifying inclusion by presenting socioeconomic data, needs and local development priorities. For instance, providing household level socioeconomic data that indicates average income can serve as an entry point for including refugees in national social protection schemes.

⁴ A Refugee Protection Assessment (RPA) is a cyclical assessment of the protection environment, conducted by UNHCR as part of its partnership with the World Bank, with the purpose of determining the adequacy of the refugee protection framework based on a solid protection analysis that will serve as a potential entry point for consideration by the World Bank to support improvements to the protection framework through policy dialogue with the Governments and/or programmatic interventions.

⁵ The Refugee Policy Review Framework (RPRF) is an ongoing systematic review of refugee policy and institutional environments conducted by UNHCR, as part of its partnership with the World Bank, that will provide the necessary information and analysis to facilitate consultation with host -governments on the support they deserve from the international community to address policy, development, and protection gaps in the spirit of GCR responsibility sharing.

Capacity building for youth through engagement and leadership skills for improved protection in the East and Horn of Africa: Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and South Sudan

a) The development collaboration

Discussions among actors involved in the PROSPECTS Partnership's⁶ Pillar of intervention 4 – New ways of working - developed what had begun as a leadership and peacebuilding Project into a global initiative with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) entitled Advancing Young People's Engagement and Meaningful Participation in the PROSPECTS Partnership, to run from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2023. In a context in which refugee young people are disproportionately disadvantaged in the absence of meaningful education and life skills development opportunities, the initiative targets 1,000 young people (aged 15 to 30 years) directly and 80,000 young people indirectly, in refugee and host communities in Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan. The project aims to improve young people and adolescents' access to national social services and vocational training, thus enabling livelihoods opportunities and contributing to securing their local integration in the country of asylum. It supports building their skills and capacities to achieve their meaningful engagement and participation, and creates leadership opportunities that allow young people to be effective partners and to lead and drive change in their communities and their lives. With additional skills and peacebuilding abilities, young people who decide to return to their countries of origin will be better equipped to ensure that their reintegration is sustainable. At the same time, the initiative aims to strengthen the internal capacities of United Nations agencies and partners to work with and for young people.

“

I am emphasizing the aspect of involving youth in issues pertaining to the well-being of the community, warning against neglecting them because South Sudan is currently not peaceful because youth are being neglected. The programme should continue bringing on board more youth, who are the pillars for social cohesion

Maneno Charity, Mentor Trainer, Zone 3

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⁶ The PROSPECTS Partnership is supported by the government of the Netherlands and comprises IFC, ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR and the World Bank

b) The protection benefits

Peaceful coexistence between refugees and their host communities contributes to the maintenance of asylum and protection space in Uganda which currently hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa, and in a region that is increasingly witnessing debates on the balance between protection of refugees and asylum-seekers vis-à-vis security management in the context of changing security dynamics.

The over 200 trained young people work with community leaders, police and young people in their communities. Using a conflict incidence mapping tool, they share information on insecurity and conflict, including potential sources of conflict with UNHCR and its partners, existing community leadership structures and the police. Incidents reported so far include cases of gender-based violence (GBV), child neglect, fighting over resources, suicide and theft among host and refugee communities. UNHCR refers GBV and child neglect cases to relevant actors for support, as outlined in the referral pathway.

They have also rolled out training sessions for community leaders on conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence. Moreover, they engage with communities through dialogue sessions, radio, sports, music and drama, share information on referral pathways and services available, solicit feedback on programming and mobilize communities for collective action such as organizing sports for peace initiatives, using art/theatre for therapy and community policing. Social cohesion among refugees and host communities, especially young people, has also improved and there has been increased collaboration between host communities and refugee young people in implementing community-level activities, particularly through youth-led organizations. In coordination with ILO, a group of national TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) trainers participated in the WorldSkills Africa event in 2022, showcasing their knowledge of skills training as well as learning from others about the promotion of inclusive projects impacting both host and refugee young people.

The Learning series for young people on leadership, advocacy and public speaking equips them with the soft skills needed to face their future with more confidence despite limited livelihood opportunities, formal education and skills-building. The young people involved in the project have started identifying solutions to the challenges that people of this age group face in their host countries. For example, participants from Kenya are designing a project to engage communities and stakeholders in enhancing primary to tertiary education transition rates in refugee and host communities and promoting access to online learning and livelihood opportunities for out-of-school youth. In Sudan, the young people are designing a project to be rolled out in 2023 that will address gender inequality in accessing education and economic opportunities. In the Somali region of Ethiopia, the project seeks to create opportunities to develop literacy and transferrable vocational skills and to provide training for applications to complementary pathways (higher education and labour mobility), such as training in writing CVs and job applications, thereby improving access to education and livelihood opportunities for young people from forcibly displaced and host communities.

The Project places a heavy emphasis on ensuring that skills-building opportunities go hand in hand with addressing the mental health and psychosocial support needs of young people among whom suicidal tendencies are noted. Youth leaders receive complementary training in MHPSS to address their own psychological well-being and better support their peers and

communities in identifying and referring cases that need professional support as well as promoting community dialogue on mental health, an area that has previously been ignored. It is vital to improve young people's mental health to enable them to take full advantage of the education and job opportunities available to them through formal skills-building.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

UNHCR chairs the Accountability to Affected Population (AAP)/Gender Equality (GE)/Youth community of practice (COP) for PROSPECTS partners in East Africa. A mapping of capacities, tools, resources, and policies was conducted by the COPs in February/March 2022, including a contextualization exercise on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on youth engagement. This was followed by a strategic action planning workshop in Uganda, with plans to undertake similar exercises in the other countries of operation. Through these workshops and COP coordination meetings, UNHCR shared specific resources with young people and partners to strengthen project outcomes.⁷

UNHCR has also worked with its NGO partner Build Up to provide training for UNHCR staff and youth trainers on digital peacebuilding, focusing on the role of social media and connectivity to support social cohesion activities. A mental health project (MHPSS Primer) focusing on South Sudanese Youth, currently undergoing finalization, will support work conducted to address the root causes of stress and trauma.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

The youth workstream of the PROSPECTS partnership project has strengthened the process of creating shared objectives and indicators across development and humanitarian agencies, ensuring better complementarity and building on respective strengths. Holistic programming to respond to the needs of young people – beyond immediate humanitarian needs – has confirmed the need for multi-year development programmes that address core development goals with the aim of meeting the longer-term needs of young people, who are catalysts for change in their societies. The project aims to support youth-led actions and connect youth-led organizations and host communities to implement community-based initiatives in line with the localization agenda.

Active implementation of national legal frameworks and/or policies is lacking in some contexts. In Ethiopia, a national legal framework has been developed that guarantees the right to work and freedom of movement. However, there have been challenges in operationalizing the legal framework on the ground. In Uganda, despite the evolutive refugee policy, legal constraints on community-based organizations (CBOs) and refugee-led organizations (RLOs) persist, limiting their ability to unleash their full potential in the country.

⁷ These resources included the Regional Youth Peacebuilding Programme (RYPP) training manual and toolkit; [Core Actions for Refugee Youth](#); the UNHCR AGD policy; the UNHCR AAP operational guidance; the UNHCR Guide to Social Media in Community-Based Protection; and the Youth Engagement Training Package.

Sociocultural factors limit meaningful youth participation in providing solutions for their communities. Power dynamics in communities and households vary across cultures, as does the willingness of young people to get involved. The effective participation of youth living with disabilities remains quite challenging. Increased community engagement is needed, with an emphasis on the role that different youth groups can play, including with community decision-makers, to ensure that they all have equal opportunities to engage meaningfully within their communities.

There is inadequate funding and opportunities for youth. Prioritization exercises for humanitarian programming often result in youth programmes being underfunded, hence it is vital to work within nexus programming to ensure that all of the needs of youth are met.

A mentor training participants in conflict management in Imvepi Settlement @UNHCR/Wanda Abu



Inclusion of urban refugees and boarding school pupils in community-based health insurance in Rwanda

a) The development collaboration

Rwanda has hosted more than 127,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1996 and Burundi since 2015, who are mainly living in five refugee camps at which two implementing partners provide primary and tertiary health-care services. Following the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, signed at the September 2016 Leaders' Summit, the Government of Rwanda pledged to include urban refugees in the national Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) plan. Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA), UNHCR and the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), urban refugees and students in boarding schools have been provided with access to public health care through CBHI on a par with nationals.

b) The protection benefits

Health is a fundamental human right indispensable for the exercise of other human rights.⁸ Refugees often have more physical and mental health issues than the general population due to past experiences of persecution, violence, trauma and flight.

UNHCR and humanitarian partners face challenges to cover the healthcare needs of refugees, including the ability to maintain significant levels of humanitarian funding in protracted situations and the risk of creating or supporting unsustainable parallel health systems for refugees. It is therefore important to seek sustainable approaches to ensure refugees' access to health care, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees and national efforts to extend social protection. Social health protection is one tool that can be used as part of a wider health and social protection platform aimed at improving the health and socioeconomic situation of refugees.

Rwanda's law and policy pursue access to universal quality health care and require any foreigner arriving in Rwanda without health insurance to "subscribe to insurance with an insurance regime of his/her choice within a period not exceeding thirty (30) days"⁹ Urban refugees do not have access to free health-care services like camp-based refugees; consequently, the CBHI scheme aims to address existing gaps in access to medical treatment, to ensure that refugees have access to the same treatment as nationals. CBHI coverage has contributed to ensuring that urban refugees can exercise their right to health and quality of life. Access has risen from 64 per cent of the urban refugee population in 2019/2000 to

⁸ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 14, The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health (Article. 12), 2000.

⁹ Article 3, para 2 - Law N° 48/2015 of 23/11/2015 Governing the Organisation, Functioning and Management of Health Insurance Schemes in Rwanda

98 per cent in September 2022 (a total of 12,089 beneficiaries). CBHI offers urban refugees comprehensive health care, regardless of age, gender, ethnic group, social profile or pre-existing health conditions. Before being eligible to enrol in CBHI, students who fell sick at school had to return to the camp for health care, which was detrimental to their learning. With a CBHI card in hand, it is expected that refugees' freedom of movement and access to quality livelihood opportunities will also improve, as many employers require employees to have health insurance. Under the CBHI plan, refugees only pay 10 per cent of their total health expenses, just as nationals do.

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Just after arriving in Rwanda in 2001, one of my children got very sick. He was three years old at the time and we didn't have the means to afford medical services, we relied on neighbours to support us. It was not easy. Having health insurance today, this cannot happen again”, Betty says. “When we go to the health centre, we just have to show our refugee ID, and then they check if the ID number is in the system. Once they confirm, we can access all services, and can also get referrals to the hospital if needed,” Betty says. “We are grateful for the inclusion of refugees in the health insurance scheme. It makes access to medical care easier



Betty, an urban refugee in Kigali shows her refugee ID that is linked to the community-based health insurance and which she uses to access health services.

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To enrol in the CBHI scheme, refugees over the age of 16 must have valid refugee identity (ID) cards issued by the Government. One indirect outcome of the requirements for enrolment in CBHI has been the accelerated production and distribution of ID cards. These valid ID cards also facilitate access to protection and socioeconomic services and rights such as access to civil documentation, bank accounts, loans and other financial services.

Granting refugees access to social protection benefits is especially relevant in long-term displacement. It can: i) reduce social tensions between host communities and refugees and avoid parallel systems; ii) increase social security contributions when there is a contributory system; and iii) strengthen the system itself, leading to more investments in institutional capacity, health service provision and delivery mechanisms which can further contribute to an improved protection environment for refugees.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

UNHCR continues to advocate for the roll-out of CBHI to camp-based refugees as well. UNHCR currently pays the premium of 7,000 Rwandan Francs (\$7) for each refugee enrolled. Refugees pay 10 per cent of their treatment costs as an Out-of-Pocket fee. In addition to paying the premium of \$7 per person per year, UNHCR sensitizes and supports refugees in the process of obtaining the necessary documents through continuous registration and biometric data capture. UNHCR works with the Government of Rwanda to update refugee records with RSSB to ensure timely enrolment and acquisition of membership cards.

Through the complaint and feedback mechanisms, UNHCR and its partners identify and address any issues arising. UNHCR collaborates with the health partners and, if required, on a case-by-case basis, assists in paying for services that are not covered under CBHI or pays the ticket modérateur (part of the expenses that remains the patient's financial responsibility) for the most vulnerable persons of concern to UNHCR. Finally, through participatory assessments (PA), regular protection channels such as hotline and email, as well as the Gikondo community centre, UNHCR collects feedback from the refugees on any challenges faced in relation to CBHI.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

Rwanda has a well-established social protection system that enables the most vulnerable to access basic services in a dignified manner. Hence, the enrolment of urban refugees in CBHI is a positive move towards their gradual inclusion in national services. For nationals, the premium depends on their socioeconomic profiles. There are four categories: the first and second categories do not pay premiums, the third pays \$3 and the fourth \$7, per person/year, while the government contributes subsidies for the well-functioning of CBHI. The highest premium (\$7) apply to all refugees, irrespective of their social category and ability to pay their own premiums. Therefore, it is not sustainable for UNHCR to continue paying premiums and other alternatives need to be explored. If UNHCR stops the payment, the ticket modérateur may be unaffordable for some refugees. Also, some medicines are unavailable in CBHI pharmacies, or CBHI does not cover them. As such, UNHCR assesses the need to facilitate the payment on a case-by-case basis.

Despite the existing challenges, there are two opportunities to address: firstly, there is a need to further assess refugees' self-reliance so that capable refugees can pay the premiums out of their own pockets. Secondly, it is critical to advocate for the inclusion of camp-based refugees into CBHI, in order to gradually avoid parallel systems. This advocacy for integration into social protection systems is in line with both the Government and UNHCR's long-term objectives and would advance inclusion prospects for other social protection services, such as insurance and pensions.

World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank support to the Government of Colombia in its response to the Venezuelan situation

a) The development collaboration

Colombia is the main recipient of mixed movements of refugees and migrants from Venezuela. While the actual figure is estimated to be higher, official statistics from Migration Colombia indicate that more than 2.4 million Venezuelans had settled in Colombia by February 2022. The World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank have supported the Colombian Government in its response to this unprecedented situation. Recognizing that the arrival of the Venezuelans could be a development opportunity if managed properly, the Colombia Government has remained committed to open policies for the social and economic integration of Venezuelans. These include (i) issuing work, transit, and stay permits¹⁰ and providing skill certification and vocational training; (ii) extending access to health, education, and social programmes and housing subsidies; (iii) investing to benefit both host as well as refugee and migrant communities; and (iv) protecting vulnerable populations through programmes to reunify families, protect children, and prevent human trafficking. The breadth and complexity of the World Bank and Inter-American Bank's support for the Colombian Government in the area of migration and forced displacement has grown over time, as have the partnerships of these institutions with UNHCR. The initial analytical engagement laid the foundation for technical assistance, policy, investment loans and sectoral investments.

b) The protection benefits

Research from these two international financial institutions has supported and reinforced the Government's commitment to an enabling protection environment for Venezuelans abroad. Notably, the World Bank's October 2018 publication *Migration from Venezuela to Colombia: Short- and Medium-Term Impact and Response Strategy* provided evidence that, if met with open and inclusive policies, the arrival of the Venezuelan populations would create economic growth potential. It argued that regularization of the Venezuelan population would help mitigate negative short-term impacts to government sectors (health, education, social protection) and realize benefits in the medium-term. This report positively influenced the Government's Venezuela Migration Attention Strategy for integrating Venezuelans refugees and migrants and strengthening institutional capacity for a coordinated response. It also informed the National Development Plan 2018–2022, which made the social and economic integration of the migrant population from Venezuela in Colombia a government priority. A new national development plan is currently being developed through a participatory process across the country.

¹⁰ This includes the landmark decision to provide Temporary Protected Status for a duration of up to 10 years.

This analytical engagement laid the foundation for World Bank investments. In 2019, the Second Development Policy Financing from the Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF) included funding for government policies to regularize and integrate Venezuelan refugees and migrants. This included the passage of Decree No 1288 in 2018, which provided for measures to regularize the legal status of irregular Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their integration into the national economy, and to facilitate their access to the labour market and basic services. This decree also included the approval of a national policy aimed at, among other things, developing a road map for the integration of refugees and migrants from Venezuela that includes health, education, water and sanitation, child support and housing services, as well as services to productively integrate them into labour markets. Other inclusive policies were subsequently approved that laid the foundation for the new Migration Policy Law (Law 2136/201), which includes a specific chapter on socioeconomic inclusion.

In subsequent years, the World Bank approved financing for projects focusing on the inclusion of Venezuelans in national services and responses specifically aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of health-care services and the social security system, inclusive housing and rental subsidies, vaccination and cash transfers in the context of the emergency COVID-19 response and adoption of the temporary protected status and the National Registry of Migrants. In addition, the World Bank approved non-reimbursable resources for technical assistance in support of institutional adjustments, as well as a policy road map for the social and economic integration of Venezuelan migrants so that they can contribute to the development process.

In 2019, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) approved the use of its Grant Facility to leverage investment operations in countries receiving extraordinary migratory flows. In that vein, IADB deployed a range of approaches to support Colombia in enabling the social, economic, productive and cultural inclusion of the Venezuelan population and protecting its rights. IADB developed an operational portfolio for elaborating policies to ensure regular, safe and orderly migration and refugee protection.

Loans and technical cooperation have focused on policy reforms and institutional support, health, education, labour market inclusion, urban development and housing, and data support. Thanks to IADB financial and technical support, 739,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants were enrolled in the General Social Security Health System and by February 2022 there were 533,000 Venezuelan refugee and migrant students across all levels of the educational system. Furthermore, the first call of the skills certification programme benefited 953 refugees and migrants, including 631 women, and also provided children and older persons with vouchers for connectivity, food and care. In Villa Caracas, 250 highly vulnerable boys, girls and adolescents were trained at sports schools in Villa Cara, while some 200 boys and girls benefited from a specific friendly space project. In addition, an employability route was created to facilitate the employment of Venezuelans, returnees and the vulnerable host community. These interventions also helped migrants and refugees to obtain documentation and access labour markets.

IDB carries out research to monitor the socioeconomic integration process in Colombia. This has shown that regularization has a positive impact on the socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan migrants in the country. Since 2020, the Bank has also been conducting

behavioural experiments to understand the main drivers of public perceptions of migrants and to establish which interventions might be most effective in influencing these perceptions and behaviours. Colombia is one of the countries studied by the IDB Laboratory of Public Perceptions and Migration, which analyses social media to monitor public conversation on issues in the region.

Furthermore, a joint WB-IADB development policy loan provided financing support to contribute to the effective socioeconomic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants through the expansion of regularization, greater access to social services and recognition of labour skills and training. Regularization is advanced through the Temporary Protection Status (TPS), which grants regular status to Venezuelans for ten years. This operation also tapped into GCFF funds. The protection impact of this cooperation has been enormous. In addition to the results cited above, more than 2.4 million Venezuelans have applied for TPS. Researchers from WB, IADB, and the Universidad de los Andes recently studied the effect of work permits obtained through an earlier regularization programme on 500,000 Venezuelan refugees. Compared to other Venezuelan migrants, the former had 60 per cent higher consumption, 30 per cent higher income, and better physical and mental health, among other metrics, after a period of two years.¹¹ The labour programme is also beneficial to the people of Colombia, considering that Venezuelan refugees with work permits have a 10 per cent higher probability of working in the formal economy and contributing by paying taxes.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

The foundational policy research document [Migration from Venezuela to Colombia: Impacts and Response Strategies in the Short- and Medium-Term](#) was produced in close partnership UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

UNHCR and the World Bank worked jointly to promote the extension of the GCFF to Colombia, making it the first country outside the Middle East to access this fund. UNHCR provided a country analysis and supported the eligibility of Colombia and the proposed loans before the GCFF steering committee. UNHCR provided technical advice on TPS (including for TPS online and in-person registration) and other legislative initiatives, enhanced protection monitoring (including identifying and removing barriers to access to TPS) and promoted community engagement and two-way communication with the Venezuelan and host communities.

As complementary activities, UNHCR ensures lifesaving assistance and promotes de facto access to rights for Venezuelans in need of international protection who are caught up in mixed movements, Colombian returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and people at risk of statelessness¹², based on the strong de jure rights provided by the State. UNHCR also contributes to confidence-building between host communities and refugees, migrants, IDPs and returnees and works with institutions to foster social cohesion, prevent discrimination and xenophobia and promote access to durable solutions.

¹¹ [Life Out of the Shadows: Impacts of Amnesties in the Lives of Refugees \(worldbank.org\)](#)

¹² Particularly children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents (to date, more than 70,000 children have benefited since 2019, with an exceptional measure affording them access to Colombian nationality).



Yohana, a Venezuelan refugee, receiving her Temporary Protection Permit. ©UNHCR/Manuel Diaz

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

There have been significant advances in the legal, institutional and public policy framework to meet the protection needs of refugees and migrants over the last seven years, with development institutions having played an important role in supporting the Government of Colombia to implement progressive policies. Looking forward, needs continue for (i) protection of the Venezuelan population and people of other nationalities, including those in transit through Colombia towards the north of the continent, including access to refugee status or other legal status; (ii) greater institutional capacity and coordination between national and local governments, including solving financing gaps at local level; (iii) improved access to national protection systems and services, including formal employment and livelihood opportunities, for Venezuelans and other nationalities in need of international protection; (iv) protection of people at risk of statelessness, specifically those entitled to Colombian nationality; and (v) enhanced social cohesion with locals.

Similarly, the refugee status determination process has considerable limitations. To date, more than 25,000 cases remain without a decision. In some cases, decisions can take more than three years to be resolved. Asylum-seekers have access to health and primary education but are not formally allowed to access work while waiting for a decision from the Colombian Government. There are still significant gaps in the legal framework and institutional infrastructure in place to address the protracted IDP situation in the country. Up to now, the Government of Colombia has registered more than 8.2 million IDPs, of whom some 6.7 million still need assistance, reparations and access to durable solutions. The main challenges are in relation to access to durable solutions, including access to land and legalization of informal urban settlements, which are inhabited in high proportion by IDPs, refugees, migrants and returned Colombians.

The Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS)

a) The development collaboration

Over one million people have been forcibly displaced in and from countries in Central America and Mexico due to violence, persecution, human rights violation, internal disturbances, inequality, poverty and food insecurity. The Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) promotes a coordinated regional response to forced displacement. It is a concrete regional application of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), which encourages regional cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination for greater responsibility-sharing in matters of prevention, protection and durable solutions. UNHCR and the Organization of American States (OAS) serve as the MIRPS technical secretariat.

The MIRPS Support Platform was launched in December 2019 to accompany the efforts of the MIRPS States in offering protection and solutions to forced displacement in Central America and Mexico. The Support Platform seeks to leverage support from the broadest possible range of states, international financial institutions, the private sector, regional bodies and other stakeholders. The current members are: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the European Union, France, Spain, Switzerland, the United States of America, Uruguay, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank Group, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the OAS.

b) The protection benefits

Since the adoption of the [San Pedro Sula Declaration](#) in 2017, the MIRPS States (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama) have committed to strengthening protection and promoting solutions for forcibly displaced populations, addressing the underlying causes of displacement and promoting a stable environment that ensures security, economic development and prosperity. Through their participation in the MIRPS, the States committed to: (i) improving mechanisms for reception and admission; (ii) responding to humanitarian and protection needs (iii) supporting host countries and communities; and (iv) enhancing opportunities for durable solutions. Through their National Action Plans, the MIRPS States have made around 180 commitments and implemented a wide range of initiatives to expand access to international protection, scale up protection for at-risk groups, enhance durable solutions and increase efforts to integrate and stabilize displaced people and host communities. The National Action Plans of each participating State lay out commitments in the areas of protection, social protection, education, health, and jobs & livelihoods.

There have been notable achievements to date. The government of Belize announced an amnesty process and is digitizing the asylum system to address the accumulated backlog. In Honduras, the National Property Institute has established a Virtual Repository of Abandoned

Assets for future restitution.¹³ In Costa Rica, the government has approved a complementary protection measure for people whose asylum claims have been denied but who cannot return to their home countries due to security concerns. This pilot phase (December 2020 to February 2022) provided legal security and work permits for 3,934 persons, with an approval rate of 99 per cent. El Salvador improved care for displaced adolescents in temporary shelters through youth-focused care and the implementation of an educational continuity strategy, supporting vulnerable individuals affected by gang violence, extortion, death threats and sexual violence. Finally, Panama included asylum-seekers and refugees in gender-based violence programming in local municipalities, notably in the activities marking the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence, and facilitated access to dedicated services for survivors of gender-based violence by expanding the municipal community centres delivering them.

At regional level, considering the significant increase in asylum claims in recent years, the MIRPS States have strengthened national reception and admission systems through case management and eligibility procedures. These aim to safeguard fairness, efficiency, adaptability and integrity in the asylum process. The MIRPS States have created the MIRPS Reception and Admission Working Group, which allows governments to share their experiences and expertise with other peers in the region and to learn from one another. The MIRPS States have also identified areas in which they would like to foster bilateral cooperation or receive technical support relating to protection and strengthening asylum systems. In response, Brazil, Canada and the United States have shared knowledge and best practices on the use of differentiated case processing modalities (simplified, accelerated and merged) for refugee status determination (RSD), including the presumption of eligibility for those with manifestly well-founded claims. Simplified prima facie recognition was particularly useful in Brazil, where the national asylum system had rapidly become overwhelmed due to a large-scale influx of refugees and migrants from Venezuela.

In addition, regional twinning meetings have been held to bring together asylum authorities from the MIRPS States and Support Platform members who have expressed interest in strengthening the asylum systems. These meetings resulted in training exchanges, tools to identify persons in need of international protection, pragmatic approaches to reducing backlogs and the use of innovative means and technology to process high volumes of refugee claims in a fair and efficient manner, in line with international standards. Brazil, Canada and Mexico are leading support for the usage of Country-of-Origin Information (COI) and implementing differentiated RSD procedures. Brazil also offered support for the setting up of an internal jurisprudence database and shared its experience on digitizing the asylum system and registering asylum-seekers. Moreover, Brazil and Mexico organized in-person visits to each other's countries to learn more about differentiated case processing.

Development actors stand to play an important role in achieving many of the MIRPS commitments. The national development plans of the MIRPS States are increasingly including a series of actions to stabilize communities, with the goal of addressing the root causes of displacement. Multilateral development banks and bilateral development agencies are making initial investments to support governments in addressing critical concerns in these communities. Examples include youth employment projects (Inter-American Development Bank), social protection systems (World Bank), water system and education investments (Central American Bank for Economic Integration), and the prevention of violence, the promotion of human rights and access to justice (USAID).

¹³ Full implementation is pending the adoption of a specific legal framework for the protection of IDPs.

Looking forward, the MIRPS States are seeking to consolidate and coordinate their approach with international actors to address the protection and solutions needs of displaced persons. Each member State has consolidated its national commitments and defined its priority support needs in response to the prevailing country context. In Honduras, the government has committed to strengthening the Directorate for the Protection of Persons Internally Displaced by Violence and established an internal displacement information management system. This will generate official data on dynamics, trends, affected areas and risk profiles to improve understanding of the causes and impacts of internal displacement by violence on affected communities and ensure that public policy is well informed. In Belize, the government has committed to implementing standing operating procedures (SOPs) to facilitate comprehensive identification and referral of persons with international protection needs. In Guatemala, the government plans to strengthen its teams of eligibility officers to guarantee fair and effective processing of asylum applications.

Building on these commitments, the recently established National Coordination Groups bring together line ministries involved with the National Technical Teams, United Nations agencies and Members of the MIRPS Support Platform (including development partners) to provide a foundation for increased country-level multi-partner engagement and to ensure that each country has a common forum for reviewing the forced displacement context and assessing protection needs, operational gaps and response priorities.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

UNHCR is part of the MIRPS Technical Secretariat, whose staff support the member States in implementing their commitments at both regional and country level, as well as the actions that they have established as priorities for improving the protection environment in their countries.

At regional level, the Secretariat supports the execution of the annual work plans of the pro tempore presidency and facilitates dialogue and collaboration with the MIRPS Support Platform. The Secretariat also coordinates the regional working groups on: admission, reception and processing of persons with protection needs; internal displacement; labour market access and vocational training; and local governance.

In addition, in the MIRPS States, UNHCR provides inputs and support for the Governments' efforts. For example, the UNHCR operation in Costa Rica prioritizes refugees and asylum-seekers' access to social protection programmes: health insurance through the Social Security Fund (CCSS); access to employability programmes leading to technical skill certification, such as Empléate, run by the National Employment Directorate; and digital literacy, through the links established between the livelihoods programme and partnerships with the private sector. This aligns with and advances the work of the government of Costa Rica, which has taken the lead with its Working Group on labour market access and vocational training.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

As a regional State-led process that seeks to improve protection and solutions for forcibly displaced persons in Central America and Mexico, the MIRPS Support Platform has provided a forum to orient and engage a range of partners vis-à-vis the forced displacement context in the sub-region. They translate the idea of responsibility-sharing into concrete, practical measures, providing long overdue recognition that it is only possible to respond to the challenges of displacement through collaboration, coordination and inclusion into national systems. To date, development partners, principally the Inter-American Development Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration and the World Bank, have taken observer roles or contributed targeted technical interventions during the Support Platform meetings and events. However, looking ahead they have expressed a desire to work in a more integrated way to support MIRPS member States in delivering their commitments. In parallel, UNHCR has been working with these development actors to ensure that programmatic interventions and planning are informed by displacement contexts and essential protection considerations as well as long-term solutions. While regional dialogue through the MIRPS is a key enabler of such collaboration, expansive programming at national and local level is an essential next step to ground the collaboration in specific response interventions that are impactful and results-oriented. The newly established multi-partner MIRPS National Coordination Groups and their bilateral engagement with UNHCR protection staff in the countries will frame national and local collaboration.

Belize. Asylum seeker children play while their parents are assisted in applying for the government's amnesty exercise
©UNHCR/Aida Escobar



Mobile wallet for refugees in Jordan

a) The development collaboration

UNHCR actively promotes mobile wallets for refugees in Jordan. This is to streamline the delivery of humanitarian cash assistance to Syrian refugees in a more timely and cost-efficient manner, as well as to enhance protection outcomes and build a foundation for greater financial inclusion through access to digital financial services and products. Through close collaboration with the financial service provider uWallet, as well as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the German development agency GiZ (on behalf of BMZ), Jordan Payments and Clearing Company (JoPACC), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, approximately 95 per cent of camp-residing households receive their cash assistance via mobile wallets. By the end of 2022, 60 per cent of urban-residing Syrian households receiving cash assistance are also expected to have this access.

b) The protection benefits

Mobile wallets allow refugees to access bank-like services. Due to significant Know Your Client (KYC) documentation requirements for opening bank accounts, fewer than 10 per cent of refugees in Jordan hold bank accounts and the remainder are consequently limited in their ability to access formal financial services such as deposits, loans and insurance. With mobile wallets, refugees can use their digital accounts to store, save, send and receive money and build transaction and credit histories. Greater access to digital financial services empowers refugees to increase their assets, mitigate financial shocks related to emergencies, receive remittances and access further opportunities such as debit cards for online purchases and access to credit and financing, thereby boosting their overall self-reliance. Refugees can also benefit from digital financial literacy training and some serve as Mobile Wallet Ambassadors training other refugees, thus boosting their capacities as agents for change within their communities.

With mobile wallets, refugees have greater autonomy over their finances – they can decide when, where and how to use their money. Unlike the traditional cash disbursements, which would be returned if not withdrawn or collected within a specified time, no such time limits apply to money received by refugees via mobile wallets.

Refugee business owners have reported that mobile wallets have helped them to expand their customer base beyond their immediate localities and to access online marketplaces. Employers are more encouraged to hire refugees who use the system, as they can be included in digital payroll systems, thereby facilitating the payment of salaries or wages. Work permit holders can also easily pay their compulsory social security contributions online via their mobile wallets.

With increased assets, freedom to control their own finances and the advantages offered by the various features of mobile wallets, refugees, including those with vulnerable profiles, have a greater ability to administer processes and expenses effectively affording access

to rights. One example is the way mobile wallets can enhance freedom of movement for refugees across the country: in fact, travel/leave or movement permits (e.g. the permission required to leave refugee camps, or the authorization to move one's residency from camps to urban areas) can be downloaded and stored in mobile wallets and checked by the authorities when required (including through contactless functions). The use of mobile wallets also enhances refugees' effective access to basic services. Due to difficulties saving or unpredictable costs, refugees often have limited access to health services, whereas mobile payment-based hospital insurance or a savings mechanism enables low-income refugee households to set aside funds exclusively for health care. Furthermore, even with free access to primary education, refugee parents must still pay for other expenses, such as books, uniforms, supplies and exam fees, and the use of mobile wallets can help them save, plan and make education payments without losing productive time or selling assets prematurely. Strengthening access to education by empowering families to fulfil the related financial requirements in a smoother, more predictable, organized and less time-consuming manner using mobile wallets, coupled with their economic/financial advantages, can be an effective way to reduce protection challenges and risks such as school dropout, child marriage and child labour. Moreover, the use of mobile wallets reduces the obstacles hindering access to justice, as legal fees can be paid through mobile wallets and documentation. It also contributes to mitigating the risks of exploitation or exposure to violence or abuse. Mobile wallets allow women in particular, to make and receive payments from the safety of their home, greatly reducing their protection risks, including those associated with GBV and child-protection, mothers do not need to leave their children at home for such transactions).

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

As part of its promotion of mobile wallets, UNHCR developed training and information materials to inform refugees of their legal rights and protections in relation to mobile wallet ownership. Included in these materials is messaging aimed at mitigating potential data protection risks, such as not sharing one's PIN or account number with others, being situationally aware when using their wallets, etc. To increase the security of the mobile wallets, UNHCR integrated the feature of identity authentication using biometric data. This technology is integrated into the mobile wallet onboarding process, as well as regular validation of identity at Umnieh offices. Refugees must give their informed consent to provide their biometrics prior to opening their mobile wallet.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

Mobile wallets provide refugees with critical financial services that were not available to them before. However, without adequate income or reliable income-generating opportunities, their utility in building refugee resilience is very limited. Therefore, ensuring refugees' effective access to livelihood opportunities is key to building their capacity for self-reliance in the future. This means addressing legal challenges such as the inability of non-Syrians to apply for work permits without renouncing their protection status, the limitations on occupational sectors open to non-Jordanian workers, the restrictive nature of Syrian-owned home-based businesses, and practical challenges such as the cost of social security contributions and complicated licensing procedures, among others. The introduction of mobile wallets and their

positive impact might be fruitfully considered within the discussions around the existing ban on non-Syrian refugees getting work permits.

Obstacles hindering the economic inclusion of refugees should also be addressed in tandem to increasing their financial inclusion. Syrian refugees benefit from greater access to financial services in Jordan than non-Syrian refugees. While refugees face tremendous obstacles in opening formal bank accounts in Jordan, Syrian refugees are now permitted to open mobile wallet accounts with a valid passport. Non-Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers continue to be excluded from all financial services. This discrepancy of legal rights has widened the socioeconomic gaps and opportunities between Syrian and non-Syrian populations. Mobile wallets are not accessible to all Syrian refugees. Enhanced efforts are required to target some vulnerable groups, for example, elderly persons, persons with disabilities or serious medical conditions, and unaccompanied children under 18 years of age who may not be able to open or use mobile wallets. Refugees need access to credit and other financial products and services to engage more effectively as market actors. However, these services must be tailored to their specific needs and realities, such as more flexible loan guarantees and collateral requirements, loan structures, and repayment schedules. The digital financial ecosystem is still relatively nascent and needs to be built on. Contactless payments via mobile wallets, cash-out agents and kiosks are limited, but are expanding with the significant growth of digital payments over the last year.

Through the use of mobile wallets, refugees are fully integrated into formal financial legal frameworks, including established mechanisms to protect national security, for example anti-money laundering mechanisms. UNHCR will closely observe and mitigate the possible hindrances that refugees may face in the use of mobile wallets when relevant scrutiny is implemented in this respect.

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Asia Development Bank support for the Government of Bangladesh through the Expanded Disaster and Pandemic Response Facility

a) The development collaboration

Bangladesh is among the top ten refugee-receiving countries globally, currently hosting over 943,000 refugees. Since the 1970s, Bangladesh has generously received Rohingya refugees fleeing conflict and human rights violations in Myanmar, including in 2017, which saw the largest influx of some 700,000 refugees within the span of a few months. Following a request from the Government of Bangladesh to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Bangladesh received financing from the ADB Expanded Disaster and Pandemic Response Facility (DRF+) in June 2022, to help improve infrastructure and manage the basic needs of refugees and host communities sheltered in the Cox's Bazar district in southeastern Bangladesh. The project builds on Phase 1 of the ADB Emergency Assistance Project in Cox's Bazaar, a financial grant approved back in 2018.

The DRF+ builds on its predecessor, the Disaster and Pandemic Response Facility (DRF), a financing facility introduced by ADB to respond to severe disasters and emergencies caused by (i) natural hazards; (ii) health emergencies, including pandemics and epidemics and (iii) conflicts and related humanitarian events, such as cross-border flows of displaced people. In recognition of the socioeconomic impact on host countries of larger scale cross-border movements, ADB recently opened eligibility for funding through DRF+ to countries that are not usually eligible for grants (including Bangladesh), but for which support can be considered in close collaboration with UNHCR. Indeed, Bangladesh became the first case in which the newly introduced ADB Expanded Disaster and Pandemic Response Facility (DRF+) was applied.

b) The protection benefits

In Bangladesh, the operational environment for the humanitarian response has generally been permissive; however, the overall protection environment remains delicate and limited. Bangladesh remains firm and consistent in its position that, as Rohingyas are hosted in Bangladesh only temporarily and on a humanitarian basis, the humanitarian response to the Rohingya situation has to remain decoupled from development programmes/interventions in the country. In view of global responsibility sharing, Bangladesh states that the country should not be put in the position of taking development loans to provide refuge to Rohingyas. Offering opportunities for grant support, DRF+ acknowledges the need for global responsibility sharing, while providing a unique opportunity to take a multi-year approach to planning investments that are aimed at improving the sustainability of the interventions. The multi-year grant financing provided by ADB through DRF+, and the Government's acceptance of this opportunity, is a

welcome development as it has the potential to contribute, inter alia, to improving the protection environment through investments in mid-term infrastructure interventions, benefiting both refugees and the host communities. ADB financing strengthens the Government's systems to improve access to basic services for both refugees and host communities, to fill the resource gap and to support the medium-term needs of both communities.

Furthermore, since Phase 1, the project has included interventions that directly improve the lives of host communities and Rohingya refugees; for example, the expansion of reservoirs and the construction of water treatment plants enhances access to drinking water, the construction of roads inside the camps and renovation of the highway outside the camp improves accessibility, the construction of two women-led semi-permanent community centres provides shelter to survivors of domestic violence, the upgrading and operationalization of four health-care facilities with segregated spaces for women encourages women to access health services, and the procurement and distribution of 1,000 sets of gender-specific personal protective equipment meet the hygiene needs of women and girls. Overall, ADB estimates that the infrastructure investments, which also include WASH and disaster response components, will eventually benefit some 1.2 million people.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

As per ADB's Supplementary Note on DRF+ under ADF 13, ADB is committed to consulting "extensively with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees during this [eligibility assessment] phase and during the design of DRF+ assistance." The joint process institutionalized under DRF+ has created space for the two organizations to work closely together and for UNHCR to share knowledge and expertise in a refugee context, with the aim of achieving better outcomes for the ADB project. In support of this, UNHCR conducted joint field missions with ADB in Cox's Bazar and supported ADB throughout the project preparation processes, including by coordinating consultation meetings at field level, facilitating discussions between humanitarian actors and ADB technical teams to identify gaps and protection impacts, and by supporting the organization of a lessons-learned workshop following the conclusion of Phase 1.

In addition, ADB's eligibility criteria for DRF+ are formulated in close alignment with the eligibility criteria of the World Bank IDA Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR), under which countries must adhere to "an adequate framework for the protection of refugees". In this spirit, UNHCR provided ADB with an advisory opinion on the refugee protection environment, as well as a commitment to provide an update to the Opinion every six months, modelled on a similar service that UNHCR provides to the World Bank as part of the IDA WHR.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

While UNHCR and ADB engage in regular exchanges on the protection environment in Bangladesh, there are currently no mechanisms to measure the impact of projects financed by multilateral development banks (MDBs) on the protection environment. This makes evaluation of the protection dividends yielded by MDB interventions harder to assess. Looking ahead, a dedicated mechanism would create added value and allow for better tracking of progress towards protection outcomes.



ADB Country Director Edimon Ginting meeting Rohingya refugee students at a learning centre
©UNHCR/Nodoka Hasegawa.

The first phase of the ADB Emergency Assistance Project did not apply an overall Resettlement Framework (as part of the social safeguards policy) for in-camp access road construction, although some shelters along the road were impacted by the constructions. In light of this, UNHCR facilitated consultations with refugees, which eventually informed the road construction and allowed for a budget to be established for new shelters and for the relocation of affected refugees before construction started. Following the implementation of DRF+, it is recommended that the ADB safeguard policy be adapted to cater for such situations.

The Inclusive Development Programme in Host Areas in Chad

a) The development collaboration

Eastern Chad is hosting about 322,000 Sudanese refugees in camps and host villages in the Wadi Fira, Ouaddaï, Sila, Salamat, and Ennedi Est regions. The southern regions of Chad host 119,000 refugees (mainly from the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Nigeria), 75,000 Chadian returnees, 63,000 of whom live on sites and 12,000 in host villages in the Middle Chari, Mandoul, Logone Oriental and Logone Occidental regions. Those populations are experiencing protracted displacement situations in environments that exacerbate structural vulnerabilities and long-term protection challenges.

Funded by the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and implemented by UNHCR and the French Development Agency (AFD) from April 2019 to April 2023, the Inclusive Development programme in host areas (DIZA) – hereafter referred to as the Project – supports Chad in implementing its pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) and the High-level Segment (HLS) on Statelessness, notably the adoption of an asylum law facilitating access to employment and agricultural land in those fragile areas. The Project aims to improve the living conditions of local and displaced populations in eastern and southern Chad by enhancing their access to sustainable socioeconomic opportunities, with an emphasis on social protection, basic services, vocational training, economic inclusion, good governance and social cohesion. Gender is a cross-cutting priority of the Project that is being mainstreamed in all outcomes and outputs.

b) The protection benefits

As a result of the combined efforts made in implementing the Project, which required the involvement of the central and local authorities and advocacy conducted by UNHCR over the past decade for adoption of the asylum law and follow-up of the pledges, in December 2020, Chad adopted its first national refugee law. Although a favourable protection environment for all categories of displaced persons had always prevailed in Chad, the absence of a specific legal reference text had long been lacking. The law has been strengthening the existing national institutional framework for the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers, which resulted in Chad ratifying several international legal instruments on asylum. A panel of experts composed of representatives from the National Transitional Council (transitional parliament), the General Secretariat of the Government, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the National Refugee Commission (CNARR) and UNHCR drafted the preliminary text of the implementing decree of the asylum law that is expected to be adopted in 2023.

By passing on this law, Chad has enshrined respect for refugees' civil and socioeconomic rights including freedom of movement and access to justice, the right to work as well as to access health care, education and land, etc. As for the dissemination, appropriation and familiarization of the provisions of the new law by various actors, including persons of concern to UNHCR, the Project specifically provides for these objectives targeting State

representatives, the press and the media, banking and micro-credit institutions, universities, etc. Awareness-raising will be also pursued among refugees, concerning the rights attached to refugee status as conferred by the current national legal framework. These activities and efforts contribute to strengthening the protection environment in Chad, which builds on a long tradition of hospitality towards individuals fleeing persecution.

Despite the Chadian government's openness and positive predispositions to host and integrate refugees, their actual inclusion in policies and national systems remains difficult. The challenges on the ground are enormous, due to repeated cycles of instability in the surrounding countries (Sudan and the Central African Republic) leading to waves of refugee influxes. In addition, the socioeconomic situation is precarious in the refugee-hosting areas where the refugees are located, which is exacerbated by the scarcity of natural resources. The DIZA Project, which is responding in the short term to food crises while reducing vulnerabilities over a longer term, contributes to operationalizing the concept of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The aim is to improve access to basic social services, employment and income, local governance and the resilience of the populations targeted by the project. All of the programme components have a gender dimension. Strengthening the organizational and structural capacity of refugees to increase their entrepreneurial capabilities and their level of empowerment is a key priority. To facilitate access to community-based financial services for refugees, a total of 146 Village Savings and Credit Associations (AVEC) have been created and their 2,779 members trained. In addition, in terms of professional activities, 46 beneficiaries in mixed groups of refugees and host communities have been trained in beekeeping and provided with modern Kenyan hives with an income capacity of Central African Franc (XAF) 3,000,000 (\$4,400) per year.

Furthermore, agriculture remains a component of the Project, with the aim of further empowering beneficiaries and diversifying their incomes. To this effect, collaboration agreements have been negotiated and signed with the decentralized structures of the State for the extension of fertilization and other agricultural techniques to increase production and productivity. As a result, 250 refugee households were trained in fertilization and soil development techniques on 148 ha of degraded land. This resulted in an increase in average yield of 2.5 tons/ha, raising the overall production of these households to 370,000 kg with an estimated value of XAF 259,000,000 (\$380,000). The harvests had two positive impacts on the lives of the refugee communities: part of the harvest was used for their personal consumption to reduce food insecurity while the other part was commercialized to increase their resilience.

With regard to the fight against statelessness, reforms have been initiated at national level, in the context of legislative and policy developments related to the Project, to implement the commitments made by Chad at the HLS, including commitment No 5 on improving access to birth registration procedures, including late registration of births and the issue of identity documents to persons at risk. Between 2019 and July 2022, 107,248 birth certificates were issued to refugees and host populations in refugee-hosting areas, which is a significant increase compared to previous years. Local authorities, civil registrars, UNHCR partners and refugee communities were provided with training in CRVS (Civil registration and Vital Statistics) and statelessness, to raise awareness of the importance of registration and documentation issues and the need for a functional and effective CRVS system in the fight against statelessness.

c) The catalytic role, protection and inputs of UNHCR and other support

UNHCR was involved in the project from the outset and picked on the asylum law and prioritized the asylum law as a critical outcome. When additional AFD funds were being considered, UNHCR made proposals to expand the project to additional areas and to increase the targets. This translated into focused efforts to achieve the expected outcome relating to the adoption of the asylum law and to further support the socioeconomic inclusion of persons of concern to UNHCR. UNHCR provided to AFD critical reports and data including on the level of socioeconomic inclusion of refugee women and related challenges and specific operational information demonstrating its ability to facilitate the implementation of the project. In addition to advocacy activities in relation to adoption of the asylum law and its popularization, UNHCR deployed efforts to facilitate the movement and activities of partners in the DIZA project areas, negotiated the clearance of materials purchased for implementation of the project and facilitated meetings with relevant administrative authorities and refugee beneficiaries.

In that vein, UNHCR organized and held meetings with refugee beneficiaries in the different areas to facilitate their understanding and appropriation of the project. The meetings were also aimed at facilitating interaction between the beneficiaries and NGOs selected to implement the project and gathering refugees' contributions to ensure smooth implementation of the project. Information gathered from the beneficiaries concerning progress made and challenges encountered was discussed at coordination mechanism meetings held both in the field and in N'Djamena.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

The main challenge encountered has been the social, political and security situation marked by the aftermath of the presidential elections (January to April 2021), followed by the death of the President in April 2021 and the installation of a Transition Military Council. The Asylum Law remains to be implemented by the Council of Minister.

Despite these constraints, the DIZA Project remains an excellent opportunity to further support Chad in its implementation of the GCR and HLS pledges. The spirit of the asylum Law is innovative since it grants refugees living in Chad the same rights as Chadian citizens with the exception of political rights. It is deemed critical to extend the socialization/popularization strategy to all state services (including law enforcement), local authorities, economic actors and all of the social components of communities living in the hosting areas, so that they are all more familiar with the provisions of the law, understand better the changes that it brings and contribute to its smooth implementation.

In this regard, an extension of the DIZA project beyond 2023 would be highly beneficial. It would give impetus to the effective implementation of three commitments, notably 1) the integration of refugees into provincial development plans; 2) the issuance of biometric refugee identity cards and Convention Travel Documents (currently being studied by ANATS) and 3) the facilitation of access to employment in the private sector and strengthening of the institutional and legal framework concerning access to agricultural land for refugees.

Strengthening municipal resilience in response to the impact of the Syria crisis in Turkey

a) The development collaboration

Turkey has been hosting the largest refugee population in the world since 2014, with more than 4 million refugees at the end of 2021, including over 3.6 million Syrians. Turkey's inclusive legal framework, particularly the Law on Foreigners and International Protection and Temporary Protection Regulation, provides Syrians under temporary protection with access to services such as health, education and social services, through national systems. More than 98 per cent of refugees in Turkey live in host communities across the country's 81 provinces, the majority living in urban areas in the south-eastern and western regions, where local authorities and municipalities in particular have played a vital role in the initial response, service delivery and social inclusion. The sudden and dramatic increase in population resulting from the arrival of Syrian refugees has proved challenging for local institutions tasked with extending services to refugees and ensuring social cohesion.

UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are co-leads of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) since 2015, recognized the critical importance of local responders and included municipal engagement as part of the Basic Needs sector. Partnering with Turkish municipalities has remained a priority under 3RP, with key stakeholders including UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, ILO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WFP, GiZ and civil society organizations like the World Academy of Local Government and Democracy (WALD) providing targeted support as outlined in the [3RP Municipal Resilience Report](#).

The multi-stakeholder collaboration brings together humanitarian and development actors to complement the Government's strong leadership and commitment to "harmonization", the term used in Turkey to denote a vision of social cohesion, by developing a network of partners working closely with municipalities to map interventions and share experiences to maximise protection impacts at local level through a development approach. In this way, agencies have been able to support municipalities in distinct but complementary ways. For example, UNDP and IOM developed programmes on municipal service delivery, infrastructure and inclusion; UNHCR and WALD focused on social protection and coordination support; UNICEF supported municipal staff on child rights, participation and policy development; UNFPA worked on improving the employability and inclusion of vulnerable women and youth; ILO promoted access to decent work and inclusive economic growth underpinned by decent work principles; and GiZ worked on building the resilience of refugees and the host community.

While this network sought to strengthen the coherence of municipal engagement across Turkey, many programmes focused on Istanbul or Gaziantep, these being the regions hosting the highest density of Syrians, and on the Gaziantep municipality, specifically setting an example of inclusive practices for other cities, nationwide and internationally.¹⁴

b) The protection benefits

¹⁴ Turkey's pioneering efforts in support of refugee inclusion were further expanded at the International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement held in Gaziantep in December 2019 and co-hosted by the municipal administration, which established an



Yildirim Municipality Social Cohesion Centre (YILSUM)

Targeted support for municipalities hosting Syrian refugees included establishing social protection desks in municipalities to enhance the protection space in urban areas and support protection service delivery, skills-building and peaceful co-existence. These desks help individuals from both communities to access information on rights and services and navigate new systems and administrative structures. Partners also assisted municipalities as they took localized action to facilitate the inclusion of refugees in public systems, contribute to social cohesion and promote institutionalization of the refugee response in municipalities. Social protection desks helped to enhance outreach capacity in the peripheral areas of Istanbul, leading to an increase in the identification of vulnerable individuals including refugees and their access to protection assistance. In addition, social protection desks enabled municipalities to monitor social and criminal incidents and engage with the refugee and host communities to strengthen community-level feedback and messaging.

In south-eastern Turkey, partners supported municipalities with analyses of strategic plans and institutional resources to identify tools, strategies and priority areas to help inform future resilience-building projects aimed at facilitating refugee access to services. Municipal programmes were supported to address the specific needs of vulnerable individuals and facilitate livelihoods and social cohesion. In addition, partners facilitated information-sharing

international network of mayors from cities hosting large refugee populations supported by the Global Task Force on Migration, a coalition of interested partners committed to implementing the recommendations of the Gaziantep Forum. Based on the 3RP model, the resulting Gaziantep Declaration outlined key principles of an integrated humanitarian and development response that helped, together with the Istanbul Declaration, to shift global thinking on refugee management by focusing on the vital role of municipal administrations as first responders to the needs of their citizens – host communities and refugees alike – and key decision-makers, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees.

between district municipalities, including through experience-sharing workshops at which local officials could discuss common challenges and share promising practices gathered through municipal work on refugee and community resilience.

In order to increase socioeconomic inclusion, the partners supported vocational training in the industry and service sectors, for refugees and members of the host community alike, to boost municipal services and offer life skills, language and livelihoods training to increase opportunities for Syrian refugees to find local employment and contribute to social cohesion.

The opportunity to work and earn a living is one of the most effective ways for displaced people to rebuild their lives in dignity and peace and develop resilience against protection risks. In 2013–2014, the Government of Turkey demonstrated strong national ownership of the refugee response by providing a solid and comprehensive rights-based legal framework for international and temporary protection, providing persons in need of international protection with a broad range of rights and entitlements, including the right for persons under temporary and international protection to access public services and the labour market.¹⁵

To improve refugee access to formal employment opportunities, partners focused on the institutional, legal and administrative environment, the capacities and skills of refugees and the economic absorptive capacity and potential of local labour markets. At the same time, partners supported various municipal administrations in establishing vocational training courses and career centres/employment offices to increase refugees' capacities to access job opportunities. In south-eastern Turkey, support for municipal administrations was channelled by partners to programmes and activities supporting basic needs, protection, education, health and social cohesion.

While opportunities to achieve any of the traditional solutions remain limited for a large number of refugees in Turkey, their socioeconomic inclusion is an important precursor to any solution that they might pursue in the future and helps them to live in dignity in the meantime. Municipal administrations continue to play a vital role in facilitating the inclusion of refugees through the implementation of inclusive policies and the participation of refugees in local committees.

Partners have supported municipal administrations in these endeavours, helping to share solutions between municipalities, increasing the effectiveness of the response as well as dialogue and networking between municipalities and the international community.

c) The catalytic role, protection and inputs of UNHCR and other support

UNHCR has played an important convening role in Turkey as co-lead of the 3RP and national lead of the Basic Needs sector, which coordinates municipal support with the aid of information management tools and products that can be used by a wide range of stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of municipal support.

¹⁵ Since the adoption of the Regulation on Work Permits for Foreigners under Temporary Protection in 2016, the total number of work permits granted to Syrians has risen to 286,483, although work permits are only valid for one year. In 2021, over 91,492 permits were issued to Syrians, a 50 per cent increase compared to 2019–2020, meaning that around 10 per cent of the estimated one million economically active refugees were formally employed. The overwhelming majority of refugees work informally as they need to supplement their living expenses, but this leaves them in a situation of high economic vulnerability.

Working closely with UNDP and other partners with development expertise and resources to provide additional support to municipal administrations has helped to ensure the complementarity of municipal engagement. In parallel, working with local partners and investing in the capacity of municipalities is helping to build the sustainability of the response, with each agency working to its respective strengths and mandate, bridging humanitarian and development perspectives.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

By taking a networked approach, partners helped increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the response in Turkey. Networking and solutions-sharing made it easier for more municipal administrations to take local, pragmatic action to increase protection, build resilience, and facilitate the inclusion of refugees, leading to a positive socioeconomic dynamic.

Istanbul and Gaziantep started to develop local networks of municipalities dealing with refugee issues at subnational level. Given the very progressive approach taken by a number of Turkish municipalities, it was considered useful that they could share their experiences and host an international event, [the Gaziantep Forum](#), which brought together cities managing large refugee and migrant populations. Through this forum and other similar actions such as the Istanbul coordination platform and the Global Taskforce on Migration, Turkish municipal administrations have contributed significantly to international learning on the role of cities in large refugee responses. This networked approach can be used in other complex situations to expand the range of positive solutions to other refugee crises.

Community concerns about the rising cost of living and increased competition for jobs can create opposition to refugees in municipal elections and result in negative campaigns about the protracted presence of refugees. Protection desks, embedded in municipal migration-directed departments, have contributed to a more structured, institutionalized approach that can help to identify anti-refugee sentiments and social tensions and inform government and partner responses in support of national development priorities.

When the SDG Assessment Tool was piloted in Turkey in 2021, the focus on the localization of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle and specifically the inclusion of refugees in municipal strategic planning led to a better analysis of the extent to which Turkish municipalities include refugees in their planning. A local review of the SDGs by all constituents found that refugee inclusion became more appealing and consensual for local stakeholders resulting in greater buy-in.

When refugees move out of a province in which they have registered, in search of better social and economic conditions and opportunities, it puts them at risk of losing their access to health, education, and formal work. 3RP partners in Turkey have complemented the work on municipal engagement with collaborative discussions on the transition from social assistance to livelihoods, resulting in a policy paper with concrete recommendations for decision-makers and donors addressing this shortcoming.

Turkey's rights-based legal framework helps to ensure that all refugees can live dignified lives and build resilience. To help refugee inclusion at the community level, it might be helpful to consider establishing a standard whereby municipalities hosting more than five

per cent of the total population as refugees would benefit from additional budgetary support to enable them to provide adequate public services for the refugee and host populations, thereby helping to mitigate social tensions at an early stage. Institutionalising this measure would decrease the burden on the host community, refugees and partners, because the trigger for supplementary municipal resources would be clearer, thereby promoting protection standards and access to basic services in communities that might not otherwise be as welcoming to refugees.

Investing in the institutional capacity of municipalities contributes significantly to refugee inclusion in municipal services. Consequently, support for migration units and similar bodies within municipal administrations helps to mainstream refugee protection in municipal services, increases access to funding opportunities for cities hosting large refugee populations and institutionalises the refugee response within municipalities.

Turkey. Refugee children draw what they imagine Syria to look like. ©UNHCR/Seyedsaram Hosseini



Safety net programme targeting refugees and host communities in Mauritania

a) The development collaboration

The World Bank has granted the Mauritanian government a loan to finance a social safety net programme (herein referred to as the Programme) under the IDA 18 window. This programme aims to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the national adaptive social safety net system and its coverage of poor and vulnerable households, with targeted cash transfers in both refugee and host communities. It covers a period of five years from 2020 to 2025. The Programme targets 69,000 vulnerable households living in poverty or extreme poverty (approximately 455,000 individuals) selected by the National Social Registry. These households, considered direct beneficiaries of the programme, will receive cash transfers.

The Programme specifically targets 7,409 refugee households that were categorized as “highly vulnerable” following a socioeconomic survey conducted by the National Social Registry in April 2021. Vulnerable refugees receive funds through the regular cash transfer mechanism (Tekavoul) and the climate-responsive cash transfer mechanism (El maouna).

The Programme is implemented by the General Delegation for National Solidarity and the Fight against Exclusion (Taazour). The National Social Protection Strategy Steering Committee (CP-SNPS) provides overall strategic direction. It is co-chaired by the Secretaries General of the Ministry of Social Action and Family (MASEF) and of the Ministry of Economy and Industry (MEI). The CP-SNPS is multisectoral and includes representatives of other ministries involved in the social protection sector as well as the Food Security Commission (CSA), the General Delegation of Taazour, representatives of civil society and donors.

b) The protection benefits

Although there are other contributing factors, the funds distributed to the most vulnerable households through El Maouna and Tekavoul greatly contribute to enjoyment of their rights, including the right to adequate food, to safe, stable and affordable housing and to better living conditions. Families have been reporting using the cash assistance from the social safety net programme to increase their food rations, to buy clothes and construction materials and to pay for labour to rehabilitate their shelters. It was also used to support small businesses (purchase of small ruminants, retail of sweets and condiments, towed trolley repairs, etc.).

Analysis of the spending categories shows that families seek to cover all their needs and do not neglect any aspect of their lives. They prioritize social as well as economic fulfilment. Through the social safety net programme, refugees are given the opportunity to gain control over meeting their needs and taking their own decisions. This also reinforces the feeling of empowerment, usefulness, physical and material security and self-esteem.

The categorization of households resulting from the socioeconomic survey conducted by the Social Registry among refugee households in the Mbéra camp has contributed to the popularization and affirmation of an equity-based approach as advocated by UNHCR. It has highlighted the notion of targeted care according to needs rather than all-out assistance, among the local population, refugees and state actors alike. The perception of assistance has changed; it is no longer linked to refugee status but to needs, thus reinforcing the notion of specific needs.

The cash assistance injected into the social safety net has contributed to the development of the economic life of the whole area by revitalising small businesses, the life of the markets and, in turn, enlarging the tax base resulting from the taxes levied by the communes.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

UNHCR has made significant contributions to deployment of the social safety net programme. This includes, but is not limited to, technical support for data collection at the Social Registry, mainly for the development of specific documents (terms of reference, questionnaires, manuals, etc.), training interviewers and team leaders, developing key messages for the sensitization of refugees, their mobilization and participation in socioeconomic surveys and identifying refugee households during interviews.

The hub jointly deployed by UNHCR and WFP plays an important role in the roll-out of the social safety net programme. It provides technical support for coordination with different partners, data quality control, development of data collection documents, data cleaning and analysis, with a view to updating the targeting methodology.

Malian refugees and host community members benefiting from a training on income-generating activities in the National Employment Agency's Office (Techghil) in Bassikounou. ©UNHCR/Omar Doukali



When the social safety net programme was deployed in Mbéra refugee camp through Tekavoul, it did not take into account child-headed households. UNHCR advocated at central and local levels (Nouakchott and Bassikounou respectively) for the age of enrolment in the Tekavoul programme to be lowered to 14. This decision made it possible to take vulnerable children into account.

With the inclusion of 7,400 very vulnerable refugee households, UNHCR contributed to the expansion of the Social Registry and the Social Nets Programme, which goes well beyond the Mauritanian population and includes the refugee component.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

Even if the cash assistance of the El Maouna and Tekavoul programmes has raised vulnerable refugees to the level of active participants in local economic life, it has not paved the way towards their integration. Whereas economic considerations can contribute to supporting the local integration option, this depends above all on the political will of the Mauritanian authorities, which has yet to be manifested.

In a concerted approach, the various stakeholders, namely the Mauritanian state, WFP and UNHCR, have agreed to conduct a socioeconomic survey of new arrivals (new asylum-seekers arriving after the socioeconomic survey of April 2021). This decision will categorize approximately 6,400 newly arrived households or those absent during the first assessment exercise. Households categorized as highly vulnerable as a result of this assessment will be included in the social protection programme. This approach has a dual benefit in that it will further promote the use of the Social Registry and also increase the number of very poor/vulnerable people served. Although WFP assistance complements that provided through the social safety net programme, it is important to harmonize approaches to make this programme more effective. While WFP assistance is indexed to the number of individuals per family, the cash amount in the social safety net programme is fixed regardless of the size of the household. The fixed cash amount approach disadvantages large households, who receive the same amount as small households, and appears to undermine the notion of equity that underpins household categorization.

In a context where socioeconomic characteristics and profiles are highly dynamic, social safety net programmes will be more effective if they adapt and update their data within a reasonably short period. As specific needs change rapidly, a well-off family may very quickly become very vulnerable and require special attention in a shorter time. Two or three years is quite a long time to wait for an update when the context changes as rapidly as it does in Mauritania.

The cash assistance amount needs to be increased if the social safety net programme is to be made more effective and efficient. Although very commendable in its objective of reducing poverty and extreme poverty, the programme provides cash amounts that are too small to effectively cover the needs of these families. Providing \$14 to a family of three on a monthly basis is too little, especially given the vulnerability of the targeted households.

The Social Housing Project in Niger

a) The development collaboration

Since 2012, Niger has been hosting Malian refugees who fled the conflict in the northern part of Mali, among other forcibly displaced persons. As of July 2022, there were 63,155 registered Malian refugees in Niger.

The Government of Niger and UNHCR have developed a joint approach to further integrating Malian refugees into the country's structures and systems and to find alternatives to camps in refugee-hosting regions. With the support of development actors (GiZ and WB), Malian refugees and host communities have been benefiting from greater access to land, housing and livelihood opportunities, while the national health, education and water infrastructure is being reinforced. The "common areas", such as village stores and cattle feeding areas, as well as the various mixed community committees, contribute to strengthening the peaceful co-existence between the different population groups.

Funded by BMZ through GiZ and implemented by UNHCR in line with the medium- and long-term development plan of the Government of Niger for the Tillabery region (in the south-west of the country), the social housing project (herein referred to as the Project) has been supporting the municipal authorities in Abala, Ouallam and Ayourou in their efforts to ensure the socioeconomic integration of refugees into local development planning processes. The Project implementation period has been running since 2018 and will be extended until the end of 2023.

By the end of 2022, more than 2,200 social plots will have been allocated to refugees, IDPs and vulnerable host community households in the Tillabery Region. Beneficiaries of the plots can build their houses on them, while the most vulnerable households are also allocated social houses (1,990 have already been built). The objective of the Project is to ensure that each forcibly displaced household owns a plot of land by the end of 2023.

These humanitarian housing estates (*Lotissements à but humanitaire*) respect the norms and laws that regulate urban planning in Niger, including in terms of space reserved for housing, roads and areas dedicated to the construction of public infrastructure or green space. The allotments, which are developed by the municipal administrations with technical and financial support from UNHCR through GiZ funding, are approved by the Ministry of Lands, Urban Planning and Housing in Niger like any other allotment project. The particularity of the approach lies in the search for diversity in these new housing areas, whether in terms of the origin or the socioeconomic level of the population. Beneficiaries are divided between refugees (90 per cent) and the host community (10 per cent) on average.

b) The protection benefits

The project has improved the capacities of the Abala, Ouallam and Ayourou municipalities to provide access to basic services to refugees and IDPs while also benefiting the host community. The involvement of the municipal authorities and local communities in allocating land and setting up services contributes to improving the level of social cohesion in the targeted areas. Each beneficiary household (refugee, host community or internally displaced person) has been allocated a plot of 200 m² on developed land, where they all live together. In addition to ensuring the legal settlement of refugees on social plots, the intervention has enabled the targeted municipalities to address pre-existing urban planning needs. As is the case in most of the Sahel countries, land is a sensitive issue in Niger, and a driver of forced displacement. The project demonstrates, in its own way, in the municipalities concerned, that innovative solutions can contribute to solving this critical issue.

The Project has facilitated access to land and housing for the most vulnerable households among the Malian refugees and host communities in the Tillabery region. An innovative construction technique has been adopted that employs interlocking stabilized bricks (ISSB). This ensures thermal comfort and adequate ventilation, which has helped to improve the living conditions of vulnerable populations. Residents are much better protected from climatic disasters, mainly very high temperatures and floods, which reduces the morbidity rate of the most vulnerable. Since they hold title deeds, they are also no longer at risk of eviction and having to move again.

Three “one-stop shops” were constructed in targeted municipalities, providing a multi-purpose facility where refugees and IDPs have access to protection and assistance services provided by the Government of Niger. All protection actors, including UNHCR and NGO partners, work alongside government staff in these one-stop shops, which have greatly facilitated access to basic services for the most vulnerable.

The Project has also allowed for the provision of vocational training on brick production and social housing construction for young men and women from the refugee, IDP and host communities. More than 5,000 young people (30 per cent female) attended the training and were employed in brick production and housing construction: inclusive and decent job opportunities for socially vulnerable groups in targeted rural areas. Access to work contributed to decreasing the protection risks faced by vulnerable IDPs and refugee youth otherwise exposed to enrolment with armed groups. Work has undeniably reduced the idleness of young people in particular, who are prey to criminal activities. This also has a positive impact in reducing the risks of sexual violence and harassment to which women are exposed when travelling long distances in search of livelihood activities and incomes.

Beyond the land component, the *Lotissement a but humanitaire* approach has gradually brought together additional actors such as development partners (WB and probably AFD in the near future) and NGOs. A proper legal management of the land has allowed actors to invest more easily and with confidence in basic public services such as health care and access to water, overcoming their initial concerns regarding the viability of a housing, land and property initiative at municipal level.

The provision of plots of land has given refugees and IDPs access to use the land and the right to own it after 7 years of occupation in Oualla and 10 years in Abala. In summary, this initiative enables refugees to enjoy more legal rights specifically house, land and property rights and an improved level of physical protection and economic independence: beneficiaries live in a safe home, free from the fear of forced eviction, and are able to access livelihood opportunities.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

UNHCR, in tandem with the authorities, has been advocating to development actors on the merits and significant multisectoral benefits of investing in a land and property project. UNHCR acted as a bridge between the local authorities and the donors, facilitating coordination and trust between all actors. UNHCR technical and legal support was crucial in the project development phase.

The houses were assigned by a dedicated committee supported by UNHCR, through a community-based approach and based on specific needs, including IDPs and host communities. UNHCR and its partners supported sensitization activities and initiatives to enhance peaceful coexistence among the communities. UNHCR also facilitated the establishment of a coordination committee in each municipality, composed of all stakeholders as well as a committee at regional level.

The one-stop shops were created with the financial support of UNHCR and designed to facilitate the provision of comprehensive protection and assistance services. UNHCR staff operate from the one-stop shops and deliver a whole range of protection and counselling services in collaboration with Government officials and protection partners.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

The major problem encountered in implementing the Project remains the fragility of the security situation in the region. An attack by armed groups in Ayorou in 2020 put a stop to the plan of constructing 1,450 social houses. The construction equipment was transferred to Ouallam. However, the recent arrival of Operation Barkhane forces in the city of Ayorou in July 2022 could possibly restore security on a sustainable basis and permit resumption of the construction project, should financing still be available.

The continuous influx of newcomers requires adaptation and flexibility on the part of municipal administrations to meet the needs of this category of people without neglecting the allocation of social plots to vulnerable displaced persons who have been in the country for much longer. Locally appropriate technical solutions can provide protection benefits when the use of local raw materials is proven to bear economic advantages, i.e. when maintenance costs do not require the mobilization of resources potentially allocated to protection-related specific needs. It is necessary to explore partnership and joint programming options with partners and development actors at the outset of development projects in order to mobilize resources to cover infrastructure needs and basic services in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), energy, environment, health and education.

Development actors should help to better assess the capacity-building and support needs of municipal administrations and other decentralized authorities in charge of land planning in areas hosting forcibly displaced persons.

GBV prevention needs to be mainstreamed in all land and housing management activities. Innovative settlement options for displaced persons can be put in place in complex humanitarian and security contexts to respond appropriately to specific situations while offering significant protection benefits. Localized changes in the security situation, whether negative or positive, can also logically modify authorities' operational approaches and policies for land management and associated protection dividends.

In a fluctuating security situation and depending on forced displacement trends, interventions on land and housing can be perceived as major advances in the stabilization of fluctuating situations or intermediate steps towards local legal integration if they support local development, coexistence and resilience. They can also be understood as obstacles to return. As their entry point is usually access to or availability of land, the project stakeholders naturally become bearers of potentially sensitive stakes. It is therefore essential to maintain ongoing and inclusive dialogue between all actors to discuss existing challenges and potential risks in order to find appropriate solutions.

"With the work in the brick factory I manage to pay for food for my children, clothes and even small ruminants".
- Zeinabou recounts.

Zeinabou Salla, Malian refugee at the Abala site. ©UNHCR/Boubacar Younoussa Siddo



The Refugee Education Integration Policy in Kurdistan Region of Iraq

a) The development collaboration

Iraq generously hosts over 300,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly Syrians, more than 245,000 of whom reside in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) with limited prospects of immediate return. Over 60 per cent of these refugees reside in urban areas while the rest reside in nine refugee camps and one transit centre.¹⁶ Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) set up and managed a parallel refugee education system, with a Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) curriculum taught in Arabic by Syrian refugee teachers.

The Refugee Education Integration Policy (REIP) is the result of years of discussion and collaborative workshops led by the Ministry of Education, jointly supported by UNHCR, UNICEF and education partners to address the limitations of the parallel refugee education system, which lacked professional teaching standards and did not equip students with the Kurdish language skills required to access higher education. REIP aims to improve access and retention for more than 71,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children in a quality, inclusive KRI public education system. The transition to an integrated approach to education for all children in KRI is taking place within the context of an overall shift from humanitarian to development responses within Iraq. The KRI Ministry of Education decided to implement REIP gradually with the first phase (grades one to four) for the 2022–2023 academic year and the second phase (grades five to nine) for the 2023–2024 academic year. There is an expectation on the part of all stakeholders that REIP will be successfully rolled-out and implemented for a period of three years, subject to the availability of financial resources.

b) The protection benefits

Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. As a means of empowerment, education is the primary vehicle by which refugees, whether adults or children, can lift themselves out of poverty and have the means to participate fully in the community of the country of asylum.¹⁷

Through this new policy, the Kurdistan Regional Government seeks to demonstrate its political will to advance refugee protection and the right of all children to access quality, inclusive education in the national education system, and to contribute to the achievement of SDG4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all). REIP highlights the commitment of the KRG authorities to recognize refugee rights to education as one of the most important ways to build self-reliance and resilience for refugee and host community children

¹⁶ UNHCR Fact sheet, September 2022, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/3461>

¹⁷ (CESCR general comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Article 13) (Twenty-first session of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999). Available from www.refworld.org/docid/4538838c22.html.

and youth, to foster social cohesion between refugees and host communities and to mitigate child protection risks. The REIP roll-out includes: 1) equal and sustainable access to formal and non-formal education for refugee children, adolescents and young people through the provision of learning and teaching materials; 2) increased education system capacity through teachers training, parental engagement and the provision of school materials; 3) further investment in local refugee-hosting communities to build and renovate schools.

REIP will provide solutions to mitigate and resolve some of the ongoing child protection concerns in KRI that particularly affect children outside the formal school system, such as child labour and child marriage. Activities like Kurdish language courses for teachers will enable children and parents to enhance refugee inclusion in KRI, offer more opportunities for access to higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and support social cohesion within the host community.

With the introduction of REIP in September 2022, the KRI Ministry of Education showed its leadership and support by recognizing the qualifications of around 400 refugee teachers who met the MoE standard for teaching and providing them with “lecturer contracts”, thereby guaranteeing them the same salary as national teachers (with the equivalent contract) and ensuring that they were included in the KRG employment and payroll system, affording them rights and access to the work market.

REIP is considered a sustainable education solution that will improve the capacities of KRG by minimizing the need for temporary measures (including temporary school infrastructure and incentive payments for refugee teachers) and enabling KRG, as a duty bearer for quality and inclusive education for all children, to invest in and strengthen its own systems. UNHCR supports the implementation of REIP as a shared responsibility with UNICEF, Save the Children International and all of the education partners, who have committed to support the MoE for the 2022/2023 academic year to ensure the success of the REIP roll-out and three-year implementation plan.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

Development of REIP was led by MoE and supported by UNHCR, also in active consultation with UNICEF, education partners, refugees and host communities. Two drafting workshops supported by UNHCR in June 2021 and May 2022 brought together regional and local MoE representatives from Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah, United Nations agencies and education partners. UNHCR and UNICEF support MoE to design the REIP implementation plan. Guided by the [Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion](#) and the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR has contributed to development of the integration policy. Various activities were defined and led by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) in consultation with local education authorities and school principals. UNHCR has provided funding to support activities that include: 1) the construction and rehabilitation of safe learning spaces and the provision of school equipment and transportation to ensure access to education for the greatest number of students; 2) support for formal and informal education, back to learning and extra-curricular activities to attract out-of-school children; 3) capacity-building for teachers, social workers and school management is foreseen in a number of host community schools due to the increase in new enrolments of refugee children; 4)



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language courses (for teachers, children and parents), mass communication, communication with communities (CwC) and education-community-based social cohesion, to boost the awareness campaigns and enhance social acceptance.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

Over 71,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children are living in KRI; among them, only around 40,000 were enrolled in primary and secondary school in 2021–2022. UNHCR has been seeking innovative approaches to ensure the inclusion of refugee children within the Kurdish public education system, in line with the Refugee Education Integration Policy, which will contribute to ensuring access to quality inclusive education and learning opportunities for all primary school children from years 1 to 4, across KRI.

The learning support programmes for the approximately 31,000 out-of-school refugee children (including Kurdish language courses, catch-up and remedial classes and extra-curricular activities), as well as capacity-building for refugee teachers and additional school materials for schools in urban areas – if not obtained – will affect refugee children’s academic development and their inclusion in the Kurdish education public system in the future.

In view of the positive progress regarding the rights of refugee teachers, recognized as eligible on the basis of their qualifications, and their access to the work market, UNHCR continues to advocate for other refugee teachers not meeting KRI teaching standards to be able to access professional development courses and livelihood support.

Fundraising will remain a shared responsibility to ensure advancement of the integration of school-aged refugee children in KRI.

Strengthening education and health services for refugees and host communities in Pakistan

a) The development collaboration

For more than four decades, Pakistan has been hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the world. The majority of the 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees live in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), with nearly 70 per cent residing in urban and semi-urban areas, accessing public education and health services on par with their Pakistani hosts.

In November 2020, the Government of Pakistan launched the [Strengthening Education and Health Services for Refugees and Host Communities](#) (EHS) project. The implementation period runs from 2020 to 2025. The Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) is the lead executive agency of the project, while GIZ is the main implementing agency working in close collaboration with UNHCR. The project is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with the objective to support the Government of Pakistan to improve access to public education and health services for vulnerable Afghan refugees and host communities in selected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project focuses on improving the capacity of state actors to provide services and engage in participatory planning processes and to strengthen the cooperation between the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) and subnational government structures. Interventions include support to participatory planning processes for inclusive district education and health sector plans, skills improvement of education and health officials, inclusive Parent-Teacher-Councils and Primary Health Care Management Committees, awareness raising campaigns to reduce school drop-out rates and strengthen mother-child health and hygiene education, and capacity development of CAR including through the establishment of urban refugee management units.

The project is complementary to other development projects, notably a World Bank IDA-18 RSW project focusing on strengthening health and education services in KP, mutually reinforcing Government's capacity and systems to better absorb refugees and ensure equal access to quality services for both refugees and host communities

b) The protection benefits

The project has strengthened the protection environment by increasing the capacity of state institutions to deliver education and health services to refugees and host communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The province, which hosts 52 per cent of the 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees, is among the provinces with the lowest living standards and the highest multidimensional poverty. The presence of over 670,000 refugees in the province, with over 5 per cent residing in urban or semi-urban areas, has stretched already limited resources and placed increased stress on public services.

Building on Pakistan’s Constitution (Article 25-A), which grants access to national schools for all children including refugees, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s inclusive 2020-25 provincial education sector plan, the project has further increased sub-national participatory and inclusive planning processes, with District Education Plans and School Improvement Plans being developed in all three districts targeted by the project. By strengthening public services and including refugees and host communities in participatory planning processes at district as well as school/basic health facility level in districts hosting the highest proportion of refugees, the project has not only improved equitable access and quality of services for refugees and host communities, but also contributed to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between them.

In UNHCR’s 2020 Participatory Assessment, 73 per cent of all responses from men and women highlighted that access to quality education was the most prevalent issue facing refugee women and girls. Lack of identity documentation, demands to earn money and support their families, and chronic poverty are some of the major barriers keeping Afghan children and youth out of school. Poor school infrastructure, low quality teaching, and the indirect costs of education contribute to children dropping out as early as grade 4, Afghan refugee girls face additional challenges in accessing in school linked to cultural constraints on female mobility, insecurity, and preference for boys’ education over girls’ education. The project has helped increase the level of school attendance. Support to the Elementary Education Department’s enrolment campaign led to the enrolment of over 3,700 school children including 241 Afghan refugee children. Afghan refugee parents are now part of Parent-Teacher-Councils (PTCs) in 60 schools.

Primary Healthcare Management Committees were capacitated on their roles and responsibilities in 60 healthcare facilities, each of them having representation from the Afghan refugee community. Two Urban Refugee Support Units have been established, providing information and advice to over 300,000 urban Afghan refugees to enable them to overcome any barriers they might face in accessing protection, education, and health services. These efforts were complemented by over 1000 sessions on social cohesion and awareness on education and health services, conducted by 300 community activists from the Afghan refugee and host communities (50 per cent females) which were trained as part of the project, contributing significantly to overcoming barriers for women and girls to access education and health services.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

GIZ and UNHCR have a long-standing and strong partnership in Pakistan, building on a mutual understanding that forced displacement is not only a humanitarian concern but also a longer-term development issue. The EHS project has benefitted from this close collaboration throughout the project cycle, including the design phase, where UNHCR provided protection advice alongside data and information on the refugee population. During the project implementation, efforts are made to ensure coordination with UNHCR in all intervention areas through working groups particularly at provincial level. In the particular area of institutional support to the Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, activities are carried out jointly or in close coordination with UNHCR to ensure the complementarity of the interventions. For instance, the Urban Refugee Support Units’ desk officers are supported by both UNHCR and the EHS project, and their referral services use UNHCR protection mechanisms as well as established livelihood and repatriation measures.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

The establishment of the Urban Refugee Support Units is a pilot approach and could be upscaled to the entire province of KP as well as other refugee hosting provinces. Closer linkages to existing services and protection-relevant organizations and institutions still need to be established in a systematic manner.

While Pakistan has provided remarkable levels of support to refugees throughout the last decades, the lack of a national urban refugee framework continues to present a challenge. As UNHCR's technical level support is well received and appreciated, UNHCR supports the development of such a framework on urban refugees. It would, among other objectives ensure the sustainability and functioning of the Urban Refugee Support Units, aligning them with subnational government structures.

Efforts to advocate for the inclusion of disaggregated refugee data in national statistics and information management systems will need to continue, alongside dedicated efforts to systematically collect socio-economic data of refugees and host communities to strengthen evidence-based planning and policy. The planned UNHCR Forced Displacement Survey will be critical in this regard. It will build on the comprehensive verification exercise completed in December and is expected to provide much needed data on the socio-economic status/living standards of refugees.



Enhancing private sector engagement and access to markets in areas hosting refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities in Mozambique

a) The development collaboration

As of October 2022, Mozambique is hosting more than 29,660 refugees and asylum-seekers and 1,075,000 IDPs (due to violence and the climate crisis). Mozambique is one of the world's most adversely affected countries in terms of climatic hazards such as cyclones, tropical storms, floods and drought. According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview of 2022, an estimated 1.5 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection in Mozambique. Ongoing armed conflict resulting in mass displacement and civilian casualties, paired with the impact of cyclical extreme weather events, compound the underlying vulnerabilities of forcibly displaced people and host communities to economic shocks, fragility and poverty.

To address these challenges, a major component of the development plans of the Government of Mozambique entails promoting and adopting more diversified and competitive economies with the potential to raise income and create more employment opportunities, particularly for youth. Against this backdrop, the Government of Mozambique, jointly with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and UNHCR, has established a project to Enhance Private sector Engagement and Access to Markets in fragile contexts hosting Forcibly Displaced Persons. The three-year project was launched in August 2022 and is funded by AfDB and implemented by UNHCR jointly with local partners.¹⁸

As per the 2021 UNHCR-WFP Joint Assessment Mission (JAM), 82 per cent of the population of the Maratane Refugee Settlement is economically vulnerable. By addressing key livelihoods challenges and gaps, the project will ensure increased diversification of household income and consequently resilience to climatic and economic shocks. It is designed, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, to take a government-led whole-of-society approach that bridges the humanitarian-development nexus based on comparative advantages. The project aims to support 600 households promoting long-term and sustainable income-earning opportunities for refugees, IDPs and vulnerable members of host communities in northern Mozambique to advance self-reliance and reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance. It consists of three main areas of intervention: 1) provision of skills training in sustainable agricultural, fishery and non-industrial activities; 2) business development, entrepreneurship and financial literacy; 3) supporting access to land and financial inclusion for forcibly displaced people, in order to support their self-reliance. Specific climate-related considerations applicable to contexts involving exposure to extreme weather events are mainstreamed throughout the project.

¹⁸ Livaningo, a local Non-Governmental Organization and the Blue Economy Development Fund (ProAzul), a governmental institution.

b) The protection benefits

The short project implementation period makes it somewhat premature to highlight tangible protection dividends. While some achievements can be cited, this analysis needs to be understood in a short-term perspective.

The protection mandate of UNHCR involves support to ensure that the basic human rights of refugees and IDPs are respected, adhered to and made accessible. To this end, the project addresses the economic, social and cultural rights of refugees and IDPs, as well as host communities' needs for safe working environments, including avoiding sexual harassment in the workplace, and the needs of women beneficiaries for fair employment conditions, such as having childcare facilities. Among the beneficiaries supported through this project with entrepreneurship, business development skills and vocational training, 50 per cent will be women.

Dependency on humanitarian aid and limited access to self-reliance can result in protection risks such as resorting to informal means of income generation to supplement aid (e.g., domestic work without formal contract can expose women and girls to GBV), and lead to food and income insecurity. Private sector engagement aims to contribute to the protection and dignity of forcibly displaced communities and their hosts through creating financial capacity at household level to meet contingencies and avoid negative coping mechanisms, enhancing economic integration, supporting sustainable solutions, and contributing to the development of local economies.

During the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, the Government of Mozambique pledged to continue working on local integration of refugees by reinforcing synergies between refugees and host communities and improving access to education, health and basic services for refugees and host communities by 2023. In line with this pledge, the Project will support the National Refugee Support Institute (INAR) in land allocation of 2,000 hectares for agriculture production for refugees, asylum seekers and host communities. The goal is to increase the plot size per for each household as per the FAO recommended 0.25 hectares needed to ensure a household's self-reliance. These efforts are being combined with support to the agricultural and fishery production sectors and linking forcibly displaced and host communities to markets. Beneficiaries will be able to sell excess of their production at local markets. It is expected that this will contribute to decreasing aid-dependency and mal-nutrition and reducing poverty at the household level. It is also expected that the possibility for refugees and IDPs to sell their products at markets will change the negative perceptions from being aid-dependent to active contributors to society.

At the 2021 UNHCR EXCOM, the Government of Mozambique requested further UNHCR support for an out-of-camp local integration approach. Promoting private sector engagement in refugee-hosting areas is a step towards these efforts and is expected to enhance economic integration and bring dignity to people's lives while contributing positively to the local economy. This reduces vulnerability and, overall, contributes to improving protection and finding durable solutions for local integration.

The project will generate jobs and opportunities for incomes through self-employment in various sectors. Recognizing the importance of financial access in driving entrepreneurship and household economies, the project aims to promote the financial inclusion of displaced persons and host communities alike. In partnership with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the project is launching a study to build the business case for providing financial

services to the target population (financial products such as micro-loans, savings and insurance). This will inform the development of a financial inclusion road map that will be implemented by multiple stakeholders, including financial service providers and development actors.

The project improves social cohesion and strengthens relations among refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and host communities jointly benefiting from project activities. Furthermore, dedicated social cohesion activities will be undertaken to increasing interaction, sharing experiences, improving communication, forming more trusting relations among community members and creating a stronger sense of belonging. Activities include interactive debates and football tournaments reaching over 900 participants from the displaced populations as well as the host communities.

c) The catalytic role, protection inputs and other support provided by UNHCR

UNHCR, in consultation with the Government and partners, develops selection criteria to identify the target group, taking into consideration vulnerability and capacity. As such, the project will make sure to “leave no one behind” and include people with special needs (e.g. people living with disabilities and households with high aid-dependency ratios). The targeting criteria will be disseminated to other stakeholders and support the inclusion of forcibly displaced people, people with specific needs and potential beneficiaries in local partner and government programmes more widely. It is expected that this will help to mainstream protection and vulnerability-targeting considerations in the localization and sustainability efforts of the wider response in the longer term.

The project design has been informed by the needs and priorities of forcibly displaced and host communities of different age, gender and diversity profiles, which were integrated into the consultation processes from the outset of planning. Implementation of the project will further ensure that households, community leaders, cooperatives and associations involved in the project are meaningfully involved at all stages of the project cycle. In addition, awareness-raising sessions will be conducted to prevent protection risks and inform beneficiaries about protection services available in their regions.

d) Main protection lessons learned and the way forward

The project has been designed in such a way as to provide practical contributions in response to the Government of Mozambique’s request for an out-of-camp approach and to support the Government of Mozambique in realizing its local integration pledges and commitments. Working jointly with the Government of Mozambique in setting up the project has been key in ensuring that it supports the Government’s commitments and development objectives.

The project is in line with UNHCR’s accountability framework to affected populations and recognizes the importance of meaningful participation of the target groups and a wide range of actors from the outset of the project design and throughout the project management cycle, to ensure that interventions are informed by the priorities, needs and capacities of the target communities and those whose lives are impacted by project decisions.

The approach of working closely with local government and local partners to mainstream protection and ensure localization and sustainability of the project’s protection dividends has been applied



Charlotte Fatuma at her shop in the Maratane refugee settlement, Nampula Province, Mozambique. ©UNHCR/Hélène Caux

throughout. Laws, policies, data collection and programmes need to be more inclusive, to ensure that refugees and IDPs are fully incorporated into national statistics, systems and services, and to promote favourable rules and regulations that will protect refugees in the labour market.

During project design and the initial implementation stages, it became evident that the project and wider response would tremendously benefit from the presence of additional development interventions to respond to the vast needs of people forced to flee and vulnerable host communities in northern Mozambique, including in areas of improving infrastructure, housing and providing access to basic services. Development and humanitarian interventions, if designed in a well-coordinated way, are mutually reinforcing and complementary and create an enabling environment that supports the sustainability of UNHCR and other humanitarian interventions and contributes to increasing beneficiaries' self-reliance.

As an important example of project complementarities, the project will be complemented and enforced through the AfDB-funded Mozambique Energy for All (MEFA) project, which aims to improve energy provision and now also includes refugees, IDPs and host communities around the Maratane refugee settlement. Electrification contributes to a number of protection outcomes: reducing theft and vandalism; increasing night-time activity; ensuring safe study environments and prolonging daily economic activities and services. Electrification will also offer a safer environment more favourable to women and girls, helping to prevent and reduce GBV and enabling health-care services to operate at night. At the same time, the electrification project will help to strengthen the enabling environment for businesses and private sectors to engage with the project's market linkage interventions.

The linkage between forced displacement and the impacts of the climate crisis dimension needs to be fully taken into account in all interventions in northern Mozambique. The project has been adjusted to enable access to diversified livelihoods and ensure stronger resilience to future extreme weather events. It will identify partnership opportunities that leverage good climate risk management and adaptation strategies.

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