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Research Report

Practitioner Note 4: Inclusive social protection for forcibly displaced populations

Research Report, No. 73

Provided in Cooperation with:

International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Suggested Citation: Sato, Lucas (2022) : Practitioner Note 4: Inclusive social protection for forcibly displaced populations, Research Report, No. 73, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), Brasilia

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/265322>

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Practitioner Note 4: Inclusive social protection for forcibly displaced populations

Lucas Sato, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Research Report No. 73

Practitioner Note 4: Inclusive social protection for forcibly displaced populations

By Lucas Sato

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United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund

This publication is one of the outputs of the United Nations Agency to Agency agreement between the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO)

The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) is a partnership between the United Nations and the Government of Brazil to promote South–South learning on social policies. The IPC-IG is linked to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Brazil, the Ministry of Economy (ME) and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea) of the Government of Brazil.

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Suggested citation: Sato, Lucas. 2022. "Practitioner Note 4: Inclusive social protection for forcibly displaced populations". *Research Report*, No. 73. Brasília and Amman: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth and United Nations Children's Fund Middle East and North Africa Regional Office.

ISSN: 2526-0499



**PRACTITIONER NOTE 4:
INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR
FORCIBLY DISPLACED POPULATIONS**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Practitioner Note is the fourth in a series commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO) and developed by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG). It was prepared by Lucas Freschi Sato from the IPC-IG with guidance from Charlotte Bilo, Maya Hammad and Fábio Veras Soares (all IPC-IG), as well as Zehra Rizvi and Samman Thapa (both UNICEF MENARO).

The author thanks Daniela Knoppik, Remy Pigois, Rosal Maya Fischer (all UNICEF), Stijn Gabriel (International Organization for Migration) and Raquel Tebaldi for their valuable inputs and reviews.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

FDP	Forcibly displaced population
ID	Identification document
IDP	Internally displaced person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East
WFP	World Food Programme

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INTRODUCTION

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been facing, and will probably continue to face, the reverberating aftershocks of multiple humanitarian crises, unstable social protection financing, rising prices of basic commodities, high unemployment rates, increased civil unrest, and threats of climate change and water scarcity. The global COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the situation and added to the negative socio-economic conditions in the region. Already vulnerable groups such as children, women, persons with disabilities, informal workers, refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons and irregular migrants are disproportionately affected.

Against this background, strengthening social protection systems generally and making them more **shock-responsive**, and more inclusive of vulnerable and marginalised groups, is vital to respond effectively to the volatile environment of the MENA region. A **shock-responsive social protection system** is one that can respond flexibly in the event of covariate shocks, such as natural hazards, economic crisis and conflict, affecting large numbers of people or communities simultaneously (UNICEF 2019, 3; OPM 2015). This Practitioner Note focuses in particular on **inclusive shock-responsive social protection**, which, in addition to responding flexibly to support large numbers of people, also recognises that different groups of vulnerable people are impacted differently by shocks, and thus takes into account their heterogeneous needs in the design and implementation of the response.

Consequently, this Practitioner Note is part of a **four-part series** providing MENA governments and practitioners in the fields of both social protection and disaster risk management with general guidelines for future shock response informed by lessons learned from the COVID pandemic. The series includes recommendations on the **design and implementation of inclusive: (i) targeting, identification and registration mechanisms; (ii) transfer values and payment modalities; and (iii) communication, case management and grievance redress mechanisms**. Given the salience of the issue of forcibly displaced populations (FDPs) in MENA, this fourth note addresses the **inclusion of FDPs**. Box 1 defines the main migration-related concepts used in this note.

Box 1 Definition of key concepts

Forced displacement or forced migration

Although it is not an internationally recognised legal concept, this term is used to describe displacement movements characterised by force, coercion or compulsion. It is used to describe the movements of refugees, IDPs and, in some cases, victims of trafficking (IOM 2019).

Forcibly displaced person/population (FDP)

A person or group of persons forced to flee their home or place of habitual residence, either across an international border or within a State, as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters (IOM 2019).

Asylum-seeker

An individual who is seeking international protection/refugee status. An asylum-seeker is someone who claims to be a refugee, but the host country has not decided yet if it will provide international protection to the individual who applied for the process (IOM 2019).



Refugee

A legal concept defined by the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954) that defines that a refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of their former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it (IOM 2019).

Internally displaced person (IDP)

A person or group of persons who has been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their home or place of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who has not crossed an internationally recognised state border (IOM 2019).

Migrant worker

A legal concept defined by the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, referring to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national. **Documented migrant workers** are those officially authorised to enter, stay and engage in a remunerated activity in the host country, while **undocumented migrant workers** are those who do not have this authorisation (IOM 2019).

Return

The act of going back to the place of departure. For IDPs, it can be inside the same country. For international migrants, refugees or asylum-seekers, it refers to the country of origin. The return movement can be voluntary or not. When the return movement is involuntary, it is called deportation or expulsion (IOM 2019).

Children on the move

Although it is not a legal concept, this is an umbrella term used by UNICEF to describe children who are migrating within their own country or across borders; children migrating on their own or with their caregivers; children forcibly displaced within their own country or across borders; and children moving in a documented or undocumented manner, including those whose movement involves smuggling or trafficking networks.

Children ‘left behind’

This often refers to “children raised in their home countries or in their countries of habitual residence, who have been left behind by adult migrants responsible for them” (UNICEF n.d., 2). The term must be used with care to avoid stigmatising children, demonising parents who migrate to provide for their children, or creating the impression that these children necessarily experience negative impacts. For most parents, the decision to migrate to provide for their families is made in the face of limited choices and a lack of viable livelihood options (UNICEF n.d.).

Trafficking in persons

A legal concept recognised in international law—see the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (adopted 15 November 2000, entered into force 25 December 2003)—trafficking in persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (IOM 2019).

Migrant smuggling

The procurement to obtain a material or financial benefit from the irregular entry of a person into a State of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (IOM 2019). Unlike with trafficking, elements of exploitation and coercion do not necessarily exist in this case.

FDPs have been particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 crisis and its socio-economic effects. In many MENA countries,¹ they do not have access to health services, formal work opportunities, adequate living conditions or sanitation. These conditions enhance the exposure of IDPs and refugees to the risk of contagion from COVID-19. At the same time, the limited access to social protection systems and current responses to COVID-19 reduce their tools to cope with the socio-economic effects of the pandemic.

It is relevant to note that, within FDP and migrant populations, children on the move have been one of the most vulnerable groups. Yet they also have been excluded from social protection schemes. Children 'left behind', for example, are often excluded from social protection programmes, including cash assistance, because they usually receive remittances and are often not assessed as living in poverty. However, these programmes do not consider the intermittent and unpredictable nature of remittances—a risk especially aggravated during the pandemic (UNICEF n.d.). Also, returnee children and their families face specific barriers in their countries, which already contributed to put them in a vulnerable situation before the pandemic. They have difficulties, for example, in accessing services and suffer from a general lack of laws, policies and institutions regarding return and reintegration (Wickramasekara 2019). Therefore, the COVID-19 crisis further aggravated the already harsh conditions of different children on the move, particularly girls, who have been disproportionately affected by the risks of trafficking, gender-based violence, child labour, school drop-out and disproportionate burdens of care (UNICEF 2021a) (for more detail, see Box 2).

The MENA region contains the main host and origin countries for refugees and IDPs in the world. Countries such as Syria, Iraq and Yemen are experiencing long-standing conflicts that force people to migrate, weaken States' responsiveness and create a trail of destruction that makes access to basic services difficult. In other significant host countries such as Sudan, Iran, Lebanon and Jordan, the pandemic has aggravated previous socio-economic crises and caused a deterioration in the living conditions of displaced persons and host communities. Moreover, the Gulf countries concentrate a high proportion of migrant workers who have lost their jobs, affecting remittances (CGTN 2020), and some countries have already announced that they will significantly reduce their foreign workforce due to the pandemic (Economic Times 2020).

This fourth Practitioner Note in the series is divided into two main parts. First, it provides a brief **overview of FDPs in the MENA region**, highlighting the importance of the region as host and origin of migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs. The main specific risks and vulnerabilities for FDPs that were exacerbated by the crisis are also highlighted in this section. The second part of this note follows the same structure as the other three notes, presenting immediate and long-term recommendations for inclusive practices focused on the best practices of efforts of MENA countries and other low- and middle-income countries to expand the access of FDPs to social protection systems.

Relevant experiences from both government and humanitarian actors are included. Despite the many differences between government and humanitarian interventions—such as the usually smaller coverage and temporary duration of humanitarian interventions—the latter are included because of their relevance in providing protection for FDPs in the MENA region, as well as the importance of promoting synergies between humanitarian actors and national governments. Moreover, it is important to highlight that this note focuses on the inclusion of FDPs, but experiences dedicated to including migrant workers, especially undocumented migrants, are also considered due to the relevance of this population in some countries of the region, particularly the Gulf countries, and the high degree of vulnerability of this population, mainly considering the impacts of the pandemic on informal workers and the lack of protection of undocumented migrant workers.

1. This brief used the UNICEF definition of MENA countries that includes the following countries/territories: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Palestinian territories, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Unlike the other three notes in this series, which focused on specific issues of inclusive design and implementation features of social protection programmes for a variety of vulnerable groups, this fourth note gathers a broader set of recommendations cutting across the topics of the other three notes for one specific population group: FDPs. It highlights interventions ranging from including FDPs in social registries and social protection programmes for the first time to more ‘modest’ interventions such as changing payment modalities to facilitate inclusion of FDPs. The common denominator of all these interventions is the focus on **making social protection more accessible for FDPs**. As the next section also shows, FDPs are especially numerous and vulnerable in the MENA region, justifying the importance of having a separate note.

This note is informed by a literature review of existing studies and guidelines, including those published by the Social Protection Approaches to COVID-19: Expert Advice Helpline (SPACE); the IPC-IG ‘Mapping of social protection responses to COVID-19 in the Global South’ (2021); and the UNICEF Technical Notes on ‘Targeting for social protection in humanitarian and fragile contexts’ (UNICEF 2021d) and ‘Better integration of social protection and humanitarian information systems for shock response’ (UNICEF 2021b), among others. Most examples provided in this note relate to social assistance measures (non-contributory social protection) implemented by governments or humanitarian partners in response to crises, including the recent COVID-19 crisis.

Overview of forcibly displaced persons in the MENA region

At the end of 2020, an estimated 82.4 million people were forcibly displaced² around the world (UNHCR 2021). The MENA region is the place of origin and asylum of more refugees than any other region in the world, and also has the second largest population of IDPs (see Figure 1). Out of approximately 26.4 million refugees and people in refugee-like situations in the world under the mandates of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East (UNRWA), 53 per cent were from MENA countries (origin), and 38 per cent were living in the MENA region (asylum). Another 48 million individuals were IDPs in 2020, 30 per cent of whom were in MENA countries. The long-standing humanitarian crisis in Palestine, the conflicts that occurred after the Arab Spring, the widespread violence of civil wars in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, conflicts in South Sudan, Somalia and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the growing adverse effects of climate change are the main factors driving the high numbers of FDPs in the region (Duclos and Palmer 2020; UNHCR 2021).

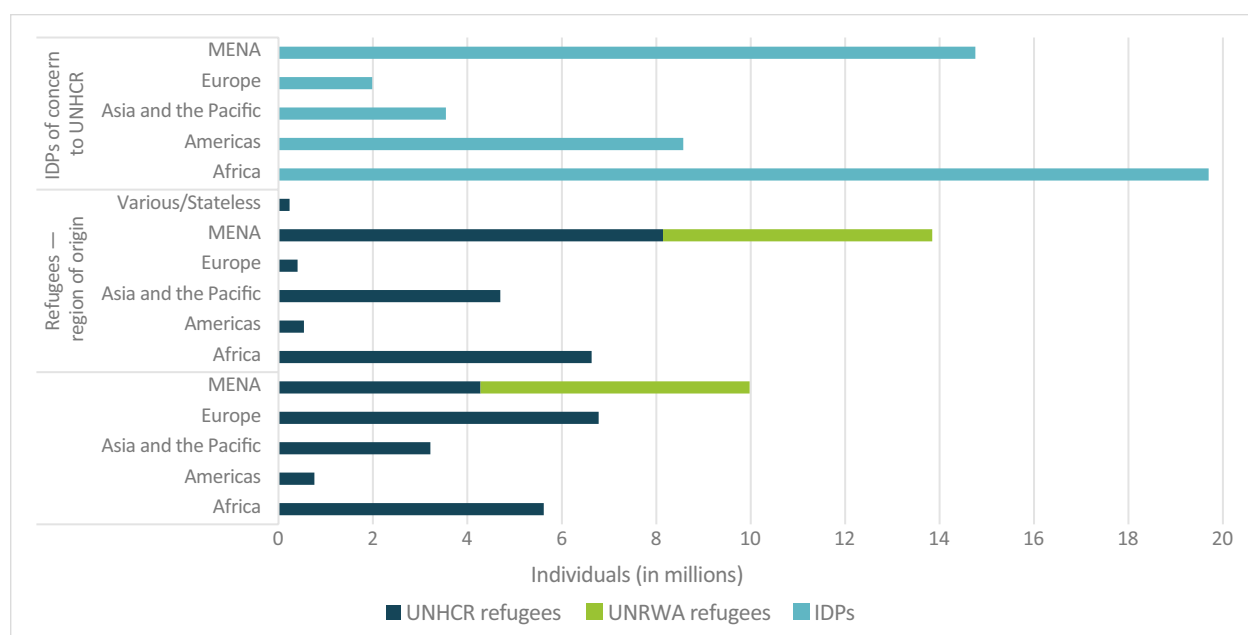
Considering the total population of concern to UNHCR³ and UNRWA refugees, nearly 25.9 million FDPs were living in the MENA region as of the end of 2020. About 25 million were hosted by only eight MENA countries (Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Yemen), and Syria alone hosted 29 per cent of this population. Figure 2 shows the distribution of FDPs by type and by country.

It is a matter of concern that the main refugee-hosting countries in the region are experiencing deep economic crises (e.g. Lebanon, Iran, Sudan), and serious humanitarian situations caused by long-standing conflicts (e.g. Iraq, Palestinian territories, Syria, Yemen). Given the particular vulnerability of FDPs to such events, when COVID-19 hit those countries, they were already living in vulnerable conditions and were thus disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

2. According to UNHCR figures for the end of 2020, there were 26.4 million refugees (20.7 million under the mandate of UNHCR, and 5.7 Palestinian refugees under the mandate of UNRWA); 48 million IDPs; 4.1 million asylum applicants; and 3.9 million Venezuelans displaced abroad.

3. Including refugees, asylum-seekers, statelessness people, IDPs, returned IDPs and other people of concern.

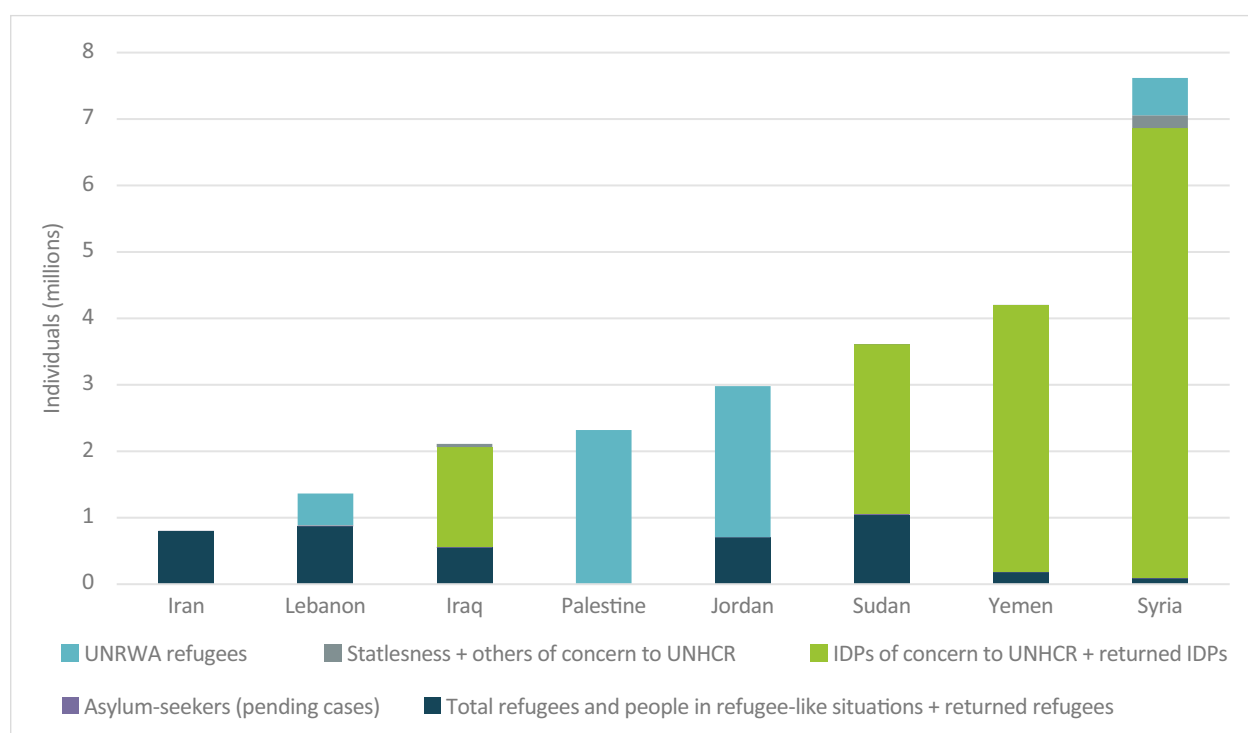
Figure 1 Distribution of IDPs and refugees (UNHCR and UNRWA) by region, end of 2020



Note: The figure considers UNICEF's geographical definition of MENA (see endnote 1), which is slightly different from the UNHCR definition. The main differences are that Sudan, Iran and Djibouti are considered MENA countries by UNICEF, while Mauritania is not. The figure considers the total number of refugees and people in refugee-like situations (Duclos and Palmer 2020; UNHCR 2020).

Source: Author's elaboration based on UNHCR (2021).

Figure 2 Distribution of FDPs by type and by country (as of end of 2019)



Note: UNRWA estimates are from the end of 2019, while UNHCR estimates are from the end of 2020.

Source: Author's elaboration based on UNHCR (2020) annexes and UNRWA (2020).

COVID-19: aggravating previous vulnerabilities

The outbreak of the pandemic aggravated vulnerabilities already experienced by FDPs in the MENA region. Moreover, it represents a ‘crisis within a crisis’ for conflict-affected countries such as the Gaza Strip, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen (OECD 2020a), and for those countries facing economic crisis such as Lebanon and Sudan. FDPs living in fragile contexts are more exposed not only to the health risks but also the socio-economic risks that the pandemic presents (OECD 2020b), as well as disaster risks resulting from natural disasters and extreme weather events—a trend that will likely increase in the coming years as a result of climate change. The combination of a number of factors such as hard borders, restricted domestic mobility, inability to work during lockdowns, and decreased income means that many migrants, including children on the move, have been unable to move onwards (or return), and cannot meet their basic needs. It has also resulted in the increased use of smugglers, riskier modes of migration and border crossings, and increased exposure to trafficking (Litzkow 2021). Box 2 summarises the risks aggravated by the pandemic for FDPs. First, it focuses on the particularly aggravated vulnerabilities for children on the move.

Box 2 Risks aggravated by the pandemic for FDPs

Children on the move are particularly vulnerable and have been disproportionately affected by the impacts of COVID-19. According to UNICEF (2021a), the pandemic further exacerbated risks such as the following.

- Disproportionate burdens of care: As many migrant mothers are working longer hours during the pandemic, the burden carried by them will likely be shared by their daughters, who are expected to care for sick family members and take on additional work in the home.
- Economic shocks and working children: More vulnerable migrant children are likely to engage in child labour. For those already working before the pandemic, exploitation and deportations may increase. Travel restrictions also make it difficult to return home.
- Unmet basic needs: Vulnerable migrant and FDP children, especially girls, are facing an increased risk of hunger and resorting to negative coping strategies, including child marriage and transactional sex. Children ‘left behind’ who depend on intermittent and unpredictable incomes are also particularly affected.
- School drop-out: Schools closures during the pandemic have had a particularly significant effect on vulnerable migrant and FDP children, especially girls. The pandemic increased the risks of dropping out of school, and remote learning options are out of the reach of most FDP and migrant children.
- Increased gender-based violence: Emerging evidence shows that, since the onset of the pandemic, the incidence of gender-based violence has been increasing, including among displaced populations who were already more vulnerable to this kind of violence. Girls on the move are especially affected by these increasing rates of gender-based violence.
- Increased trafficking in persons: COVID-related travel and movement restrictions, combined with disruptions to social protection services, have increased the risks of boys and girls being trafficked, the use of smugglers and riskier modes of migration. Girls are at heightened risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation, while boys are more likely to be trafficked for forced labour.

Vulnerabilities
of children
on the move



Movement restrictions



Border closures and national emergency and lockdown measures are being used as part of responses to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Strict containment measures were introduced in May 2020 in most countries in the MENA region (OECD 2020a). Border closures and lockdown measures affect FDPs by leading to an increase in irregular movements and making it more difficult to access rights to protection and asylum (OECD 2020b). Due to movement restrictions, the number of UNHCR refugee registrations worldwide in 2020 was the lowest since 2012—representing a decrease of 42 per cent compared to 2019. East Africa and MENA were the regions that experienced the most significant decreases in the number of refugee registrations in 2020.

Also, FDPs are more vulnerable to discriminatory restrictions and stigmatisation. In Lebanon, for example, at least 21 municipalities have introduced restrictions on Syrian refugees that do not apply equally to Lebanese residents, including curfews restricting the movement of refugees to certain times, and measures prohibiting Syrians from leaving their homes or receiving visitors (HRW 2020). Consequently, FDPs are more exposed to arbitrariness, extortion, deportation and violence at the border and within host countries. Women on the move are especially vulnerable to gender-based violence, and UNHCR also identified a spike in psychological distress and domestic violence among people of concern arising from isolation or loss of income.

Aggravated humanitarian situation



The pandemic has significantly affected refugees living in temporary camps and shelters. In Bekaa Valley, where 38 per cent of all refugees in Lebanon were living in 2020, nearly half of the total refugee population were living in tents or temporary structures, often overcrowded and with poor sanitation, which makes social isolation and adequate hygiene practically impossible (Action Against Hunger 2020). In some camps, access to water, for example, is limited to 7–9 nine gallons per day, far below the 26 gallons recommended by the World Health Organization (ibid.).

Figures from the beginning of the pandemic also revealed that more than two thirds of households in refugee camps in Jordan had more than three persons per room, and Syrian refugees in cities generally lived in accommodation with two or three bedrooms for families of five or more people (Action Against Hunger 2020; Dhingra 2020).

In Yemen, a UNHCR protection assessment⁴ (July 2020) revealed that 95 per cent of the surveyed IDP families had no income; 19 per cent lived in makeshift shelters; 53 per cent described their shelter's condition as poor and in need of major repairs; and 82 per cent said they had at least one family member with a vulnerability⁵ (UNHCR 2020j).

IDPs in Iraq were suffering from a lack of access to health care (22 per cent), and women and girls were more exposed to psychological trauma, stress and anxiety (68 per cent), a lack of specialised services for women (45 per cent), a lack of safe spaces and privacy (36 per cent), and violence or abuse within the household (23 per cent) (UNHCR 2020i).

In Syria, IDPs living in camps were sharing tents with 8–10 other individuals, and the destruction of hospitals by military actors meant that governorates such as Idlib had fewer than 2,000 hospital beds for over 3 million people (Syria Relief 2020). The aid received by humanitarian organisations decreased in 2020 due to global financial effects of the pandemic and movement restrictions, making these conditions even worse (OECD 2020b; Trostsenburg 2020).



4. A total of 233,000 households of IDPs, local host communities and returnee families in Yemen were surveyed in July 2020.

5. Vulnerability includes persons such as “a pregnant or lactating woman, with a chronic medical condition, has a child engaged with labour, with physical disability, a female heading a family or an elderly unaccompanied person” [p. 1].

Reduced economic opportunities

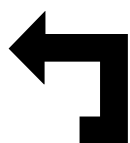


The pandemic and the consequent lockdown measures have had a devastating impact on the labour market, especially for informal workers. In most MENA countries, refugees have limited or no access to formal employment due to legal and practical barriers. As a result, most refugees are working in the informal sector;⁶ without access to social security schemes, they are more vulnerable to the current crisis (OECD 2020b; UNHCR 2018). Based on data from eight major hosting countries⁷ before the pandemic, a study indicated that refugees are 60 per cent more likely than the host population to work in sectors severely affected by the pandemic (Dempster et al. 2020). An assessment⁸ carried out between April and June 2020 revealed a high degree of informal employment among Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as considerable impacts on their employment status and income due to COVID-19. In Jordan, one third of Syrian workers had lost their jobs permanently, and 95 per cent reported a decline in household income due to the pandemic. Of great concern, over 90 per cent of the refugees living in the country had less than JDN50 (USD70) of savings left (UNHCR 2020f). In Lebanon, 60 per cent of Syrian refugees were permanently laid off, and 31 per cent were temporarily laid off, and income decreased by more than two thirds for both Lebanese and Syrian workers in March 2020, compared to the previous 12 months (Kattaa, Kebede, and Stave 2020).

Another study done by the non-governmental organisation Paz for Peace surveyed 234 Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and found that 85 per cent of the respondents had lost their main source of income due to the lockdown measures (SACD 2020). To overcome this situation, Syrian refugees were resorting to negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing their food consumption (Action Against Hunger 2020). Furthermore, the reduced economic opportunities can further lead to violence, neglect and/or exploitation of children on the move.

Another concern created by reduced economic opportunities is the impact on remittances. Remittance trends varied greatly among MENA countries. In 2020, remittances to Egypt, for example, increased by about 11 per cent, while Morocco and Tunisia saw increases of 6.5 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively. In contrast, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and West Bank and Gaza posted a double-digit decline in remittances (World Bank 2021b). For individual households dependent on remittances, disruptions can have significant impacts.

Forced return movements



Movement restrictions and deteriorating socio-economic conditions in host countries can encourage FDPs to return to their country of origin, even if they will not find safety there. This was the case for Afghan refugees in Iran, for example. In March 2020, the two main border crossings saw a new record of returns, with 150,855 Afghan refugees spontaneously returning to their country, mainly due to economic hardship and fear of COVID-19 in Iran (IOM 2020; OECD 2020b).



6. UNHCR (2018) estimates that 50 per cent of refugees worldwide are employed in temporary or transient roles.

7. Colombia, Ethiopia, Iraq (Kurdistan), Jordan, Lebanon, Peru, Turkey and Uganda (for more detail, see Dempster et al. (2020).

8. The assessment was based on telephone surveys and interviewed 1,580 Jordanian and Syrian workers and 1,190 enterprises in Jordan, and 1,987 Lebanese and Syrian workers and 363 enterprises in Lebanon.

Reduced
access to
services



School closures and the suspension of some health care services disproportionately affect FDPs, further increasing their access difficulties. In Lebanon, for example, as most Syrians do not have a legal residence document, they are already afraid of accessing hospitals and official institutions (SACD 2020). When the movement restrictions started, non-governmental organisations working in the medical field reported that the number of Syrian beneficiaries decreased by 80 per cent (SACD 2020).

Also, the increased economic hardship faced by Afghan refugees in Iran led to one in every four refugees taking children out of school, and one in every five sending children to work (OECD 2020b). Distance learning is also less accessible to FDPs, as they have limited access to technological devices and the Internet. In Jordan, for example, only 2 per cent of refugee households own computers (Dhingra 2020). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on migrants and displaced populations in the MENA region (Jourdain et al. 2021) points out that the pandemic has been extremely disruptive to education systems, especially in humanitarian contexts.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the provision of child protection services has been affected by the pandemic due to disruptions to reporting and referral mechanisms. For example, adults who may recognise signs of abuse, such as teachers, child-care workers, coaches and family welfare workers, are no longer in regular contact with children (UNICEF 2021c).

Social protection policies have the potential to mitigate many of the risks presented above. They can also increase the resilience of FDP and migrant families living in poverty, by reducing food insecurity, poverty and vulnerability and improving specific child-related outcomes such as schooling, health and nutrition. Social assistance policies are especially important to provide emergency income support through cash and in-kind transfers, for example. Also, social insurance mechanisms can support workers who lose their jobs (e.g. unemployment benefits), while labour market programmes provide incentives such as wage subsidies for employers who decide to retain their workers in times of crisis. Finally, it is important to mention the potential of social protection to maximise child protection dividends. Child protection and social protection are different but complementary, and often work with similar partners, especially social workers. These social workers can play a key role by offering families direct support and by providing them with a link to social protection and child protection services.

However, refugees and other non-nationals are usually excluded from social protection systems because of fiscal concerns, as well as legal, administrative and informational barriers. For example, the lack of firewalls⁹ between service providers and immigration authorities has the potential to prevent undocumented persons from approaching service providers for fear of arrest, detention or deportation (UNICEF 2020b). Although the COVID-19 crisis has not created a groundbreaking shift towards inclusive social protection systems, it has shed light on these barriers, caused a marginal increase in the inclusion of refugees in social protection systems, exposed the gaps in coverage and encouraged cooperation between governments and humanitarian actors (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021). Some of the best practices observed to eliminate these barriers, especially in the MENA region, are presented in the following section. Information on implementation challenges is also provided, when available.


9. "Measures to separate immigration enforcement activities from public service provision, labour law enforcement and criminal justice processes to protect migrants, including migrant victims of crime, that States and non-State actors implement to ensure that persons in an irregular status are not denied their human rights" (OHCHR n.d., 12).

How to use this Practitioner Note

The remainder of this Practitioner Note is prepared as an easy-to-use toolkit for practitioners working in governments or supporting agencies, which allows them to pick and choose the areas they want to focus on. This part of the note is subdivided into two main sections:

- Section 1: ‘**Recommendations for inclusive practices**’ presents the following pieces of information in a table:
 - Three identified **best practices** from existing toolkits and the reviewed literature
 - **Challenges** that practitioners are likely to face during implementation
 - **Recommendations** to address those challenges and increase inclusiveness in implementing those best practices, which are divided into two sections:
 - Those concerning enhancing the inclusivity of the **immediate** shock response
 - Those concerning building inclusiveness and adaptability through **long-term** system strengthening
 - Corresponding **country examples** of the recommendations whenever found, which are hyperlinked to **blue** tables with further details in Section 2.
 - Brief **justifications** to further explain some recommendations, when necessary, which are hyperlinked to **green** tables with further details in Section 2.
- Section 2: ‘**Additional details**’ provides further **details** (indicated in blue tables) on how some of the listed countries implemented the identified best practice (including limitations, when information was available) and elaborates on **justifications** (indicated in green tables) for some inclusive recommendations that countries did not implement but should have.

Readers are advised to go through Section 1 ‘**Recommendations for inclusive practices**’ and then pick and choose the country examples/justification about which they want further information by clicking on the hyperlinks that will take them to the corresponding tables in Section 2: ‘**Additional details**’.

For a quick return to Section 1, click on the list icon  at the top of the page.

It is important to highlight that following any of the recommendations listed as enhancing the immediate shock response or concerning building inclusiveness through long-term system strengthening must be **based on a thorough understanding of the local context**, to ascertain which recommendation is indeed best suited to the situation and crisis at hand.



SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION PRACTICES FOR FORCIBLY DISPLACED POPULATIONS

Recommendations for inclusive practices

Unlike the other Practitioner Notes in this series, which focus on specific topics of social protection programmes—namely, targeting, identification and registration mechanisms; transfer values and payment modalities; and communication, case management and grievance redress mechanisms—this fourth note gathers recommendations that cut across the different topics of the other notes, focusing on inclusive practices to expand the access of FDPs to social protection. Some of the recommendations and examples presented in this note are also included in the first three notes, and readers are encouraged to consult them as well.¹⁰ Three main groups of recommendations for expanding the access of FDPs to social protection responses are:

- design inclusive legal frameworks and social protection programmes;
- eliminate implementation, administrative and information barriers; and
- coordinate responses between humanitarian and government actors.

The table below details the recommendations clustered in each group. It is important to keep in mind that humanitarian and government-led initiatives are not differentiated. This is because, despite the many differences between these two groups of interventions, most of the good practices and recommendations are applicable to both.

WHAT	Best Practice 1: Design inclusive legal frameworks and social protection programmes	
WHY	In most MENA countries, there are legal barriers that prevent FDPs from enrolling in social protection programmes (e.g. legal exclusion of refugees and other non-nationals). Moreover, some programme design choices, such as restrictive kinds of documentation required for enrolment or targeting strategies, can lead to the exclusion of refugees and other non-nationals. Ensuring the statutory coverage of FDPs by social protection programmes by eliminating preliminary legal and policy design barriers is the first step to achieving inclusive social protection responses.	
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reforming legislative frameworks and opening up the social protection system to non-nationals is a political decision that can be particularly difficult in contexts of high levels of xenophobia, lack of political will and fiscal constraints.• Refugees and asylum-seekers may face more difficulties than nationals, so more generous benefits may be necessary to address their vulnerabilities. The trade-off between the acceptance of the host population and the coverage of needs must be considered (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).• A lack of fiscal space and misconceptions about the affordability of increasing social protection coverage can be particularly relevant challenges in low- and middle-income countries hosting large FDP communities.	
Recommendations <i>Immediate</i>	1.1 Expand programmes that already included FDPs before the crisis to additional FDPs.	Iraq UNICEF Jordan
	1.2 Ensure that new emergency social protection programmes are inclusive, explicitly allowing refugees and asylum-seekers to benefit or forgoing eligibility barriers related to migratory status.	Colombia Sudan
	1.3 Offer sufficient benefit levels to address specific and extra needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, including by promoting vertical expansion of programmes.	UNRWA Jordan



10. Note 1 : <<https://t.ly/5VQg>>; Note 2: <<https://t.ly/6q0r>>; Note 3: <<https://t.ly/x3Zy>>.



Recommendations <i>Immediate</i>	1.4 Apply simplified eligibility criteria for FDPs and adopt alternative methods of identification and targeting.	UNHCR Iran
	1.5 Design Cash Plus components with child-sensitive features, such as birth registration, especially in refugee camp settings or informal settlements	UNICEF Yemen
	1.6 Adjust eligibility criteria to allow unaccompanied children or households headed by children over 14 years to benefit from social protection schemes (UNICEF n.d.).	UNRWA Syria
	1.7 Support education costs during the school return period or the cost of alternative education methods such as remote learning, especially for refugees and internally displaced children (Global Education Cluster 2020; Save the Children 2020).	UNICEF Jordan UNICEF Iraq
	1.8 Guarantee the eligibility of non-nationals for labour market programmes, including emergency responses.	Qatar Jordan
Recommendations <i>Long term</i>	1.9 Ensure the legal right of refugees to contribute to social insurance schemes and benefit from emergency social insurance responses.	Jordan
	1.10 Extend access to health care, including by allowing undocumented migrants and refugees to benefit from primary care	Gulf countries Iran
	1.11 Produce data and evidence by including refugees in national socio-economic surveys (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).	Morocco
	1.12 Set up a robust and clear legal framework outlining the right of non-nationals to enrol in social protection programmes and social registries.	Brazil

WHAT	Best Practice 2: Eliminate implementation, administrative and information barriers	
WHY	Even in countries where comprehensive legal frameworks are present, refugees and other non-nationals can face difficulties in accessing benefits and registering for programmes due to implementation barriers (e.g. difficulty in accessing payment points or delivering benefits in areas where FDPs live), administrative barriers (e.g. lack of documentation, barriers to access social registries) and informational barriers (e.g. lack of knowledge about FDPs' entitlements, language barriers, discrimination and lack of knowledge among service providers about the access of non-nationals to social protection programmes).	
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited administrative and financial capacities to adopt special procedures for refugees, such as extra training for those executing programmes and payment implementers or hiring multilingual teams, among others Fiscal constraints limit the capacity of governments to expand social protection programmes, especially in low- and middle-income countries hosting large FDP communities When several actors (e.g. different ministers) are responsible for the implementation of a social protection programme, lack of coordination can enhance administrative barriers for FDPs Cash-based interventions are limited by liquidity constraints in some of the main refugee-hosting countries (e.g. Iran, Iraq and Libya) When information is only available through digital channels, it can lead to the exclusion of many vulnerable FDPs. 	
Recommendations <i>Immediate</i>	2.1 Adopt flexible administrative and enrolment processes by adopting flexible requirements for identification documents (IDs) and extending the validity of documents of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.	Egypt Portugal
	2.2 Guarantee social assistance interventions especially tailored for stateless people and undocumented migrants to support income and guarantee food security during emergencies.	Kuwait
	2.3 Establish firewalls prohibiting the sharing of information between social protection service providers and immigration authorities, and do not require questions about legal status to provide basic services.	Netherlands
	2.4 Adopt multiple and flexible payment modalities (payment instruments, devices and pay points) for cash-based interventions, including options outside the national financial system (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).	UNHCR Iraq United Nations responses Jordan
	2.5 Consider aligning social protection and financial inclusion by simplifying account opening processes for refugees (e.g. flexible ID verification or using other identification mechanisms, or SIM card registration).	Jordan Philippines





Recommendations <i>Immediate</i>	2.6 Adopt adequate delivery strategies for in-kind assistance in refugee camps and settlements, including by engaging local communities to distribute benefits. This engagement is especially relevant in places where access for humanitarian actors is limited due to movement restrictions.	WFP Algeria
	2.7 Pay benefits (both in-kind and cash-based) in advance to ensure refugees' livelihoods for a longer period and compliance with mobility restrictions.	UNHCR and WFP Sudan UNHCR Syria
	2.8 Disseminate quality information using multiple platforms (e.g. door-to-door campaigns, radio, TV) and different languages/dialects to inform refugees and asylum-seekers on issues such as how to access social protection programmes, open bank accounts, access grievance channels etc.	Turkey
	2.9 Guarantee community engagement to facilitate implementation of safety measures, as well as to adapt previous works developed by local networks to respond to urgent needs.	UNDP Sudan WFP Algeria
	2.10 Provide practical and adequate guidance documents to orient the implementation of social protection programmes in humanitarian situations, including camps, guaranteeing safe biosafety protocols in delivery processes.	Examples
Recommendations <i>Long term</i>	2.11 Strengthen social registries by including data on refugees and asylum-seekers.	Djibouti Congo
	2.12 Strengthen efforts to generate evidence on the importance of extending social protection to migrants and FDPs.	Justification
	2.13 Strengthen the linkage between social protection and child protection for FDPs and migrant children.	Turkey

WHAT	Best Practice 3: Coordinate responses between humanitarian and government actors	
WHY	Due to the exclusion of FDPs from most national social protection responses, humanitarian actors play a fundamental role in protecting these groups. When these actors work together, they can prevent duplication, reach more families and establish a single list of beneficiaries. Coordination between humanitarian and government actors can facilitate responses for nationals and FDPs (e.g. using existing payment mechanisms and databases), as well as the inclusion of refugees in the national social protection system in the long term.	
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning responses requires time to gradually construct close partnerships and advocacy efforts between all stakeholders, including governments, donors, and humanitarian and development actors (UNHCR 2019). Different donors and humanitarian and development actors can have different guidelines and objectives for their programmes, target different populations, set different eligibility criteria, have different duration etc. Aligning different targeting approaches between different humanitarian actors and between humanitarian actors and governments can be difficult because some targeting tools can be costly and require significant capacity, data and resources that some humanitarian actors may not have (UNHCR 2019). Coordinating databases and data-sharing can be a challenge because of a lack of data protection and privacy standards, agreements to safely share data, or interoperable systems between agencies. 	
Recommendations <i>Immediate</i>	3.1 Create coordination groups between humanitarian actors to prevent duplication and cover as many beneficiaries as possible.	Sudan Jordan
	3.2 Coordinate databases, information systems and targeting tools of national and international actors involved in the response, respect data security measures and/or establish appropriate data-sharing agreements.	Jordan Sudan
	3.3 Align humanitarian and government programmes as far as possible in terms of benefit amount, duration, eligibility criteria, payment mechanisms and monitoring systems (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).	UNHCR Morocco Turkey
Recommendations <i>Long term</i>	3.4 Provide financial incentives for the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers, especially considering that humanitarian actors also provide financial support to host communities in low- and middle-income countries (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).	IDA18 sub-window funding
	3.5 Construct strong and long-standing relationships between government and humanitarian actors through open dialogue initiatives and long-term coordination forums.	UNHCR Pakistan



SECTION 2: FURTHER DETAILS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Best Practice 1: Design inclusive legal frameworks and social protection programmes

Table 1.1 Increase the coverage of IDPs in Iraq and refugees in Jordan

Recommendation	1.1 Expand programmes that already included FDPs before the crisis to additional FDPs	
Country example	Iraq	UNICEF Jordan
Details	The Social Safety Net programme existed before the COVID-19 crisis in Iraq and supported households with income below the poverty line. The programme was extended to cover new beneficiaries, as a response to the socio-economic effects of the pandemic. IDPs were among the groups eligible for this expansion, alongside informal workers, those who lost their jobs, and large households with children. In addition to the horizontal expansion, beneficiaries also received top-ups, which were paid twice (IPC-IG 2021).	Prior to the crisis, UNICEF Jordan already provided cash transfers to vulnerable families through the <i>Hajati</i> programme. The programme is specifically tailored to Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanian families. Responding to the crisis, UNICEF decided to expand <i>Hajati</i> 's coverage by adding 18,000 new households (including vulnerable refugees and nationals). The database maintained by this programme with information on 38,000 of the poorest and most vulnerable families in Jordan was fundamental to ensure rapid identification of new beneficiaries, as well as effective communication through the RapidPro system and a helpline for direct communication (Hoop et al. 2020).

Table 1.2 Inclusive new emergency programmes in Colombia and Sudan

Recommendation	1.2 Ensure that new emergency social protection programmes are inclusive, explicitly allowing refugees and asylum-seekers to benefit or forgoing eligibility barriers related to migratory status	
Country example	Colombia	Sudan
Details	Colombia created an emergency cash transfer named <i>Ingreso Solidario</i> ('Solidarity Income') to protect households in situations of poverty and vulnerability who were not benefiting from other cash transfer programmes. The programme's design anticipated the eligibility of Venezuelan migrants and refugees living in the country and whose data were available in the national social registry. Around 40,000 non-nationals benefited from this cash transfer (IPC-IG, UNICEF LACRO, and WFP 2021).	In Sudan, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, in partnership with UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, set up a programme to provide food and hygiene items for vulnerable families living in Khartoum. The programme explicitly allowed refugee households to benefit. As of June 2020, a total of 300,000 families had received support (IPC-IG 2021).

Table 1.3 Vertical expansion of the Social Safety Net Programme in Jordan (UNRWA)

Recommendation	1.3 Offer sufficient benefit levels to address specific and extra needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, including by promoting vertical expansion of programmes
Country example	UNRWA Jordan
Details	The Social Safety Net Programme is provided by UNRWA to Palestinian refugees living in extreme poverty. As a response to the aggravated socio-economic challenges faced by this group due to the pandemic, UNRWA provided an additional JOD182 for beneficiary families in Jordan. As a temporary top-up, this intervention was limited in supporting households to deal with long-standing consequences of the pandemic. However, it is a noteworthy example of vertical expansion to supplement the benefit levels provided by humanitarian-led social protection programmes (UNRWA 2020a).

Table 1.4 Simplified targeting in Iran (UNHCR)

Recommendation	1.4 Apply simplified eligibility criteria for FDPs and adopt alternative methods of identification and targeting
Country example	UNHCR Iran
Details	In Iran, for example, UNHCR is providing one-off cash assistance to 1,000 refugee households to help them cover basic needs (shelter, nutrition and hygiene needs) for up to three months. A simplified targeting criterion was used with adjusted standard operating procedures and referrals from the authorities with required supporting documents allowed to rapidly initiate the assistance. Eligible families include those with members who: (i) contracted COVID-19; (ii) are considered at risk, including members with underlying conditions and older persons; and (iii) have suffered income loss combined with specific protection vulnerabilities. Bank transfers and gift cards (exceptionally) are being used as payment modalities (UNHCR 2020a; 2020g).

**Table 1.5 Cash Plus components and facilitation to access birth certificates in Yemen (UNICEF)**

Recommendation	1.5 Design Cash Plus components with child-sensitive features, such as birth registration, especially in refugee camp settings or informal settlements
Country example	UNICEF Yemen
Details	UNICEF Yemen has been implementing the emergency cash transfer programme since before the pandemic. It includes several Cash Plus components such as improving access to health care, nutrition and birth registration. The programme targets poor and conflict-affected families, including IDPs (UNICEF 2020a). It also uses case referral officers to meet with beneficiary families to understand their needs and refer them to relevant services (Alturki 2020). Improving access to birth registration is particularly important for refugees, as this documentation can enable households to access emergency programmes targeting children and lactating mothers.

Table 1.6 Unaccompanied children are eligible to receive cash assistance in Syria (UNRWA)

Recommendation	1.6 Adjust eligibility criteria to allow unaccompanied children or households headed by children over 14 years to benefit from social protection schemes (UNICEF n.d.)
Country example	UNRWA Syria
Details	To protect unaccompanied children from the additional risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNRWA Syria implemented a five-month cash assistance programme benefiting 415,781 refugees, including the most vulnerable categories such as female-headed households and unaccompanied minors (UNRWA 2021). Adding unaccompanied children as an eligible group to receive assistance was a noteworthy practice in this case.

Table 1.7 Initiatives supporting access to education for refugees in Jordan and Iraq (UNICEF)

Recommendation	1.7 Support education costs during the school return period or the cost of alternative education methods such as remote learning, especially for refugees and internally displaced children	
Country example	UNICEF Jordan	UNICEF Iraq
Details	In mid-March 2020, the Jordanian government announced school closures, introduced an online platform for distance learning and created three TV channels for streaming lessons. Despite these efforts, the digital gap means that the poorest students are still likely to be excluded, since 70 per cent of them have no access to computers, and 50 per cent of them have no access to the Internet (Audah, Capek, and Patil 2020). Given this context, UNICEF Jordan is providing 1,500 beneficiaries, mostly Syrian refugees and children with disabilities, with access to data packages and tablet computers (UNICEF Jordan 2020a; 2020b).	UNICEF provided stationery and supplementary learning materials to children in Baghdad, Najaf, Salah Al-Din, Babil, Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Ninawa. In addition, in collaboration with implementing partners, it supported internally displaced children in camp settings through blended learning and home schooling, and by reaching their parents with educational messages (IPC-IG 2021).

Table 1.8 Inclusive wage subsidies for refugees and migrant workers in Qatar and Jordan

Recommendation	1.8 Guarantee the eligibility of non-nationals for labour market programmes, including emergency responses	
Country example	Qatar	Jordan
Details	Despite facing several implementation challenges, Qatar made positive advances in protecting migrant workers during the pandemic by establishing wage subsidies to protect all migrant workers who were in quarantine or undergoing treatment for COVID-19. The country issued directives determining that companies should pay the wages of these workers, whether they were legally entitled to sick leaves before the crisis or not. To support companies to fulfil this obligation, the government established a public fund of over USD800 million (IPC-IG 2021). It is necessary to highlight that evidence shows implementation gaps and a lack of compliance of companies across all sectors (Equidem 2021), reinforcing the importance of addressing administrative and informational barriers (e.g. limited inspection mechanisms and a lack of awareness of migrant workers about their rights) to ensure inclusiveness.	Gazan refugees living in Jordan, as well as some other non-nationals, were eligible to receive wage subsidies, including the <i>Tadamun</i> and <i>Estidama</i> programmes. As a limitation, these programmes were only available to workers contributing to the Social Security Corporation (SSC) who had their salaries reduced and were employed at eligible businesses. To extend coverage to uninsured national and non-national workers, the SSC, supported by international donors, is about to launch an Emergency Unemployment and Employment Stabilization Fund (IPC-IG 2021).

**Table 1.9 Inclusive social insurance responses in Jordan for Syrian refugees**

Recommendation	1.9 Ensure the legal right of refugees to contribute to social insurance schemes and benefit from emergency social insurance responses
Country example	Jordan
Details	In Jordan, refugees are allowed to contribute to social insurance schemes, which were widely used in response to the crisis. Syrian refugees working in the formal economy and with work permits, for example, are entitled to contribute to social insurance schemes, and about 100,000 have contributed, although this is still a small proportion of the total refugee population (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021). Benefits offered for insured individuals in the context of the pandemic included, for example, the <i>Musaned</i> programmes, which provided unemployment benefits, and compensation for workers whose jobs were suspended (IPC-IG 2021). The pandemic and the response provided by the contributory schemes in the country were identified as factors leading to a change in the perception and willingness of refugees to contribute, with more positive attitudes emerging about the value of registering (for voluntary schemes) and contributing (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021). Moreover, as a way to expand access to social protection, the World Bank has been supporting Syrian refugees in Jordan since before the pandemic to have access to work permits by disseminating information and guaranteeing free work permits and relaxed inspections for Syrian refugees (World Bank 2021a).

Table 1.10 Extension of the provision of health care to migrant workers in Gulf countries and for refugees in Iran

Recommendation	1.10 Extend access to health care, including by allowing undocumented migrants and refugees to benefit from primary care	
Country example	Gulf countries	Iran
Details	During the COVID-19 crisis, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain allowed non-nationals, particularly migrant workers, to access free tests and free treatment for COVID-19. In Qatar and Saudi Arabia, non-nationals had access to treatment irrespective of their migratory status. Qatar did not require a health card or Qatari ID to allow residents to access free testing and treatment. In Saudi Arabia, anyone could access tests and treatment services using the Ministry of Health's Sehhaty app (IPC-IG 2021).	During the pandemic, Iran guaranteed that all refugees, including undocumented Afghan refugees, would have access to health care services, including testing and treatment for COVID-19. Moreover, the government extended the annual insurance validity of all refugees. A long-standing partnership with UNHCR allows the most vulnerable to have access to health insurance, once the organisation pays the premium fees for refugees who cannot afford them (IPC-IG 2021).

Table 1.11 Inclusion of refugees in national socio-economic surveys in Morocco

Recommendation	1.11 Produce data and evidence by including refugees in national socio-economic surveys
Country example	Morocco
Details	A lack of data on refugees and asylum-seekers hinders their inclusion in social registries, understanding of their needs and vulnerabilities, and, consequently, the efficiency of social protection systems and humanitarian interventions. In Morocco, the socio-economic effects of the pandemic led to the inclusion of refugees in a national survey for the first time (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021). The <i>Haut-Commissariat au Plan</i> (independent governmental statistical institution), in partnership with UNHCR, interviewed 600 refugee households to gather information about their conditions during the lockdown, access to essential items, income sources and health care. The results provide key information for policymakers (Haut-Commissariat au Plan 2020). The initiative also sent a symbolic and political message about inclusiveness. Similar processes occurred in other countries such as Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, where refugees were included in national surveys for the first time (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).



Table 1.12 Legal frameworks guaranteeing the rights of non-nationals to access social registries and social programmes in Brazil

Recommendation	1.12 Set up a robust and clear legal framework outlining the right of non-nationals to enrol in social protection programmes and social registries
Country example	Brazil
Details	In Brazil, refugees and migrants, regardless of their migratory status, were eligible to receive the <i>Auxílio Emergencial</i> ('Emergency Grant'), an emergency cash transfer to support households' income during the pandemic. The benefit was paid automatically to those who were already receiving the <i>Bolsa Família</i> conditional cash transfer, as well as to those who had their data in the national social registry and complied with certain additional eligibility criteria (e.g. low family income, no formal job, among others). People who were not included in the social registry could register on demand through an online platform. Law No. 13.982/2020, which created the benefit, does not explicitly mention the inclusion of non-nationals. However, other previous legal frameworks guarantee their inclusion in the social protection system. Both the Brazilian Constitution and the national Migration Law guarantee equal treatment for nationals and non-nationals, explicitly mentioning equal rights to social assistance. Moreover, directives adopted by the Ministry of Social and Agrarian Development (now called the Ministry of Citizenship) also ensure the right of migrants to enrol in the national social registry (IPC-IG, UNICEF LACRO, and WFP 2021).

Best Practice 2: Eliminate implementation, administrative and information barriers

Table 2.1 Extension of expired documentation in Egypt and Portugal

Recommendation	2.1 Adopt flexible administrative and enrolment processes by adopting flexible requirements for IDs and extending the validity of documents of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers	
Country example	Egypt	Portugal
Details	Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, registered migrants and refugees in Egypt were already eligible for public primary and secondary health care. Responding to the pandemic, the government decided to adopt an exceptional extension of expired visas and residency permits, allowing non-nationals to continue to access health care services (Hoagland and Randrianarisoa 2021).	The Government of Portugal extended the validity of all documents issued by national entities, including documents related to asylum status and residence permits. The extension was valid for documents that would expire after 24 February 2020 until at least 30 October. This measure guaranteed access to social protection services (e.g. health care and social security benefits) for all asylum-seekers and other non-nationals residing in the country (UNHCR 2020d).

Table 2.2 Faza Kuwait campaign for stateless individuals, migrant workers and vulnerable families

Recommendation	2.2 Guarantee social assistance interventions especially tailored for stateless people and undocumented migrants to support income and guarantee food security during emergencies
Country example	Kuwait
Details	Kuwait created the <i>Faza Kuwait</i> campaign to provide cash and in-kind assistance to stateless individuals, migrant workers and vulnerable families who lost their jobs and/or were placed in quarantine. Potential beneficiaries were able to register online (on-demand registration) to receive the benefit provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs in cooperation with national charities (IPC-IG 2021).

**Table 2.3 The importance of firewalls to ensure the safety of undocumented migrants**

Recommendation	2.3 Establish firewalls prohibiting the sharing of information between social protection service providers and immigration authorities, and do not require questions about legal status to provide basic services
Country example	Netherlands
Details	One of the main barriers to access social protection services for undocumented migrants is the fear of detention by immigration authorities. Therefore, it is essential to establish firewalls capable of prohibiting the sharing of information between social protection service providers and immigration authorities, to ensure the effective coverage of undocumented migrants. It is also important that service providers are not required to ask questions about beneficiaries' migration status (UNICEF 2020b). The Netherlands is an example of a country that adopted firewalls. It recognised that the risk and fear of deportation and detention compromise the right of irregular migrants to report to the police when they have been a victim of a crime. To change this situation and implement the European Union's Victims' Rights Directive, the Netherlands decided to adopt a firewall that provides a separation between immigration enforcement and the provision of public services—for more detail on this policy, see Timmerman et al. (2020).

Table 2.4 E-wallets in Iraq and the OneCard platform in Jordan

Recommendation	2.4 Adopt multiple and flexible payment modalities (payment instruments, devices and pay points) for cash-based interventions, including options outside the national financial system (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021)	
Country example	UNHCR Iraq	United Nations responses Jordan
Details	As Iraq has liquidity limitations and government restrictions of movement, digital options were introduced through shops contracted by WFP. The beneficiaries receive the assistance through e-wallets that can be used to buy items in some merchants that accept digital payments, to purchase phone credits or for person-to-person payments, with no need for physical cash (UNHCR 2020h).	In Jordan, a pre-existing platform managed by WFP, the OneCard platform, is being adapted to cover beneficiaries of programmes administered by other humanitarian actors. Since 2014, WFP has been managing OneCard in Jordan, providing financial transactions in partnership with private banks through cards. The value of assistance can be received as an electronic transfer or optionally withdrawn through ATMs (WFP 2019). In the context of COVID-19, the platform has been adapted to facilitate payments to almost 60,000 Palestinian refugees on behalf of UNRWA, 470 beneficiaries of the Collateral Repair Project, and 216 beneficiaries of UN Women projects and benefits (UNHCR 2020c).

Table 2.5 Promoting financial inclusion for refugees in Jordan and the Philippines

Recommendation	2.5 Consider aligning social protection and financial inclusion by simplifying account opening processes for refugees (e.g. flexible ID verification or using other identification mechanisms, or SIM card registration)	
Country example	Jordan	Philippines
Details	Humanitarian actors such as UNHCR worked alongside the Central Bank to ensure that the Jordan Mobile Payment Switch allows the use of refugee IDs issued by UNHCR in the mobile wallet account opening process (Kazzaz 2020).	The Central Bank of Philippines waived the requirement for presenting valid IDs for customer onboarding. The measure was introduced to allow beneficiaries with no valid IDs to open bank accounts during the lockdown period from 1 April to 30 June 2020. Each beneficiary had to indicate that they did not have a valid ID (Jenik, Kerse, and de Koker 2020).

Table 2.6 Provision of in-kind benefits in refugee camps in Algeria

Recommendation	2.6 Adopt adequate delivery strategies for in-kind assistance in refugee camps and settlements, including by engaging local communities to distribute benefits
Country example	WFP Algeria
Details	In Algeria, WFP continued to provide nutrition support to pregnant women and children, as well as basic food rations, taking preventive measures such as decreasing the number of staff and using personal protective equipment. The food and containers arriving in the camps are sterilised, and warehouses are ventilated frequently. Also, the food is delivered through a community-based system: representatives of local committees (mostly women) receive food at the distribution points and are responsible for delivering it to households (Meyer-Seipp 2020).



Table 2.7 Upfront distribution of food vouchers in Sudan (UNHCR and WFP) and cash transfers in Syria (UNHCR)

Recommendation	2.7 Pay benefits (both in-kind and cash-based) in advance to ensure refugees' livelihoods for a longer period and compliance with mobility restrictions	
Country example	UNHCR and WFP Sudan	UNHCR Syria
Details	In Sudan, UNHCR and WFP delivered food vouchers for a longer period—two months instead of one—and provided prepared wet food to isolation facilities close to refugee-hosting regions (UNHCR 2020e).	UNHCR anticipated the payment of its Multi-Purpose Cash Grants for refugee households. Upfront transfers were adopted to cover two months for all eligible families who had their ATM cards (IPC-IG 2021).

Table 2.8 Information about social protection programmes provided in different languages in Turkey (UNICEF)

Recommendation	2.8 Disseminate quality information using multiple platforms (e.g. door-to-door campaigns, radio, TV) and different languages/dialects to inform refugees and asylum-seekers on issues such as how to access social protection programme, open bank accounts, access grievance channels etc.
Country example	Turkey
Details	Prior to COVID-19, the Government of Turkey established a call centre with a toll-free helpline to receive complaints from beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education and the Emergency Social Safety Net. As an important implementation feature, the helpline was offered in multiple languages, including Turkish, Arabic, Farsi and Pashto (UNICEF Turkey 2018).

Table 2.9 Community engagement in Sudan (UNDP) and Algeria (WFP)

Recommendation	2.9 Guarantee community engagement to facilitate the implementation of safety measures, as well as to adapt previous works developed by local networks to respond to urgent needs	
Country example	UNDP Sudan	WFP Algeria
Details	In Sudan, UNDP has established more than 150 local networks, including management committees, peace committees, volunteer groups and farming and water management groups, aiming to ensure the delivery of personal protective equipment, hygiene supplies and information. The groups operate in eight different languages to ensure that refugees and migrants are made aware of practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (UNDP 2020).	In Algeria, WFP relies on a well-established network of food committees (comprising mostly women) in all refugee camps to ensure the distribution of food to beneficiaries (Meyer-Seipp 2020).

Table 2.10 Examples of practical guidance documents to implement interventions, including social protection programmes

Recommendation	2.10 Provide practical and adequate guidance documents to orient the implementation of social protection programmes in humanitarian situations, including camps, guaranteeing safe biosafety protocols in delivery processes
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaling up COVID-19 outbreak readiness and response operations in humanitarian situations, including camps and camp-like settings: This guidance instrument was produced as a joint initiative between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), IOM, UNHCR and the World Health Organization. It provides information for communities working in humanitarian settlements on how to keep providing services in safety, counter misinformation, ensure protection in refugee camps etc. • Cash and voucher assistance guidance during COVID-19: In Iraq, the Cash Working Group developed this guidance document covering fundamental practices in designing, coordinating and implementing cash transfers during the pandemic. Among other recommendations on how to distribute benefits, the document suggests, for example: if feasible and applicable, consider home-to-home distribution; consider rounding up the transfer value; and consider switching modalities and using a different delivery mechanism that could minimise overcrowding and the use of banknotes. • Recommendations for adjusting food distribution standard operating procedures in the context of COVID-19: This guidance instrument was developed by WFP to ensure safe delivery of in-kind support. Among its recommendations, the document mentions: organise and clearly mark allocated spaces at the distribution site; organise rations ahead of the scheduled distribution; do not allow crowding around the distribution point; and manage the flow of traffic at the distribution site.



Table 2.11 Inclusion of refugees in the national social registry in Djibouti and the Republic of Congo

Recommendation	2.11 Strengthen social registries by including and updating data of refugees and asylum seekers	
Country example	Djibouti	Republic of Congo
Details	In Djibouti, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity, in partnership with UNHCR, included refugees in a food voucher system. This opportunity also led UNHCR to start an operation to promote the biometric registration of refugee families to include their data in the national social registry (United Nations 2020).	The Government of the Republic of Congo was able to set up an emergency cash transfer programme by building on the existing <i>Lisungi</i> programme to respond to the pandemic. The <i>Registre Social Unique</i> (Single Social Registry) used by the regular <i>Lisungi</i> programme was used as a targeting mechanism, and already included data on refugee households. Neighbourhood chiefs were responsible for updating data on those already included in the registry and adding data on those who were not previously registered. Refugees can be included in this process in the same way as nationals, with no specific targeting criteria for them (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).

Table 2.12 The importance of evidence to guide inclusive policy

Recommendation	2.12 Strengthen efforts to generate evidence on the importance of extending social protection to migrants and FDPs
Justification	Efforts capable of generating evidence on the importance of extending social protection to migrants and FDPs are important for two main reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong evidence of how non-nationals can contribute to local economies and host communities can mitigate xenophobia, which is a problem that has been increasing during the pandemic.• Strong evidence of good practices can help to influence policy decisions towards more inclusive social protection systems, prevent failures and provide innovative ideas to solve national issues (UNICEF 2020b).

Table 2.13 Strengthening the linkage between social protection and child protection for FDPs and migrant children in Turkey

Recommendation	2.13 Strengthen the linkage between social protection and child protection for FDPs and migrant children
Country example	Turkey
Details	Growing evidence has been showing that combining social protection and child protection can promote positive outcomes. This synergy can leverage results for child protection, since social protection schemes often work at the national scale, while also helping social protection policies to be more effective for children. In Turkey, for example, UNICEF, in partnership with the government, supports the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education for refugees. This programme provides support to poor households and reinforces the importance of girls' education. In addition to the cash component, beneficiaries are accompanied by social workers to address problems at home such as child labour, child marriage and violence (Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action 2021).



Best Practice 3: Coordinate responses between humanitarian and government actors

Table 3.1 The COVID-19 Working Group in Sudan and the Basic Needs Working Group in Jordan

Recommendation	3.1 Create coordination groups between humanitarian actors to prevent duplication and cover as many people as possible	
Country example	Sudan	Jordan
Details	In Sudan, five United Nations agencies (the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, UNHCR and UNFPA) comprise the COVID-19 Working Group and act in coordination with the Ministry of Health to implement the country's strategy against the COVID-19 (Kunna 2020). Another special group was formed by IOM and UNHCR and focuses on responses in IDP camps and camp-like settings, reporting its achievements to the general group (OCHA 2020).	In Jordan, the pre-existing Basic Needs Working Group brings together more than 30 organisations acting in the country and provides a comprehensive response. In particular, the group established a single list of beneficiaries that can be accessed by all partners and is using a Refugee Assistance Information System (RAIS) Coordination Module to avoid duplication (UNHCR 2020g). Further, strong coordination of task forces in Jordan—i.e. the Response Task Force and the Common Cash Facility Task Force—was fundamental to improving the efficiency of responses for refugees, reducing overlaps and covering gaps (Dürr 2021).

Table 3.2 The RapidPro system in Jordan

Recommendation	3.2 Coordinate databases, information systems and targeting tools of national and international actors involved in the response, respecting data security measures and/or establishing appropriate data-sharing agreements	
Country example	Jordan	Sudan
Details	In Jordan, UNICEF created the RapidPro system for the Hajati programme for vulnerable households (including Syrian refugees) before the pandemic. The system was used by the Jordanian government to reach the beneficiaries of the new emergency cash transfer for daily workers. It can be used for digital communication to raise awareness, monitor programme implementation and collect data, as well as send two-way SMS messages. Through this system, UNICEF and the National Aid Fund used text messages to confirm beneficiaries' identity and whether they had mobile wallets. Orientation was provided for those who needed to open a mobile wallet, and data exchanged with the Central Bank of Jordan and mobile money companies confirmed the date they were opened. Fourteen days after starting this process, a total of 188,000 out of 200,000 targeted beneficiaries had been identified and had received their cash. Therefore, the use of RapidPro showed efficient, quick and safe results, at no cost to new beneficiaries to register, proving synergies between humanitarian and development work (Albaddawi et al. 2020).	In Sudan, a working group is aligning the interoperability of two databases of United Nations agencies: ProGres, which is UNHCR's case management software application; and Protection-related Information Management (PRIMER0), which is the UNICEF case management tool. A data-sharing agreement is in place, making it possible to share information when necessary and justified. This collaboration is expected to strengthen case management in the country, especially for children who face rights violations (Samuel Hall 2021).

Table 3.3 UNHCR Morocco's emergency cash transfer for refugees mirrors the government programme

Recommendation	3.3 Align as far as possible humanitarian and government programmes in terms of benefit amount, duration, eligibility criteria, payment mechanisms and monitoring systems	
Country example	UNHCR Morocco	Turkey
Details	In Morocco, the UNHCR emergency cash transfer for refugees mirrors the government's response to COVID-19 in terms of grant size, duration and delivery mechanism (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021). However, while the government responses use a database that excludes refugees when selecting beneficiaries (the RAME database), UNHCR uses a refugee database to target beneficiaries (Landa 2020).	The Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme in Turkey is a humanitarian cash transfer for refugees. It provides an example of the importance of aligning benefit values from humanitarian and government sources to prevent social tensions between host communities and refugees. The ESSN transfer value was set below the Minimum Expenditure Basket, to align more closely with the benefit value received by poor nationals benefiting from the Turkish social protection system. To increase the transfer value, quarterly top-ups for both refugees and host communities are planned, with extensive communications efforts to happen at the same time and with similar values (McLean, Carraro, and Barca n.d.).



Table 3.4 IDA18 sub-window funding providing incentives for countries to adopt adequate frameworks for refugees

Recommendation	3.4 Provide financial incentives for the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers, especially considering that humanitarian actors also provide financial support to host communities in low- and middle-income countries
Country example	IDA18 sub-window funding
Details	<p>The International Development Association (the World Bank's fund for the poorest countries) finances the IDA18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities, which is a fund for low-income countries that host a large number of refugees. Countries eligible for the funding include those which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• host at least 25,000 refugees or where at least 0.1 per cent of the population are refugees;• have adequate frameworks for refugee protection; and• have a plan or strategy for long-term solutions for refugees and host communities. <p>On the social protection side, the fund supports efforts to strengthen social protection systems, including by expanding coverage to nationals and refugees. In contexts of emergencies such as COVID-19, countries can access contingency emergency response components that enable rapid disbursement of funds. This mechanism was used to support a project in Chad, where additional funding was made available through the sub-window to strengthen a response programme that cover refugees and host populations (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).</p>

Table 3.5 Long-standing partnerships between UNHCR and the Government of Pakistan

Recommendation	3.5 Construct strong and long-standing relationships between government and humanitarian actors through open dialogue initiatives and long-term coordination forums
Country example	UNHCR Pakistan
Details	<p>UNHCR has a long history of advocacy work for the inclusion of refugees in the national social protection system in Pakistan. This relationship of open dialogue favoured the government's decision to reach out to UNHCR to develop a complementary response for refugees in the country. The long-standing relationship with the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees also enabled UNHCR to design and deliver cash transfers (Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021).</p>

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