

SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE FORCIBLY DISPLACED IN LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

A PATHWAY FOR INCLUSION

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Sammanfattning

Antalet flyktingar blir allt fler i världen, och ökningen har pågått under årtionden. 86 procent av dessa flyktingar befinner sig i låg- och medelinkomstländer. I genomsnitt befinner sig flyktingar och internflyktingar (IDP) på flykt under tio år, samtidigt som rätten till samhällsservice ofta är oklar eller utom räckhåll (Devictor and Do, 2016). Totalt sett befinner sig 76 procent av alla flyktingar i utdragna situationer, och enbart en procent av dem hittar hållbara lösningar i form av frivilligt återvändande, omflyttning eller integration i värdlandet (UNHCR, 2021).

I praktiken har påtvingad flykt främst hanterats med hjälp av humanitära insatser, med tonvikt på mat, säkerhet, husrum. Men utdragna flyktingsituationer kräver förändrade ansatser – i form av stöd för mer långsiktiga, samordnade och utvecklingsinriktade insatser. Tack vare en rad nya policies har möjligheter öppnats för en inkluderande agenda gentemot flyktingar. Till dessa nya överenskommelser hör 'Global Compact on Refugees', 'Action Agenda' från FN:s generalsekreterare högnivåpanel kring internflyktingar, OECD-DAC:s rekommendationer för humanitär-utveckling-fred-nexus (HDP) Nexus, och OCED-DAC/INCAF gemensamma position om sammanhållet agerande i flyktingsituationer.

Hanteringen av flyktingsituationer har gradvis förskjutits mot ökat fokus på integration i lokala värd-samhällen, vilket gör det möjligt för flyktingar att bli mer självförsörjande och värdsamhällen att få en mer hållbar situation. De flesta tvångsförflyttade saknar dock verkliga möjligheter att återskapa sina liv och få kontroll över sitt uppehälle när de förlorat jobb och inkomster samt utsätts för upprepade sociala chocker. I sådana situationer blir tillgång till statlig service och lokala arbetstillstånd avgörande för att hitta hållbara lösningar där flyktingar ges rätt till värdiga liv och kan bidra till samhället. Ett policyområde där både humanitära- och utvecklings-aktörer kan samarbeta nära gäller därför tillgången till sociala trygghetssystem.

Den samlade kunskapen kring flyktingars tillgång till statliga sociala trygghetssystem är mycket begränsad, i vilken grad de får del av programmen och vilka faktorer som underlättar sådan tillgång. Denna rapport bidrar till fördjupad kunskap om flyktingars tillgång till sociala trygghetssystem i värdländer. Den ger vidare en analys av den aktuella situationen kring tillgång i tolv länder: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, Demokratiska republiken Kongo, Etiopien, Irak, Kamerun, Sydafrika, Sudan, Tchad och Uganda. Baserat på flera intervjuer av nyckelpersoner, en omfattande översyn av system och rapporter och analys av sekundärdata så ger rapporten en detaljerad bild av sociala trygghetssystem i dessa länder. Frågan om flyktingars legala (de jure) och faktiska (de facto) tillgång till systemen belyses. Syftet är att etablera en baslinje vilken kan fungera som en kunskapsbas för framtiden.

Kartläggningen visar att statliga trygghetssystem i stor utsträckning är nya och bräckliga i de låg- och medelinkomstländer som tagit emot flyktingar. Vilken historia och vilken grad av mognad som sociala

trygghetssystemen har bestämt i hög grad hur flyktingar kan integreras. De mer etablerade systemen har större möjligheter att samordna och inkludera flykting-populationer. Nationella trygghetssystem i låg- och medelinkomstländer är ofta finansiellt beroende av externa biståndsgivare. Subventioner till stöd för flyktingars tillgång till sociala trygghetssystem har dock givit konkreta resultat och främjat inkludering.

Om än sociala trygghetssystem i huvudsak är öppna för flyktingar förblir den faktiska tillgången låg, på grund av systematiska och institutionella, och inte minst politiska hinder. Den totala bilden är dock mycket svår att fånga, på grund av stora brister i vilken data som finns tillgänglig. Bristen på systematiska data på individnivå kring flyktingar och internflyktingar i relation till sociala trygghetssystem gör det svårt att identifiera målgrupper. Denna brist kan bero på att datamängder hålls i separata stuprör, att väsentliga data saknas, att integritetsskäl gör att den inte kan delas brett. Oavsett vilket begränsar det kunskapen om hur väl flyktingar tar del av sociala trygghetssystem. Detta är i sig själv ett stort hinder för att inkludera fler.

Den politiska kontexten kring flyktingmottagande är ofta ett hinder för att inkludera tvångsförflyttade i sociala trygghetssystem. Nationell planering och policy-utformning, likväl som utvecklingssamarbete, bör dock aldrig vika sig för sådant tryck, även om det är förståeligt och legitimt. Sociala trygghetssystem utgör en väg till inkludering av flyktingar och internflyktingar in i värdländernas samhällen. De kan förbereda för hållbara lösningar, inklusive frivilligt återvändande, omflyttning eller lokal integration. På längre sikt kan sådana program minska kostnader genom att flyktingar får möjlighet att själva bidra till både socialförsäkringar och till det bredare fiskala systemet i värdlandet.

Hur tillträdet till sociala trygghetssystem mer specifikt ska ordnas hänger på var i flyktingprocessen människor befinner sig. Men det är också viktigt att ha realistiska förväntningar. Att snabbt integrera flyktingar i statliga trygghetssystem i låg- och medelinkomstländer blir lätt problematiskt om dessa system inte är mogna och flexibla nog. Det tar tid att utveckla nya trygghetssystem.

Utifrån sådana överväganden ges fem policy-rekommendationer kring flyktingar, internflyktingar och deras inkludering i sociala trygghetssystem i låg- och medelinkomstländer.

1. Tänk in flyktingar och internflyktingar när nationell policy och planering kring sociala trygghetssystem utformas

Värdländers regeringar och deras samarbetspartners måste mycket tydligare arbeta in sociala trygghetssystem i nationella beredskapsplaner för flyktingkriser, specifikt genom att ge tvångsförflyttade människor tillgång till dessa system. Detta förutsätter en övergång till territoriellt planerande, där påtvingad förflyttning (inklusive flyktingläger) ses som fullvärdiga delar av övergripande utvecklingsplaner för kommuner eller regioner, och inte som utmaningar som ska hanteras separat. Detta understryker också vikten av att försöka hantera utmaningar innan krisen kommer, snarare än efteråt. Lagstiftning bör tydligt visa vilka system som flyktingar har tillgång till för att undvika otydligheter i efterhand. För att skapa hållbarhet bör möjligheten att bära med sig rättigheter i samband med flykt starkt övervägas, såväl för internflyktingar som för de flyktingar som korsar nationsgränser. De senare kan få det lättare att återvända hem med hjälp av sådana rättigheter.

2. Stöd flerårig finansiering för att underlätta inkludering av flyktingar

Givarländer bör ge stöd till utvecklingen av breda sociala trygghetssystem, och sätta av flerårig finansiering för att möjliggöra inkludering av flyktingar. Detta ger värdländer ökad tilltro till att de kan klara av en gradvis ökande inkludering av flyktingar i dessa system. Särskilt viktigt är att finansiera sådana mekanismer som kan bemöta chocker och som kan leverera stöd i särskilt utsatta områden.

3. Förstärk samordningen mellan nyckelaktörer

Det finns behov av ökad samordning mellan den stora mängden aktörer. Inkludering kan underlättas om aktörer utgår från ett regerings-övergripande perspektiv och samordnar sig utifrån flyktingars olika typer av behov. Förbättrad samordning med FN och civilsamhällsorganisationer är dessutom en förutsättning för att information och data ska bli mer gemensam och enhetlig. Detta är i sin tur en förutsättning för att flyktingar ska få socialt skydd och likabehandling.

4. Inkludera flyktingar och internflyktingar i systemen med att samla in information och data

Tillgången till sociala trygghetssystem för tvångsförflyttade personer underlättas genom att de registreras i staters socialförsäkringssystem eller medborgarregister. Flyktingar och internflyktingar bör systematiskt inkluderas i nationella hushållsundersökningar, eftersom de ofta ger en grund för bedömningar om vilka grupper som ska omfattas.

5. Övervaka och utvärdera regelbundet vem som inkluderas

Resultaten av policies och lagstiftning bör regelbundet följas upp och utvärderas. Hur flyktingar och internflyktingar i praktiken inkluderas bör följas genom regelbunden datainsamling. Data om sociala trygghetssystem bör innehålla specifika underkategorier där flyktingar och internflyktingar noteras under respektive typ av trygghetssystem. Som utgångspunkt har denna studie täckt in tolv länder, men likartad analys bör göras för fler länder. Bortom frågan om sociala trygghetssystem bör också tvångsförflyttade människors tillgång till, och deltagande i, bredare nationell planering och socio-ekonomisk utveckling också undersökas. Enbart så kan den svåröverskådliga frågan om de-facto inkludering få ett tydligare svar.

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Social protection for the forcibly displaced in low- and middle-income countries

A pathway for inclusion

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Abstract/résumé

This paper provides the first overview of efforts by low- and middle-income countries to extend the coverage of national social protection systems to the forcibly displaced persons they host. It presents a baseline of *de jure* (legal) and estimated *de facto* (actual) coverage in twelve countries; analyses the conditions enabling access to social protection by the forcibly displaced; draws lessons from Iraq, Sudan and Uganda in terms of challenges and successes; and offers guidance to major stakeholders on extending social protection initiatives to forcibly displaced persons.

Ce document donne un premier aperçu des efforts déployés par les pays à revenu faible et intermédiaire pour étendre la couverture des systèmes nationaux de protection sociale aux personnes, déplacées de force, qu'ils accueillent. Il présente un état des lieux de la couverture *de jure* (légale) et *de facto* estimée (réelle) dans douze pays, analyse les conditions d'accès à la protection sociale pour ces populations, tire des enseignements des expériences en Irak, en Ouganda et au Soudan, et fait des recommandations pour l'action publique.

Foreword

In 2022, the scale of global forced displacement has reached unprecedented levels, surpassing 100 million people in light of Russia's war against Ukraine and other conflicts, and affecting socio-economic development and fragility worldwide. Forced displacement is also increasingly protracted, hence the importance of a co-ordinated development and systemic response. In this context, the OECD Development Centre and Development Co-operation Directorate, the DAC International Network on Crisis and Fragility (INCAF), and the Swedish Expert Group for Aid Studies (EBA) have come together to examine the role of social protection systems in responses to forced displacement. In this important area, an effective collaboration between humanitarian and development actors is essential, but the critical data needed is missing. This project aims to contribute to filling that gap.

This has been a fruitful collaboration, overseen by a joint reference group presided by EBA's chairperson and bringing together experts from UNHCR, Oxford Policy Management, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the OECD. It is our shared hope that this paper will prove useful for policy makers in donor and host countries, and for programme managers in the spheres of both humanitarian interventions and longer-term development programmes. We also think it will be of interest to a wider audience of academics, opinion makers and an engaged public. The responsibility for analysis and conclusions rests with the authors.

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The paper draws crucial knowledge from a wide range of organisations and national administrations: the Cash and Livelihoods Consortium for Iraq (CLCI), the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), Iraq's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Kurdistan Region of Iraq's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraq's Ministry of Migration and Displacement, *Migración Colombia*, Save the Children International, Sudan's National Health Insurance Fund, Sweden's embassy in Uganda, Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Bank, and the World Food Programme.

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Table of contents

Abstract/résumé	3
Foreword	4
Acknowledgements	5
Abbreviations and acronyms	8
Executive summary	9
1 Introduction	12
2 Background and context	14
2.1 Forced displacement has become a major development challenge	14
2.2 Social protection systems in developing countries are largely nascent	19
2.3 Recent policies on forced displacement make the case for inclusion into national socio-economic systems	21
2.4 The actual inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in social protection systems remains unclear	23
2.5 There is no overarching baseline on the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in social protection programmes	24
3 Presentation and analysis of the baseline	27
3.1 Country selection and target group	28
3.2 Forcibly displaced populations often have good <i>de jure</i> access to social protection	29
3.3 Estimated <i>de facto</i> access to social protection programmes	34
3.4 There is a disconnect between the data systems for displaced populations and regular citizens	38
3.5 Sustainable financing is a key aspect of inclusive systems	40
3.6 Contextual factors will determine the feasibility of inclusive social protection	42
4 Policy discussion and recommendations	44
References	51

FIGURES

Figure 1. Developing economies host the majority of refugees across the world	15
Figure 2. Poverty rates vary in countries hosting forcibly displaced populations	16
Figure 3. Many countries hosting forcibly displaced populations have high rates of informal employment	17
Figure 4. Most countries hosting large forcibly displaced populations have low social protection coverage	20
Figure 5. Aligning social protection systems with the forced displacement situation	22
Figure 6. Social assistance spending (% of GDP)	41
Figure 7. Official Development Assistance earmarked for social protection and humanitarian assistance by country in 2019	42

TABLES

Table 1. Recent literature on social protection in forced displacement contexts	25
Table 2. Key informant interviews by country	29
Table 3. <i>De jure</i> access for IDPs, by country and type of social protection	31
Table 4. <i>De jure</i> access for refugees, by country and type of social protection	32
Table 5. <i>De jure</i> right to work for refugees	33
Table 6. Reported and estimated social assistance coverage rates, by country and programme	35
Table 7. Refugee registration and identity management systems	40
Table 8. Social protection interventions in the forced displacement cycle	44
Table 9. Enablers and challenges for including refugees and IDPs in social protection systems	47

BOXES

Box 1. Hospitable refugee policies in Uganda have limited impact on inclusive social protection when social protection systems are nascent	34
Box 2. <i>De jure</i> and <i>de facto</i> access to social protection in the fragile context of Sudan	37
Box 3. Going digital on social protection programmes in Iraq	39
Box 4. Policy recommendation to governments hosting refugees and IDPs	49
Box 5. Policy recommendations to donors	49
Box 6. Policy recommendations to UN agencies, international NGOs, and civil society organisations	50

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ASPIRE	Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity
CCAP	Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GRF	Global Refugee Forum
HDP	Humanitarian-Development-Peace
IDA	International Development Association
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
INCAF	International Network on Conflict and Fragility
IPC-IG	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
JDC	Joint Data Center
LDC	Least developed country
LMIC	Low- and-middle-income country
MEB	Minimum expenditure basket
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRIMES	Population Registration and Identity Management Ecosystem
ProGres	Profile Global Registration System
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SPIAC-B	Social Protection Inter-Agency Board
StatCom	United Nations Statistical Commission
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Executive summary

Forced displacement has been increasing worldwide for decades, and has been further aggravated by Russia's war against Ukraine in early 2022. On average, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)¹ spend ten years in displacement, a period during which rights to public services often remain obscure, or inaccessible (Devictor and Do, 2016). Overall, 76% of refugees live in a protracted situation, while only 1% realise a durable solution (UNHCR, 2021a).

While forced displacement has primarily been addressed through humanitarian responses, emphasising food, safety and shelter, protracted situations increasingly require a change in approach – focused on integration and alignment with longer-term development-oriented objectives. Momentum on an inclusion-oriented forced displacement agenda has been gained through global instruments in recent years, including: the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the Action Agenda following the United Nations Secretary-General High Level Panel on Internal Displacement, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus Recommendation, and the DAC International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) Common Position on comprehensive responses to refugee situations. Certain countries have also begun aligning their own approaches and policies with the objectives of the HDP Nexus (Gagnon and Rodrigues, 2020).

Despite humanitarian efforts, forcibly displaced persons remain in precarious and vulnerable situations. Focus on addressing forced displacement has slowly shifted towards integration with local hosting communities, enabling forcibly displaced persons to be more self-reliant and host communities to be more resilient. Access to governmental services and the right to local employment are fundamental for forcibly displaced persons to live dignified lives and contribute to society. A policy area where both humanitarian and development actors can therefore work closer together is access to social protection systems.

Little data is available about forcibly displaced persons' access to social protection. This paper contributes to filling that data gap. It provides an analysis on *de jure* (legal) and *de facto* (actual) access in twelve low- and middle-income countries (LMICs): Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda.

The analysis suggests that often government social protection systems are nascent in LMICs hosting forcibly displaced populations. The maturity and history of the social protection system in the hosting country largely determines the adequate response towards inclusion of forcibly displaced persons: more established systems are able to co-ordinate and create an inclusive environment for forcibly displaced populations. Governmental social protection programmes in LMICs are also often financially reliant upon

¹ "Forcibly displaced persons" are those who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence (whether within their own country as internally displaced persons (IDPs), or across an international border as refugees), in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. "Internally displaced persons" are a subset of forcibly displaced persons, describing those who are forcibly displaced within a country.

external donors. Subsidising access for forcibly displaced populations and host communities has delivered tangible results and positive change towards inclusion.

While social protection for forcibly displaced persons is generally legally accessible in the countries reviewed, *de facto* access remains low, due to systemic and institutional barriers, and the political economy in some hosting contexts. A complete picture remains elusive, however, due to large data gaps. National planning and policy making, as well as international development co-operation, have an enabling role and should not yield to pressures against inclusion.

Social protection programmes are one way to foster the sustainable inclusion of refugees and IDPs in the socio-economic fabric of the host country, and to attain durable solutions such as voluntary return, resettlement or local integration. Policy on social protection must be adapted for the displacement situation: from preparation prior to crisis, to the immediate emergency response, the protracted context and the more sustainable solutions in the longer term. In the longer run, such an approach can help reduce cost, as the forcibly displaced begin to contribute to social insurance and the broader fiscal system of the host country. Expectations should be managed, however. Government social protection systems in LMICs may find it hard to rapidly include additional (forcibly displaced) beneficiaries, unless the system is mature and flexible enough. New system development and inclusion takes time.

With these considerations, this paper makes **five main policy recommendations** to address social protection coverage of refugees and IDPs in low- and middle-income countries.

1. Incorporate refugees and IDPs into national social protection policy and planning

Host country governments and their partners need to incorporate social protection more firmly into national preparedness plans for displacement crises, through the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in social protection systems. This requires a shift towards a territorial development approach, in which forced displacement and areas of interest (including camps) are viewed as part of an overall development plan, rather than separate challenges. It also underlines the need to address issues prior to the occurrence of crisis, rather than addressing ex-post. Legislation and policy should clearly identify *de jure* access by type of social protection programme, avoiding issues of obscure legal access ex-post. Concerning durable solutions, issues of portability of such programmes should be strongly considered, both for potential IDPs and cross-border refugee returnees, who may wish to return home with their accrued benefits.

2. Support multi-year financing for the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations

Donors should support broader social protection system development, and specific multi-year financing for the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations, providing host governments the confidence to engage in the progressive expansion of social protection to displaced (particularly refugee) populations. Particular attention should be paid to shock-responsive mechanisms and the delivery architecture in at-risk areas.

3. Enhance co-ordination across key actors

Better co-ordination across the broad spectrum of actors can be facilitated with coherent, whole-of-government policy visions, as well as co-ordination mechanisms that address the needs of forcibly displaced persons. Enhanced co-ordination with United Nations and non-governmental organisations is, moreover, a pre-requisite for streamlining data to ensure that forcibly displaced persons receive social protection benefits and equal treatment.

4. Include refugees and IDPs systematically in data collection systems

Forcibly displaced persons' access to social protection systems should be facilitated by synchronisation or inclusion of their registration data in state identity management systems and social registries. Refugees and IDPs should be systematically included in national socio-economic household surveys, which often constitute a key source for developing targeting criteria of programmes.

5. Monitor and evaluate inclusion regularly

The impact of inclusion policies and legislation should be systematically evaluated. The *de facto* inclusion of refugees and IDPs should be monitored through regular data collection. Data collection systems on social protection beneficiaries should include specific sub-categories on refugees and IDPs, by type of system. This study covered only twelve countries: more should be included in follow-up research. Beyond social protection, the inclusion of the forcibly displaced in broader national planning and socio-economic development strategies should also be examined. Only then will the obscure picture of *de facto* inclusion become clearer.

1 Introduction

Forced displacement is at an all-time high. As of mid-2021, over 84 million people globally were in situations of forced displacement, of which 26.6 million were refugees, 4.4 million were asylum seekers, 51 million were IDPs, and 3.9 million Venezuelans were displaced abroad (UNHCR, 2021a).² The number of forcibly displaced persons, the limited number of resettlement opportunities and the protracted nature of forced displacement have shown the urgency of a new approach towards addressing forced displacement. Emphasis has been put on inclusion, and more specifically, enabling the self-reliance of forcibly displaced persons and the resilience of local communities. The humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus has helped foster such an approach. It aims to bring humanitarian, development and peace actors closer together in a more co-ordinated effort for effective shorter- and longer-term responses to forced displacement.

One area that requires a stronger push for co-ordination between actors working in situations of forced displacement however is social protection. Forcibly displaced persons are more vulnerable than host populations, while access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons in LMICs remains elusive. Social protection systems have been rolled out globally, at a rate never experienced in developing countries in the last 50 years. Yet, they are largely nascent and underdeveloped and remain in a context of limited fiscal space. Coverage, even for non-displaced national citizens, remains sparse. In Africa for instance, only 17% of the population is covered by at least one social protection benefit, and only 9% of vulnerable persons are covered by social assistance (ILO, 2021). However, social protection initiatives represent an area where the efforts surrounding the HDP nexus can particularly boost collaboration efforts from a variety of actors, data collection and a balance of longer- and shorter-term objectives (Gagnon and Rodrigues, 2020; Burlin, A. (ed.), 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has made addressing the lack of social protection coverage even more pressing – as countries grapple to address the widespread health and socio-economic crises that the pandemic created. Yet, in displacement hosting areas in low- and middle-income countries, the uncertain nature of *de jure* and *de facto* access to social protection often prohibited effective provision for them, slowing recovery, and increasing contagion risks. Even where the political, fiscal, and staffing capacity existed to respond, authorities and operational partners found that they were often not armed with the data and information required to quickly assess and provide relevant support.

The challenge of extending social protection coverage to forcibly displaced persons lies beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, however. The recent global rollout of social protection mechanisms in LMICs has raised questions around their financial sustainability. Many of the current social protection initiatives in LMICs are substantially funded by donor transfers. The sustainability of the social protection agenda in these countries therefore often seems compromised – and remains fragile. Linking forced displacement and social protection, with the right to work in the hosting community, may be a potential solution for a more financially sustainable inclusion of forcibly displaced persons. It would enable forcibly displaced persons to contribute to a fiscal base that could pave the way towards a more sustainable solution, addressing vulnerability, self-reliance, and community resilience.

² UNHCR's Global Report further distinguishes Venezuelans displaced abroad, which refers to persons who are likely to be in need of international protection under the criteria contained in the Cartagena Declaration, but who have not applied for asylum in the country in which they are present.

The paper is guided by four policy questions

Given the increasing profile of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus, a broader and more comprehensive approach to addressing forced displacement in developing countries has emerged (Gagnon and Rodrigues, 2020). Governments and other stakeholders³ testified to this change during the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, when they made significant policy and financial commitments towards the GCR's four objectives: (1) ease the pressures on host countries, (2) enhance refugee self-reliance, (3) expand access to third-country solutions and (4) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

The focus of the international community has now shifted to translate commitment into action. One promising area is enhancing refugee self-reliance through the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in government social protection systems. During the Global Refugee Forum, some countries made specific pledges to enhance access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons. The Government of Angola intends to implement social protection mechanisms targeting refugee and host communities to strengthen social cohesion, while the government of Ethiopia aims to enhance social protection and asylum systems through improved legal and institutional frameworks at national and local levels.

The funding made available by the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) 18 and 19 Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities and other initiatives has created momentum, reinforcing government capacity to scale up coverage for asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The COVID-19 pandemic has made such efforts more urgent with additional needs in refugee locations coupled with a raft of socio-economic recovery and stimulus packages that are likely to channel significant investments via government social protection systems.

As a first step, social protection coverage and the conditions for effective access into national social protection systems of vulnerable populations in forced displacement locations need to be better understood. There is a lack of global- and country-level data showing whether forcibly displaced people have the right to social protection as defined by national laws and legislation, and who actually has received which types of benefits and services. This policy paper therefore aims to fill the data gap and provide guidance to major actors and stakeholders on collecting, analysing, and acting on the need to extend social protection initiatives to forcibly displaced persons. It seeks to raise awareness on the short- and long-term implications by presenting a baseline of *de jure* and estimated *de facto* coverage of forcibly displaced persons in 12 countries, and providing a deeper policy analysis for Iraq, Sudan, and Uganda.

The following four research questions guided the analysis in the policy paper:

1. What conditions enable access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons?
2. Who is covered? Who is not? What is the overall coverage rate of forcibly displaced persons?
3. How is social protection coverage for forcibly displaced persons financed?
4. What are the challenges and best practices for scaling up social protection coverage of forcibly displaced persons?

Section 2 presents the context surrounding social protection coverage for forcibly displaced persons, Section 3 presents an analysis of social protection coverage, including *de jure* and *de facto* access in 12 countries and Section 4 offers policy recommendations.

³ This paper is primarily focused on governmental public social protection systems and programmes, with the objective of providing policy recommendations on sustainable national and local programming. Hosting governments are not, however, the only key actors in the discussion on access and coverage of social protection systems. Donors and international organisations are often funders of such systems, particularly in nascent system contexts. Civil society organisations may act as delivery service providers, with good knowledge of local contexts. Private sector actors may expand the supply of programmes. Such actors are fundamental to the success, and implementation of the policy recommendations made in this paper.

2 Background and context

The inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in social sectors in host countries reflects a discussion at the confluence of several major development trends: the rise of forced displacement flows and protracted situations, the vulnerability of forcibly displaced persons, the fragility of hosting communities, the hits and misses of the international response and, for social protection in particular, the limited reach of social protection systems in developing countries. This section describes the overarching context joining them.

2.1 Forced displacement has become a major development challenge

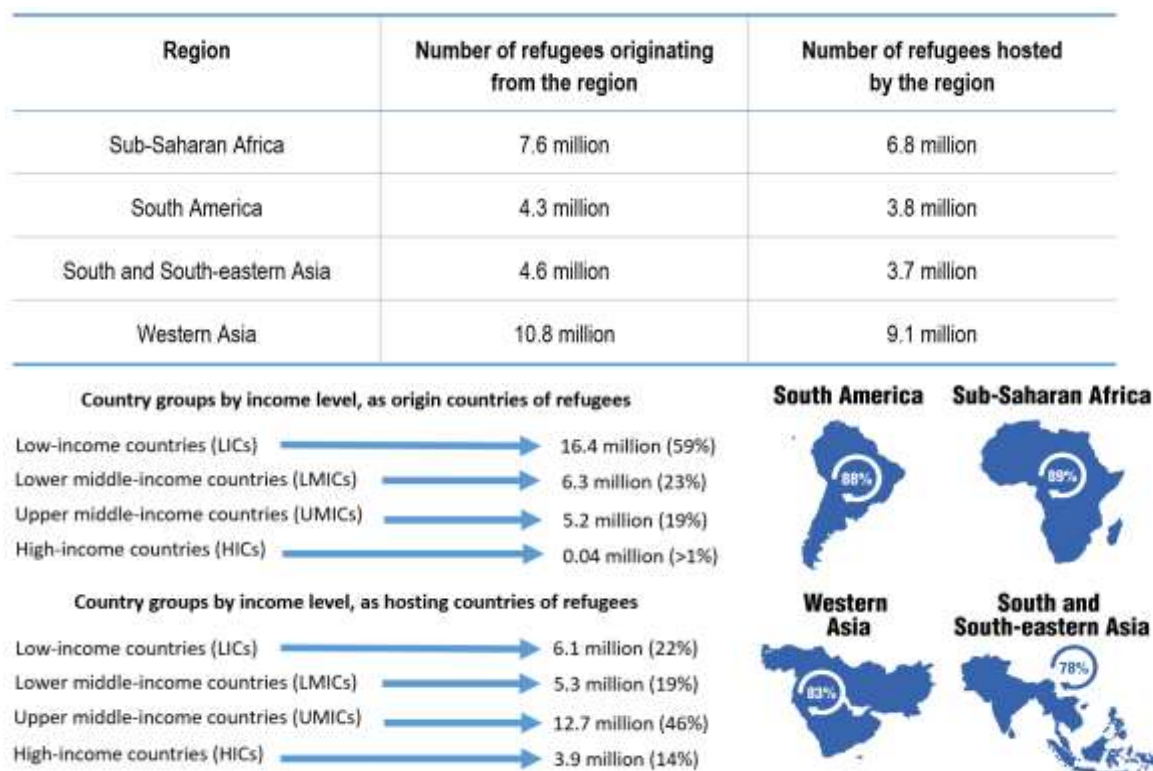
The number of forcibly displaced persons has been on the rise over the last two decades. As of mid-2021, UNHCR reported over 84 million forcibly displaced persons, of which 26.6 million were refugees, 4.4 million were asylum seekers, 51 million were IDPs, and 3.9 million Venezuelans were displaced abroad (UNHCR, 2021a). By mid-2021, low- and middle-income were also hosting 86% of the world's refugee population (Figure 1).

Forced displacement has in effect doubled in the last decade and despite the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers increased by 4% in 2020. It is a significant challenge for LMICs,⁴ where conflict, violence, natural disasters, and the adverse effects of climate change continue to force people from their homes.

⁴ In this paper, developing countries are defined as countries that are of low- and middle-income (LMICs). Country income levels are defined by World Bank IDA criteria.

Figure 1. Developing economies host the majority of refugees across the world

Number of refugees by region and income-level (mid-2021)



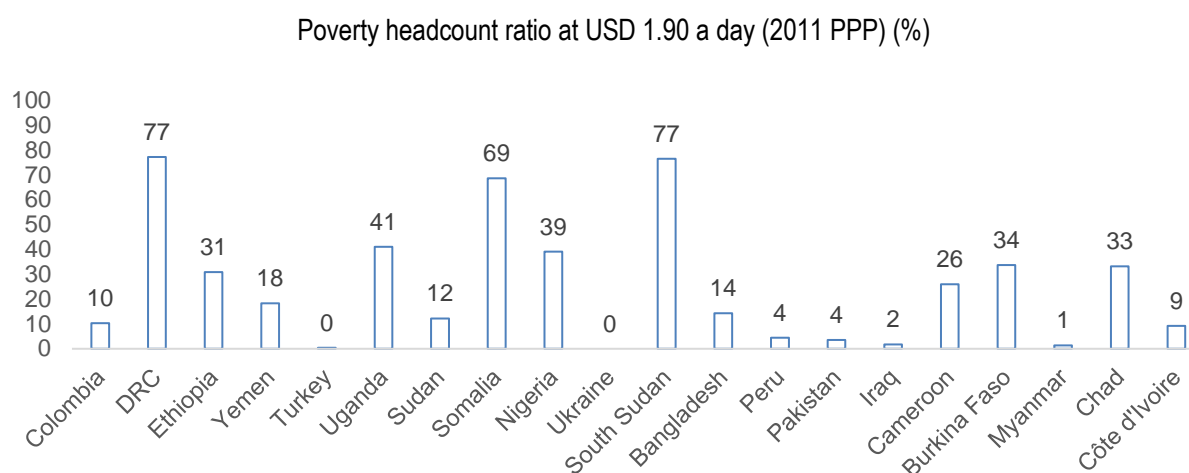
Note: Figures represent total of refugees and persons in refugee-like situations (including Venezuelans displaced abroad, and refugees under the mandate of UNRWA), as at mid-2021, prior to the war in Ukraine. Regions are defined according to the United Nations Geoscheme. Income groups defined as per the World Bank (calendar year 2020). Developing countries defined as being either LIC, LMIC or UMIC. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding errors. Percentages in bottom-right corner maps reflect the share of refugees originating and currently hosted within the same region as a share of total refugees originating from the region.

Source: Calculated by authors using UNHCR Population Statistics Database, <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview>.

The refugee context has dramatically changed over the past two decades. 60% of refugees live outside of refugee settlements in urban areas where they find themselves in precarious situations (World Refugee Council, 2018). Living outside of camps does increase refugee integration and the likelihood of participation in economic activities but may also mean losing the social safety nets more easily accessible inside camps. Furthermore, the average length of stay in which a typical refugee has remained in a protracted crisis has increased since the 1990s (OECD, 2016), with a current average length of time now approximately ten years (Devictor and Go, 2016). 76% of refugees were living in a protracted situation at the end of 2020 (UNHCR, 2021a).

General poverty rates vary across countries hosting high numbers of forcibly displaced persons, although many forcibly displaced persons reside in countries that have particularly high rates of the population living below the poverty line of USD 1.90 per day (Figure 2). This means significant resources are needed to support vulnerable households in hosting communities alongside the needs of displaced households. In the DRC, nearly four out of five people live in extreme poverty, and in Burkina Faso (34%), Chad (33%), and Uganda (41%), this concerns at least one in three people. Poverty rates are much lower in upper middle-income countries like Costa Rica (2%), Iraq (2%) and Colombia (10%).

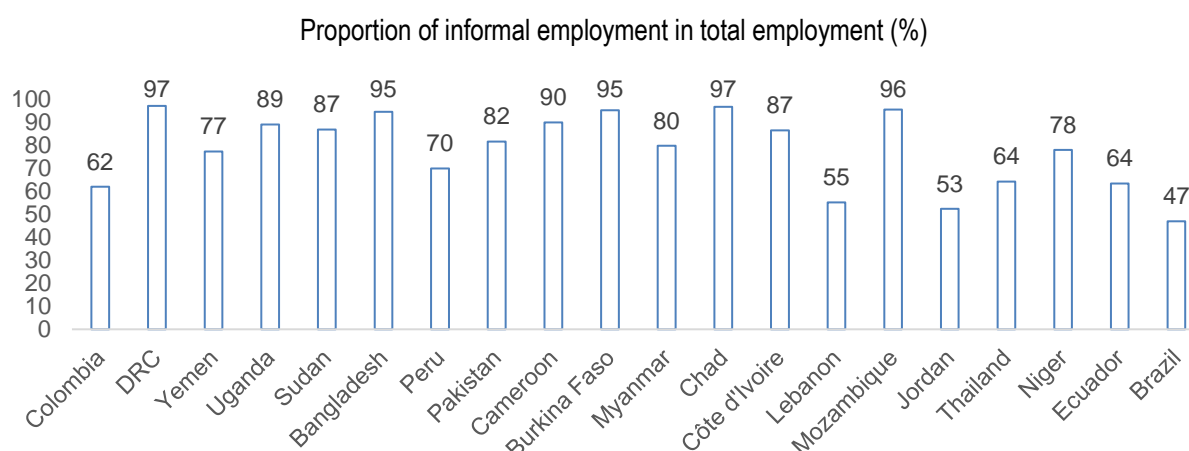
Figure 2. Poverty rates vary in countries hosting forcibly displaced populations



Note: Top 20 low- and middle-income countries with total populations of more than 500 000 and available data are listed left-to-right based on total forced displacement population, according to UNHCR Population Statistics. Latest year of available data reported, ranging by country from 2012 to 2020. Countries with missing data include (in order of size of forced displacement population) Syria, Afghanistan and Venezuela. Source: Authors' calculations based on World Bank Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/> (accessed April 2022).

Developing countries who are hosts also typically have high informal employment rates, including several countries covered by this study (Figure 3). Scarce economic opportunities leave many forcibly displaced persons and persons living in host communities prone to informal work with irregular income and lack of social protection. While informal employment rates are lower in countries like Costa Rica (37%) and South Africa (32%), in many countries hosting high numbers of forcibly displaced populations at least eight out of ten people make up the share of informal workers in the total workforce. This includes Burkina Faso (95%), Cameroon (90%), Chad (97%), the DRC (97%), Sudan (87%) and Uganda (89%).

Figure 3. Many countries hosting forcibly displaced populations have high rates of informal employment



Note: Top 20 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) with total populations of more than 500 000 and available data are listed left-to-right according to total forced displacement population, based on UNHCR Population Statistics. Latest year of available data reported, ranging by country from 2009 to 2020. Countries with missing data include (in order of size of forced displacement population) Syria, Ethiopia, Türkiye, Afghanistan, Somalia, Nigeria, Ukraine, South Sudan, Iraq, Venezuela, Iran, the Central African Republic, Azerbaijan and Kenya. DRC stands for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Source: Authors' calculations based on ILOStat, <https://ilostat ilo.org/topics/informality/> (accessed April 2022).

Food insecurity is another major challenge that hosting developing countries regularly cope with. According to the 2021 Global Report on Food Crises, 66% of the 155 million people living with food insecurity reside in countries and regions with high rates of forced displacement, such as the DRC (21.8 million), Yemen (13.2 million), the Syrian Arab Republic (12.4 million) and Sudan (9.6 million) (Global Network Against Food Crises and Food Security Information Network, 2021). 25.9% of Africa's population, and 14.2% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean suffered from severe food insecurity in 2020 (FAO, 2021). Conflict, climate extremes and economic slowdown are some of the external drivers that act upon food systems in developing countries, alongside internal factors like low productivity and inefficient food supply chains.

The high concentration of forcibly displaced persons in urban areas stretches the capacities of developing countries to host them. According to UNHCR 60% of refugees and 80% of IDPs live in urban areas. Greater housing safety and security is often stated as a reason to move to urban areas, but the actual accommodation status of forcibly displaced persons is precarious: low rates of property ownership, lack of written lease agreements and the risk of forced eviction are prevalent. Despite these challenges, local governments receive little support to build inclusive cities that would enable to expand services and resources to refugees and IDPs.

Forcibly displaced persons are vulnerable

Evidence suggests that refugees and IDPs not only experience the same vulnerabilities as hosting populations, but also with more severity, being uprooted from relative stability and protection in their areas of origin. The compounding factor of flight and traumatic experiences during flight, as well as residing in a new unfamiliar environment, makes forcibly displaced persons particularly vulnerable, and often in need of targeted assistance to meet their basic needs, such as housing, food, water, access to health services and education. Some of these can be met through social protection interventions.

Poverty levels among forcibly displaced persons are nevertheless high compared to host populations. In Uganda, 69% of refugees live on less than UGX 2 000 per person per day, and more than 25% of refugees live on less than UGX 1 000. This corresponds to approximately USD 1.68 per day in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms and USD 0.56 in actual dollars, which is below the internationally recognised extreme poverty line (UNHCR/WFP/OPM, 2020). In Cox's Bazar, a city in Bangladesh, household income levels for Rohingya are 75% lower than host communities and amount to BDT 740 on average (USD 8.50) compared to BDT 2 497 (USD 29.17) for host communities (WFP, 2021). In Sudan, the national poverty line stands at USD 75 in urban areas and USD 59 in rural areas. 56% of refugee households have a much lower household income that amounts to USD 45 per month (UNHCR/Voluntas Policy Advisory, 2021).

Forcibly displaced persons tend to live in very densely populated areas where access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is limited, and health issues are frequent. In certain settlements, IDPs and refugees from different households may share a communal toilet with up to 50 people, interfering with adequate hygiene practices. A recent assessment in Sudan revealed that more than 50% of refugees residing in Kassala, Blue Nile and Central Darfur experience high and severe vulnerability related to inadequate access to water sources, sanitation, and waste disposal facilities, as well handwashing tools (UNHCR/Voluntas Policy Advisory, 2021). In Cox's Bazar, 59% of displaced Rohingyas face sanitation issues due to overcrowded and unclean WASH facilities, while 49% reported water access problems (UNHCR, 2021a). The poor quality of WASH services can lead to serious disease outbreaks in refugee settlements. In 2015, there was a large cholera outbreak in Kenya's Dadaab Refugee Camp affecting more than 1 700 refugees (National Center for Biotechnology Information, 2018). Multiple diphtheria outbreaks have also been reported in Rohingya refugee camps since late 2017 (Rahman et al., 2019).

Mental health issues and trauma among forcibly displaced persons is widespread and can be exacerbated by the living conditions in host countries. Those with pre-existing mental health conditions often face greater challenges when trying to navigate through asylum systems. A recent study carried out by Syria Relief revealed that 99% of IDPs in the Syrian city of Idlib have symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and that 75% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Türkiye also showed PTSD symptoms (Syria Relief, 2021). In Türkiye, 32% of refugee households reported that at least one household member showed psychological or distress symptoms, while 16% stated that their general physical and mental well-being had deteriorated and required immediate medical attention (IFRC, 2021). The access to mental health services varies across hosting countries: 64% of refugees in Türkiye state that they have received active support, whereas only 15% of refugees living in Lebanon benefit from counselling (Syria Relief, 2021).

Limited access to food and drinkable water hinders forcibly displaced persons to meet basic needs. In Uganda, 60% of refugees are classified as being moderately food insecure, while 16% are severely insecure (UNHCR/WFP/OPM, 2020). Similarly, more than 50% of refugees in Sudan suffer from high to severe food vulnerability, with particularly high levels (up to 70%) reported in the regions and cities of Kassala, West Kordofan and East Darfur (UNHCR/Voluntas Policy Advisory, 2021). In Cox's Bazar, 49% of Rohingya refugees that receive external assistance have food consumption below the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) (WFP, 2021). If assistance is removed, almost 96% will have consumption below the MEB. Reduced rations and food price shocks during COVID-19 have exacerbated food insecurity for forcibly displaced persons. In Cameroon, for example, the World Food Programme (WFP) had to reduce its assistance to refugees from the Central African Republic by 50% in May and June 2020 (Scaling up nutrition, 2020).

Violence and abuse against forcibly displaced persons have increased in recent years. Assessments conducted by UNHCR revealed that gender-based violence (GBV) has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, as reported by 73% of forcibly displaced women in East and West Africa. In Colombia, the number of Venezuelan migrants who experienced GBV in the first three quarters of 2020 increased by 40% compared to the previous year (UNHCR, 2021a). Xenophobic attacks also occur as reported in South

Africa, where over 20 Somali refugees were killed in the first half of 2021 (Anadolu Agency, 2021), and over 1 000 Bangladeshi shops were looted in 2019 alone (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Forcibly displaced children persistently lack access to basic services that can lead to greater reliance on negative coping mechanisms. Recent UNHCR estimates show that children constitute 42% of all forcibly displaced people, and that almost one million children were born as refugees between 2018 and 2020 (UNHCR, 2021a). Children, and in particular those who are separated from their families, are exposed to numerous risks along their journeys, including violence, exploitation, and human trafficking. In Iraq, child marriage increased from 15% in 1997 to 24% in 2016, and in Somalia, 45.3% of young women were married before turning 18 (UNICEF, 2020). The recruitment of child soldiers is one of the worst forms of child labour and occurs in countries with high levels of internal displacement like South Sudan, where UNICEF estimated 19 000 child soldiers in 2019 (UNICEF, 2019).

Forcibly displaced persons with disabilities are often overlooked. 12 million people with disabilities were forcibly displaced in 2020, which represents 15% of all displaced people (HI, 2021). 17% of refugee households in Uganda have a member with a severe disability, while 54% of households report a member with some form of disability (UNHCR/WFP/OPM, 2020). In Türkiye, 14% of Syrian and Iraqi refugees had some form of disability (IFRC, 2021). Persons with disabilities are also at higher risk of facing targeted violence that reaches from physical violence, denial of food and medicine to profound neglect and emotional abuse (HI, 2021).

When documents are lost during flight, and refugees do not have regular documentation in the new host country, the lack of documentation may curb the access to essential services. In most countries, a regular status and related documentation is a pre-requisite, for example, to open a bank account and enrol children in public schools. In Lebanon, it is estimated that 300 000 to 500 000 Syrian refugees are unregistered (International Crisis Group, 2020), while the Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya currently hosts close to 16 000 undocumented people mainly from Somalia (UNHCR, 2020b).

Covering the needs of forcibly displaced populations therefore requires sustainable access to all social sectors. Inclusion in social protection systems is an important element in providing better opportunities.

2.2 Social protection systems in developing countries are largely nascent

Social protection is firmly entrenched as a global priority in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular in Goal 1⁵ to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”, which explicitly aims to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable. Social protection systems aim to protect the population from poverty and vulnerability through a mix of policies and programmes.

Social protection can be broken down into different overarching types (Carter et al., 2019):

1. Social assistance: non-contributory transfers in cash, vouchers, or in-kind to the most vulnerable groups; public works programmes; and fee waivers and subsidies.
2. Social insurance: contributory programmes, in which participants pay a premium to participate. Provides compensatory support in the event of e.g. illness, injury, unemployment, parental leave, or old age.
3. Labour market interventions: a variety of programmes that promote labour market participation and ensure minimum employment standards.

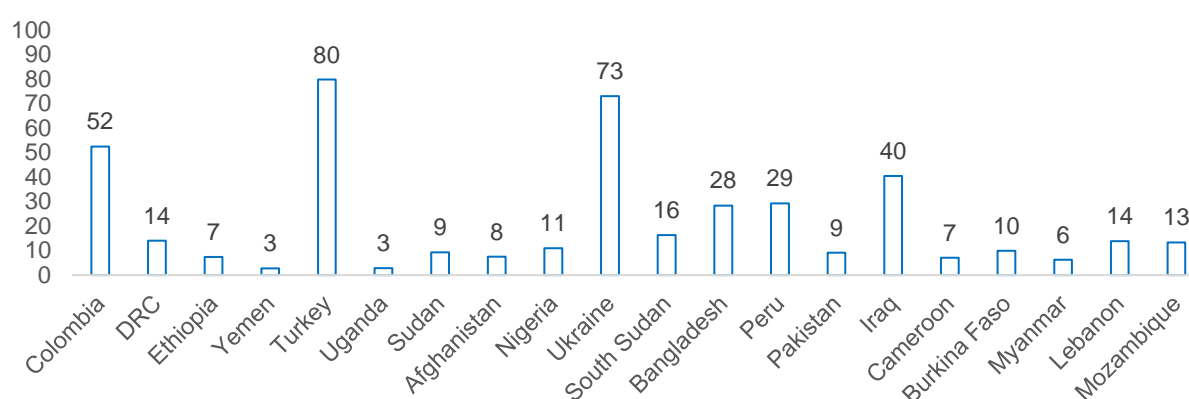
Most people in the world do not have access to any form of social protection. As of 2020, less than half (45%) of the world’s population was effectively covered by at least one form of social protection. Coverage

⁵ Social protection in its different forms is also anchored in other SDGs, such as Goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and well-being for people of all ages, and Goal 8 to promote productive employment and decent work for all.

is moreover unequally distributed across regions. The average rate across Africa, for instance, is 17.4%, while in Asia and the Pacific it is 39%. Countries that host forcibly displaced persons typically and generally also feature low social protection coverage (Figure 4). This is particularly true for many of the countries investigated in this study, including Afghanistan (8%), Burkina Faso (10%), the DRC (14%), Ethiopia (7%), Sudan (9%) and Uganda (3%). There are also gaps in the types of coverage. Coverage gaps remain in the areas of child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment protection and disability benefits. The gap is particularly large among those of working age where globally, 69% of the population is not covered or only partially covered by comprehensive social protection (ILO, 2021).

Figure 4. Most countries hosting large forcibly displaced populations have low social protection coverage

Population covered by at least one social protection benefit (excluding health) (%) (2020)



Note: Top 20 low- and middle-income countries with total populations of more than 500 000 and available data are listed left-to-right according to total forced displacement population, based on UNHCR Population Statistics. Countries with missing data include (in order of size of forced displacement population) Syria, Somalia, Venezuela, Chad and Côte d'Ivoire. DRC stands for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Source: Authors' calculations based on ILOstat, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/social-protection/> (accessed April 2022), UNHCR Refugee Population Statistics Database (accessed April 2022); United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019), *World Population Prospects 2019*, Online Edition. Rev. 1; World Bank country classification by income for the 2022 fiscal year.

The differences in coverage rates reflect the varying degree of maturity of social protection systems across the world (Kool and Nimeh, 2021). Building on UNHCR classification (2021) of social protection systems, development can be categorised across three broad categories (UNHCR, 2021b):

1. *Nascent systems*, which, in relation to social assistance, consist of a few separate programmes, often cash transfer programmes that rely to a considerable extent on international investments;
2. *Systems in development*, that are scaling up social assistance and other types of social protection programmes using a mix of international and government funding; and
3. *Well-developed systems*, that consist of diverse types of social protection benefits that are mainly financed by government investments.

In addition to the maturity of social protection systems in terms of their scale and financing, other features will also determine the feasibility of including additional populations in social protection programmes. The policy and programme design defines who should benefit, who should provide the benefits and through what instruments (Schüring and Loewe, 2021). An additional concern is the possibility to design systems that are flexible enough to scale up quickly in situations requiring urgent support for more people, such as following climate-related shocks or conflict. Social protection systems are increasingly being used to deliver support in humanitarian situations and have the potential to provide sustainable longer-term solutions

(Cherrier, 2021), including in situations of forced displacement. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit committed, through the *Grand Bargain*,⁶ to “increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts” (IACS, n.d.).

Social protection information systems aim to show who is eligible and who is benefitting (Barca, 2017), information that is crucial when integrating new populations into social protection programmes. The increased use of digital information systems, both for monitoring and delivery of benefits, has improved the responsiveness and flexibility of programmes (see Box 3). Responsive and flexible programmes can more easily be adjusted and reduce the administrative burden of registration, update of registries and payment of benefits, which are important aspects to enable the inclusion of new population groups in the programmes.

2.3 Recent policies on forced displacement make the case for inclusion into national socio-economic systems

The recognition that forced displacement is not solely a humanitarian, but also a longer-term development and peace issue, has been thoroughly documented and translated into policy. The 17 SDGs, adopted in 2015, aim “to reach the furthest behind first” and to “leave no one behind”, which includes displaced populations. There have been calls for a new refugee policy, which is financially sustainable and reconciles the interests of host States with the needs of the displaced (Betts and Collier, 2015). The Global Compact on Refugees, adopted in 2018 calls for pursuing integrated responses among the humanitarian, development, and peace dimensions to support refugees in rebuilding their lives (United Nations, 2016; UNHCR, 2018b). The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) INCAF Common Position on supporting comprehensive response in refugee situations, developed in 2019, states that refugee situations benefit from an HDP nexus approach that includes humanitarian assistance, development, and peace interventions from the outset of a crisis (DAC INCAF, 2019). The report of the UN Secretary General’s High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement (UN, 2021) calls for making solutions for IDPs a nationally owned, whole-of-Government priority, and for embedding a development approach to internal displacement. In the light of such global commitments, financial and policy instruments are increasingly being developed by donors and their partners, reflecting the objectives of the HDP Nexus (Gagnon and Rodrigues, 2020).

Across recent policy developments, the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in broader development planning and in national socio-economic systems has emerged as a priority, with the potential to benefit both the hosting communities and the forcibly displaced themselves. Conditions and capacities permitting, and if the right policies are applied, forcibly displaced persons contribute productively to the local economy, and become one beneficiary group – alongside host community members – of broader education, health, and social protection systems. Furthermore, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families recommend their inclusion in national systems. Objective 22 of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) aims at providing mechanisms for the transferability of the right to social security and benefits across countries.

Government social protection systems are inherently a socio-political instrument that has a critical impact on social and national cohesion. Social protection systems can be a strategic platform for meeting long-term basic needs and protection of forcibly displaced and host communities alike, to build self-reliance, and as a pathway to prepare for durable solutions. As such, they have the potential to build a pragmatic bridge over the gap between humanitarian emergency responses and development approaches. Gradual

⁶ The Grand Bargain is an agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organisations committing to get more means into the hands of people in need and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

integration and transition from parallel emergency delivery towards full inclusion in host country socio-economic systems should align with the displacement cycle (UNHCR, 2021b). In terms of system design, social cash transfer programmes as part of social protection systems have increased rapidly in number over the past decades. At the same time, humanitarian assistance has increasingly moved towards providing support in cash or vouchers rather than in-kind transfers. The similarity in programme modality has opened the opportunity to use existing social protection systems for populations in humanitarian situations.

Social protection systems must align with the forced displacement situation

According to UNHCR, humanitarian aid delivers services for newly displaced populations as required by new emergency situations, while shock-responsive government social safety nets start initial support with cash and/or in-kind assistance. This is only possible if preparedness planning and capacity building is carried out well in advance of new displacement crises and has enabled existing central and local government social protection systems to include additional populations. As displacement becomes protracted, services for displaced persons gradually shift to state social safety nets and welfare services, including health insurance systems. Eventually, after initial subsidised access, forcibly displaced persons can become contributory participants through participation in the labour market. This offers the potential for sustainable interim solutions for displacement until formal durable solutions, such as voluntary return, local integration and resettlement, become possible (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Aligning social protection systems with the forced displacement situation



Source: Authors, based on graphic from UNHCR (2021d), "Social protection in Support of Protection and Solutions", internal UNHCR report.

The implementation of such solutions and approaches is contextual and depends on the political economy of the forced displacement context. This includes sentiments throughout communities and by leaders towards receiving and hosting forcibly displaced persons, social cohesion and conflict dynamics in the local hosting area and country. It depends on the nature of political agendas and the interests relating to the refugee and IDP communities. In some cases of internal displacement, the host government may not be able or willing to provide protection or services to the IDPs, or may even be part of the cause of internal displacement in a conflict situation. Xenophobia and scapegoating of new communities can easily be instrumentalised against both refugees and internally displaced, making inclusion efforts a difficult

undertaking. In some situations, IDPs flee from persecution by their own Government, and their exclusion from existing national service systems may be deliberate. Nor may IDPs trust actors of the same government that forced them to flee, and they rather prefer not to interact for their own safety. In the case of refugees, the prioritisation of precious national resources may not include foreigners, an undertaking which can be a controversial political sell to local constituencies. At the same time, there are also examples where political will to embrace fleeing populations by country leaders and local communities has gone a long way towards making protection, integration and solutions possible.

2.4 The actual inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in social protection systems remains unclear

Even if forcibly displaced populations have the legal right to social protection, it is often not available to them (Kool and Nimeh, 2021). *De jure* and *de facto* access to social protection systems are often divergent. *De jure* access implies that the constitutions and broader legal frameworks of hosting countries enable the access to social protection with specific attention to migratory status, such as in Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador (IPC-IG, UNICEF LACRO and WFP, 2021). Legal access, however, does not guarantee the effective, *de facto* access to social protection. This largely depends on the availability of government services, its ability to reach all areas of its territory and whether social protection systems are designed for their integration.

The maturity of social protection systems in developing countries influences the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons. In nascent systems, it is unlikely for the most vulnerable groups – including forcibly displaced persons – to benefit from wide-ranging social protection. In systems in development, forcibly displaced persons have higher chances to benefit from the efforts of scaling up social assistance and other social protection programmes. In well-developed systems with a range of social protection benefits, with significant government investments, forcibly displaced persons have the highest chances of inclusion (UNHCR, 2021b).

Some challenges related to the inclusion of forcibly displaced in social protection programmes are known. For example, an important pre-requisite for inclusion of forcibly displaced persons is their status in the hosting developing country. The legal status in transit and destination countries, and the extent to which regularisation mechanisms are available, have a direct impact on the access to government services. For undocumented, it is unlikely to benefit from government social protection services. Even when refugees have a regular status, some countries require a minimum length of residency, in particular for Old Age Pension (IPC-IG, UNICEF LACRO and WFP, 2021). Barriers to access by forcibly displaced can also be related to the administration of programmes. In Colombia, for example, certain social protection programmes like the *Familias en Acción* enrolment into the programmes are not continuous but depend on periodical calls for registration (IPC-IG, UNICEF LACRO and WFP, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opening for including forcibly displaced in social protection. In fact, the number of social protection programmes temporarily increased dramatically as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Gentilini et al., 2020). Recently published reports revealed that COVID-19 provided a window of opportunity to include refugees in national programmes, but there are practical obstacles (e.g. irregular status and political economy) that impede *de facto* access (Andrade et al., 2021; IPC-IG, UNICEF LACRO and WFP, 2021). It is also unclear to what extent these shock-responsive social protection programmes will lead to long-term inclusion into broader national systems. A recent working paper from ODI revealed that although numerous assistance programmes have been directed towards refugees, refugees in low- and middle-income countries have generally not been included in government social protection. The support has been provided by international humanitarian and development actors. In the few cases where refugees have been included, it has been a continuation of policy already in place prior to the pandemic. The pandemic has only resulted in minor changes in the approach towards allowing

refugees to access government social protection (Hagen-Zanker and Both, 2021). Examples from Africa where refugees have received social protection benefits during the pandemic include countries benefiting from the WBG IDA regional sub-window for refugees and host communities, such as Cameroon, the Republic of Congo and Djibouti (UNHCR, 2021b).

2.5 There is no overarching baseline on the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in social protection programmes

There have been previous attempts to measure both *de jure* and *de facto* access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons, particularly in the recent light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research efforts have primarily focused on *de jure* access, concluding that forcibly displaced persons often have *de jure* access, but that regular migration status in the host country is an essential condition for access to such rights. *De jure* access is often either anchored in national constitutions or referred to in specific migration laws and policies.

The literature broadly takes the form of short guidance material, best practice documents and reviews of social protection systems and programmes and their accessibility by forcibly displaced persons (Table 1). It includes a mix of studies at the regional level, like Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as studies on specific countries like Egypt and Jordan. The literature has to a significant extent focused on social assistance, especially cash transfer programmes, which are most common types of programmes in LMICs. Literature that has a stronger focus on rights and legal frameworks tend to be broader and include aspects of right to work, work related programmes and social insurance.

It argues that:

- Social protection programmes can play a substantial role at all stages of the migration process;
- Social protection programmes are nascent in LMICs and often not able to take on complex and widespread tasks;
- With limited budgets and targeting programmes that insufficiently cover the eligible national population, the inclusion of migrants can generate social tensions;
- Social protection programmes that include forcibly displaced persons rarely account for the additional protection needs of vulnerable groups;
- Social registries are a gateway for receiving social protection, functioning as information systems that can support intake, registration and determination and provision of benefits;
- Social protection programmes are often supported and financed by international organisations, especially when they cover forcibly displaced persons, although budget allocations differ between LMICs;
- There is a complementary role between humanitarian assistance and government social protection systems;
- In response to COVID-19, temporary assistance programmes were created that were partially extended to forcibly displaced persons.

Previous literature in this category has mostly focused on rights and legal frameworks, as well as the availability of and eligibility for social protection programmes (Table 1). These reviews and mappings, however, do not include information on actual, *de facto*, coverage of social protection among forcibly displaced persons.

This OECD development policy paper contributes to the global review literature and provides updated insights on access to social protection in twelve LMICs. It has a varied geographical scope by including countries with potential to provide lessons on social protection and displacement from Central Asia

(Afghanistan), Latin America (Colombia, Costa Rica), the Middle East (Iraq) and sub-Saharan Africa (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, South Africa, Sudan).

Table 1. Recent literature on social protection in forced displacement contexts

Categories	Source	Publication year	Focus area	Target countries
Handbooks, guides, and frameworks	Katy Long and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, "Migration, Forced Displacement and Social Protection"	2017	Vulnerabilities faced by forcibly displaced persons and the type of social protection needed at various stages	N.A
Handbooks, guides, and frameworks	Clare O'Brien et al., "Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems research: Synthesis report"	2018	Shock-responsive social protection systems	N.A
Handbooks, guides, and frameworks	Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, "differential vulnerabilities and rights: 'opening' access to social protection for forcibly displaced populations"	2019	Possibilities to extend access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons	N.A
Handbooks, guides, and frameworks	Karin Seyfert et. al, "Unbundled: A Framework for Connecting Safety Nets and Humanitarian Assistance in Refugee Settings"	2019	Delivery approaches of social assistances for refugees and shared responsibility among different actors	N.A
Handbooks, guides, and frameworks	Tamara Kool and Zina Nimeh, "Refugees and social protection"	2021	Rights-based approach to social protection and possibilities for inclusive social protection	N.A
Best practice documents	Iffat Idris, "Linking social protection and humanitarian response—best practice"	2019	Linking social protection to humanitarian interventions	Cameroon, Lebanon, Türkiye
Best practice documents	IPC-IG and UNICEF, "Improving social protection for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt"	2021	International practices to expand social protection for forcibly displaced persons on which Egypt can build on	Egypt
Reviews of current social protection systems	Mpho Makhema, World Bank, "Social protection for refugees and asylum seekers in the Southern Africa Development Community"	2009	Legal provision of social protection for refugees and asylum-seekers and institutional set-up	South Africa and Botswana
Reviews of current social protection systems	Alovsat Aliyev, "Social and economic rights of refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan"	2013	<i>De jure</i> access to social protection	Azerbaijan
Reviews of current social protection systems	Hanna Röth et.al. ODI, "A mapping of social protection and humanitarian assistance programmes in Jordan"	2017	Mapping of social protection and humanitarian assistances programmes	Jordan
Reviews of current social protection systems	UNHCR, "UNHCR Mapping of Social Safety Nets for Refugees - Opportunities and Challenges"	2019	Mapping of social safety nets for refugees and opportunities to align humanitarian cash assistance and social safety nets	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Colombia, Ecuador, Iran, Kenya, Malaysia, Mozambique, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Türkiye, Uganda, Venezuela, Yemen
Reviews of current social protection systems	Tilman Brück et al., "Social Protection in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement: Introduction to a Special Issue"	2019	Role of social protection in fragile contexts and in settings of forced displacement and migration	Mali, Niger, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, Ecuador
Reviews of current social protection systems	UNHCR, Social protection responses to COVID-19 for forcibly displaced persons	2020	Examples in which social protection has been extended to forcibly displaced persons in the context of COVID-19	Brazil, Kenya, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Pakistan,

Reviews of current social protection systems	IPC-IG, UNICEF, and WFP, "Social protection and Venezuelan migration in Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of COVID-19"	2021	<i>De jure</i> access to social protection and main programmes available for Venezuelan migrants	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago
Reviews of current social protection systems	World Bank, "Integration of Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in Brazil"	2021	<i>De jure</i> access to social protection programmes and challenges related to inclusion in national systems	Brazil
Reviews of current social protection systems	Institute of Development Studies, "Country Reviews of Social Assistance in Crises: A Compendium of Rapid Assessments of the Nexus Between Social Protection and Humanitarian Assistance in Crisis Settings"	2021	Overview of social assistance landscape including social transfers, public works programmes, fee waivers, and subsidies with the primary aim of reducing poverty and vulnerability among people affected by crises	Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen
Reviews of current social protection systems	UNHCR, Inclusion of Refugees in Government Social Protection Systems in Africa	2021	Overview of government social protection programmes and the inclusion of refugees based on access to rights, international investments, government capacity, eligibility criteria, inclusion in government programmes and follow-up support	Ghana, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Malawi, Djibouti, Kenya, and Rwanda
Reviews of current social protection systems	Jessica Hagen-Zanker and Nathalie Both ODI, "Social protection provisions to refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons learned from government and humanitarian responses"	2021	Scaling-up government-led social protection responses to forcibly displaced persons in the context of COVID-19	Republic of Congo, Colombia, Jordan, and Pakistan

Note: This list does not cover all publications related to social protection in situations of forced displacement but provides an overview of recent reports discussing the access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons.

3 Presentation and analysis of the baseline

There is no globally harmonised and accessible overarching baseline on social protection coverage of forcibly displaced populations. This section takes a step towards creating such a database, by building and analysing a baseline of *de jure* (legal, permissible) and *de facto* (actual) access to social protection by forcibly displaced populations in twelve LMICs. The analysis is divided by refugees⁷ and IDPs, as well as by type of social protection, when possible.

The dearth of data on access to social protection by people in displaced situations is part of a larger challenge on improving data and statistics on situations of forced displacement. Several initiatives have been established to improve such knowledge, with potential for more knowledge on inclusion and social protection. Such initiatives include:

- The United Nations Statistical Commission's (StatCom) adoption of the International Recommendations on *Refugee Statistics* in 2018 and the International Recommendations on *Internally Displaced Persons Statistics* in 2020;
- The creation of a Joint Data Center (JDC) on Forced Displacement, a collaboration between the World Bank and UNHCR in 2018.

Despite these advancements, data on displaced populations is rarely part of regularly collected governmental data. The JDC views this as the result of five types of gaps (JDC, 2020):

- a quality gap, due to the lack of clear definitions and solid methods;
- a substantive gap, due to the lack of more overall quality socio-economic data;
- a systems gap, due to the limited integration of displaced populations in national statistical systems;
- an access gap, due to limited available and access to microdata; and
- a coverage gap, due to the lack of data on key population groups and geographic areas.

The creation of a baseline therefore requires two elements: an investigation of the right for forcibly displaced persons to access social protection programmes (*de jure* access), and an investigation into the effective access to such programmes (*de facto* access). The creation of a *de jure* baseline should draw on national legal frameworks, strategies and literature containing publicly available information. The creation of the *de facto* baseline database should draw on several sources, and in many cases, on proxy measurements of *de facto* access, rather than actual evidence. Two databases were particularly relevant to estimate general national coverage as a baseline comparison:

- The World Bank's Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE database);
- The ILO's Social Protection Report and its accompanying online dashboard (latest release: September 2021).

⁷ When information is available and pertinent, the analysis includes asylum-seekers as well.

These two sources complement each other well - the ASPIRE data draws its information from nationally representative household survey data, while the ILO's data draws on administrative data provided by governments. Neither of these databases provide information specifically on forcibly displaced populations, however. There are five main reasons for their non-inclusion in the databases:

- Displaced populations are often excluded from government social protection;
- Political economy concerns determine whether and what data on displaced persons is collected and shared;
- Humanitarian priorities shift the focus away from data on social protection coverage;
- Displaced populations are often omitted from underlying data collection;
- Resource constraints limit the prioritisation of additional data collection.

De facto access was estimated based on information reported in publicly available programme or project reports, complemented by available literature.

The following sections present a baseline of *de jure* and estimated *de facto* coverage of forcibly displaced persons in 12 countries. It first presents the selection of countries included in the study. This is followed by a presentation of *de jure* rights and the legal landscape across the 12 countries for forcibly displaced persons, and by estimations of the *de facto* coverage for social assistance, social insurance, and labour market interventions. In addition, it provides additional analysis on the initiatives surrounding social protection and inclusion in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.1 Country selection and target group

The initial baseline dataset contains information for 12 LMICs with a large internationally or internally displaced population (at least 100 000 people). Countries were selected with the aim of ensuring diversity of contexts in terms of income levels, geographies, fragility, and social protection system development as well as having the potential to provide lessons on inclusive social protection. The twelve countries selected are as follows: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, South Africa, Sudan, and Uganda.

The baseline mapping was completed for most countries in July and August 2021, using information collected or published in 2020 and earlier.⁸ More recent developments were therefore not considered, including major changes that have significant implications for the displacement context.⁹

In addition to the use of data, key informant interviews were conducted in each of the target countries to obtain a better understanding of national and local guidelines and legal frameworks and potentially existing

⁸ The legal, programme and other documents reviewed for each country are available upon request.

⁹ Such changes include those in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Sudan. In Afghanistan, increased conflict during 2021, followed by the Taliban's full acquisition of power in August 2021 led to dramatic increases in internal displacement, with at least 700 000 additionally displaced persons as of October 2021 (UNHCR, 2021a), as well as uncertainty over the political priorities and programmes that will remain under the Taliban administration. In Ethiopia, displacement numbers rose during 2021 due to an escalation in conflict in the northern Tigray region between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) since November 2020. More than 60 000 refugees fled the conflict, in what has been the largest refugee outflow from Ethiopia in decades, with most heading to Sudan. The situation has also resulted in internal displacement. As of November 2021, approximately 4.2 million Ethiopians were internally displaced. Eritrean refugees hosted in Ethiopia have been severely affected by the conflict, particularly in settlements in the North of the country (UN, 2021; Adugna 2021). In Sudan, political developments were unfolding at the time of writing, following a military coup on 25 October 2021, which resulted in the house arrest of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and sparked widespread protests (UN, 2021; Abdelaziz, 2021).

relevant data. In all, 47 key informant interviews were conducted, both for the baseline mapping and the three country case studies (Table 2).

Table 2. Key informant interviews by country

Country	Key informants interviewed
Afghanistan	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)
Burkina Faso	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), World Bank (WB)
Cameroon	World Bank (WB)
Chad	World Bank (WB)
Colombia	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Migración Colombia, World Food Programme (WFP)
Costa Rica	World Food Programme (WFP)
Democratic Republic of Congo	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), World Bank (WB), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
Ethiopia	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank (WB), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
Iraq	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), UNHCR, Cash and Livelihoods Consortium for Iraq (CLCI), World Food Programme (WFP), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), World Bank (WB), International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, IOM, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Migration and Displacement
Sudan	International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank (WB), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), Save the Children, UNHCR, National Health Insurance Fund
Uganda	International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNHCR, World Food Programme (WFP), Save the Children, Office of Prime Minister, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Swedish Embassy
Global and regional	ILO HQ, UNICEF HQ, UNHCR HQ, WFP HQ, WFP Regional Bureau for Latin America and Caribbean, FCDO, GIZ, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Leiden University

3.2 Forcibly displaced populations often have good *de jure* access to social protection

De jure access implies legal access to social protection programmes for forcibly displaced persons, on the same basis as local citizens – that is, without reference to their status as forcibly displaced persons, including IDPs and refugees.

Global and regional instruments

Several global instruments articulate and clarify the global rights to social protection and governmental services for forcibly displaced persons. The two overarching global instruments are the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the 1951 Refugee Convention), for which there are 146 parties and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (the 1967 Protocol), for which 147 countries are parties. Both instruments form the grounds for the treatment and protection of refugees, including access to governmental services. Amongst the countries in this project, Iraq is the only country that is not party to either instrument.

Regional instruments build on global instruments to further contextualise local priorities. For IDPs in Africa, the primary instrument is the Kampala Convention, a 2009 treaty of the African Union addressing the

challenges of IDPs, ratified to date by 30 African countries. As access to governmental services figures prominently in the treaty, ratification of the Convention often facilitates national legislation on access to social protection by IDPs. Amongst the countries of interest in this research paper, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Uganda have all ratified the Convention. Ratification of the Convention does not imply that the country has domesticated its recommendations into national legislation, however, and therefore the Convention's recommendations may not be reflected in local legislation.

In Latin America, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (the Cartagena Declaration) is the main regional instrument for the protection of refugees. It sets normative standards and recommendations for policies and actions, including on durable solutions and access to governmental services. The Cartagena Declaration was drafted and adopted in a very different context than the one in which Latin American countries find themselves today, as the main priority and concern at the time of its drafting was the forced displacement fallout from the civil conflicts occurring in Central America. In the context of the countries covered in this project, both Colombia and Costa Rica have adopted the Declaration.

***De jure* access to national social protection programmes**

Information on *de jure* access to social protection was collected for the 12 countries of focus for this project, by type of social protection, and by forced displacement status. The summarised findings, which display whether displaced persons can legally access social protection, is shown using a traffic light system in the figures below, separated by IDPs and refugees.¹⁰

Much of the analysis in this section reflects the fact that social protection systems are nascent in most of the 12 countries studied. Specific legislation dealing with social protection, but also that dealing with IDPs, was, in almost all cases, developed over the past 15 years. Nascent systems are typically characterised by cash transfer programmes, relying to a considerable extent on international funding.

The various degrees of maturity in the social protection systems are an important determinant in *de jure* access for forcibly displaced persons, as national strategies are still being rolled out for local citizens, often in the context of limited financial resources and capacity. New systems frequently involve international actors such as the World Bank, the ILO and UNICEF. In other cases, strategies have gone out of date, and have not been revised or updated, leaving little space to address contemporary displacement challenges (e.g. Afghanistan).

There are two levels of extending access to social protection to forcibly displaced populations, each reinforcing the other. The first is the right to access enshrined firmly in constitutional law, as is the case in Colombia and Costa Rica. The second is specific legislation and policies according to wide-ranging access and outlining who has access in a single social assistance law.

Issues pertaining to access to social protection typically pertain to the political economy of producing legislative documents dealing with access once the situation has already turned into a crisis, the vague notion of forced displacement in the text and outdated text. These can be avoided by ensuring legislative instruments are firmly domesticated before a crisis occurs, to minimise the effect of the political economy keeping legislative documents in limbo, ensuring the text is clear on type of social protection and on type of forced displacement situation (including for asylum-seekers), and finally, ensuring that the text is not entirely and uniquely reflective of a specific region or context.

¹⁰ The traffic light coding reflects the following three levels of access: relatively accessible with few exceptions (green), accessible but with exceptions and exemptions or unclear (orange), relatively inaccessible (red).

Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

As citizens of their country, IDPs are legally entitled to access social protections like other national citizens (Table 3), across all types of social protection, of course depending also on the targeting criteria of each specific programme. In cases where such access is not fluid, it is typically due to an administrative hurdle, rather than a legal barrier. Such barriers are typically due to the fact that for certain social assistance programmes, registrations must be made in the region of usual residence – and therefore IDPs often face challenges in registering. This is notably the case in Iraq for example.

Table 3. *De jure* access for IDPs, by country and type of social protection

Country	IDP-specific legislative instrument	Social assistance	Social insurance	Labour market interventions
Afghanistan	2013			
Burkina Faso	2014			
Cameroon				
Chad				
Colombia	2011			
Costa Rica	n/a			
DRC	2014			
Ethiopia				
Iraq	2009			
South Africa	n/a			
Sudan	2009			
Uganda	n/a			

Note: Green - full access; orange - partial or unclear access; Costa Rica, South Africa and Uganda were not part of the analysis, as the number of IDPs in these countries is very small.

In certain cases, the right is firmly dealt with by specific legislation, such as the 2013 Afghan National Policy on IDPs, the 2014 Burkinabe Law on the Prevention and Management of Risks (No. 012-2014), the 2009 Sudanese National Policy for IDPs, and the 2009 Iraqi Law No. 21 providing assistances and services to IDPs which explicitly provides for displacement by catastrophic events. Colombia provides preferential social protection access to IDPs under special circumstances, through the 2011 Victims' Law, which was recently extended to 2031.

Even when legislation exists, plans continue to be developed. Iraq recently developed The National Plan to End Displacement, alluding to access to social protection schemes.

In certain cases, access to social protection is provided to IDPs, but legislation not yet adopted in parliament, thus weakening the legal argument. In the DRC, for instance, a draft law on the Protection and Assistance of IDPs was published in 2014 but has yet to be adopted in parliament. In Cameroon, IDPs are entitled to the same rights as citizens, including in relation to social protection, but the country has not yet domesticated the Kampala Convention into national legislation, and therefore there is no specific law outlining such rights (UNHCR, 2021c).

In other cases, IDPs are entitled to access social protection, but no specific legislation is currently in place. In such cases, there is often a movement towards pushing through and issuing orders and national plans. In Chad, a 2019 ministerial order led to the creation of a working group on the implementation of the

Kampala Convention. In Ethiopia as well, two projects are under way to legislate stronger *de jure* access for IDPs. These are the 2019 Strategic Plan to Address Internal Displacement and the 2019 Durable Solutions Initiative, with specific objectives on access to social protection benefits.

A notable exception to access is in Sudan, where IDPs are granted full access to all social protection programmes, but such right can be temporarily suspended if it is in the national interest, related to the safety and security of other citizens.

Refugees

In many of the selected baseline countries refugees enjoy legal access to social protection (Table 4). This points to the fact that for many refugees, the issue of accessing social protection in host countries is not necessarily due to legal barriers, but rather putting legal access into practice, and actually accessing such programmes. Moreover, this is true and consistent across all types of social protection programmes, including social assistance, social insurance and labour market interventions.

Table 4. *De jure* access for refugees, by country and type of social protection

Country	Legislative instrument	Social assistance	Social insurance	Labour market interventions
Afghanistan				
Burkina Faso	2006 & 2008			
Cameroon	2005			
Chad	1996 & 2020			
Colombia	1993			
Costa Rica	2020			
DRC	2002			
Ethiopia	2011 & 2019			
Iraq	2014			
South Africa	2012			
Sudan	2014			
Uganda				

Note: The analysis reflects the right for refugees, and not necessarily asylum-seekers. Green - full access; orange - partial or unclear access; red - no access.

Source: Secondary data review.

There are typically two types of access, and by extension legislative documents, for refugees in the social protection systems of their host countries. The first is access to governmental programmes that fall under social assistance, and the second is social insurance and labour market interventions, with the right to work as a prerequisite, as formally contracted workers can typically access social insurance programmes.

For some countries, understanding *de jure* access to social protection for refugees is straightforward, as it is explicitly stated in law. This is the case in Burkina Faso (2008 Law on the Status of Refugees, No. 042), the 2005 Cameroonian Law on the Status of Refugees, the Chadian 2020 Asylum Law, 1993 Colombian Law 100, the 2002 DRC Law 021, the Ethiopian 2019 Refugee Proclamation, the 2014 Iraqi Social Protection Law, the 2012 South African Social Assistance Act, and the 2014 Sudanese Asylum Act. While

not inscribed in law, Costa Rica's constitution also guarantees right to equality for all residents, including access to social protection.

In certain cases, provisions are explicitly made for asylum-seekers, clarifying their right to access social protection. This is the case in Chad, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Iraq and Sudan. In the case of Iraq, however, the scope of asylum, which covers political and military reasons for asylum only, severely limits access. Similarly, Sudan applies the Arabic/Islamic notion of asylum, limiting the scope of access.

In certain countries, access to social protection for refugees remains unclear. While the subject has been politically debated in Afghanistan, a National Asylum Law has not been fully adopted yet, leaving a legislative gap. In other countries, social protection is not legally accessible by refugees. This is the case, for instance, in Uganda, where the National Social protection Policy explicitly refers to Ugandan citizens. In Cameroon and the DRC, access to labour market interventions by refugees is rather unclear, as there is no explicit mention of it in legislative instruments.

For social insurance, access is granted in most of the baseline countries if they have a regular status and formal contract in the country. This is, however, marred by the fact that some countries do not extend the right to work in the country to refugees, which would be a prerequisite for social insurance in most cases (Table 5). For Burkina Faso, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, DRC and Uganda, the right to employment for refugees is full, without any or few conditions, including the need to get a work permit. While refugees have the right to work in South Africa, such right is not extended to asylum-seekers. The right to employment for refugees in Cameroon, Ethiopia and Iraq is less accessible or unclear.

Table 5. *De jure* right to work for refugees

Country	Right to work
Afghanistan	
Burkina Faso	
Cameroon	
Chad	
Colombia	
Costa Rica	
DRC	
Ethiopia	
Iraq	
South Africa	
Sudan	
Uganda	

Note: The analysis reflects the right for refugees, and not necessarily the right for asylum-seekers. Green - legal right to work; orange - partial or unclear right to work.

Source: Secondary data review.

Box 1. Hospitable refugee policies in Uganda have limited impact on inclusive social protection when social protection systems are nascent

Despite attempts to achieve refugee self-reliance in Uganda, livelihood opportunities are limited, and refugees have high levels of food insecurity. Uganda has been recognised for its hospitable refugee policies and was an early adopter of the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF). The 2006 Refugee Act grants refugees the right to work and access national health and education services. The inclusion of refugees is, however, not yet reflected in the national social protection policy that only covers Ugandan citizens.

Although refugees' rights to social protection are not reflected in the national policy, several initiatives have taken place, moving towards inclusion of refugees in social protection programmes and systems in Uganda:

1. The Uganda CRRF provides a framework for integrating refugees in the national social protections systems and it is expected that a new social protection strategy will include refugees.
2. Refugees are included in several donor-financed social protection programmes implemented by, or in close collaboration with, the Ugandan government.
3. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is working on integrating programmes that include refugees in the management information systems for government social protection.

The main obstacle for wider inclusion of refugees in social protection programmes in Uganda is the limited scope and coverage of the government social protection programmes. To enhance their coverage, the government social protection system needs to be expanded and strengthened and sufficient and predictable financing be made available.

Source: Literature review; key informant interviews.

3.3 Estimated *de facto* access to social protection programmes

In addition to investigating *de jure* access, actual coverage rates to specific social protection programmes were estimated for the same 12 countries (Table 6), when adequate data was identified and available. *De facto* access is analysed in the context of coverage rates for the general population, as well as for refugees, but for reasons of data availability, does not cover asylum-seekers and IDPs. Moreover, there are other limitations to the quality and quantity of data assessed, and these are noted when relevant. In certain cases, the data is dated (more than a decade old), such as for Afghanistan and Chad. Most notably, coverage comparisons are only indicative as their methodological approaches are not harmonised.

For national citizens, coverage rates are derived directly from the ILO World Social Protection database. The database does not contain data on coverage estimates for refugees, and therefore estimates for this group are based on data available in published government and donor reports, relating to specific social protection programmes or projects. There is often little method applied to harmonise the various sources, so that the numbers are indicative and intended to create a baseline only.

Table 6. Reported and estimated social assistance coverage rates, by country and programme

Country	Share of host citizens covered by at least one social protection benefit (%)	Select social protection programmes with information on refugee coverage	
		Programme	Estimated <i>de facto</i> access for refugees
Afghanistan	7.5%	n/a	n/a
Burkina Faso	7.5%	World Bank-financed Social Safety Net Project	0%
Cameroon	6.8%	Regular Cash Transfer programme	2%
		Labour-intensive Public Works	3%
Chad	n/a	World Bank-supported cash transfer scheme	2%
		World Bank-supported productive activities grant programme	0%
Colombia	52.5%	Ingreso Solidario scheme (emergency COVID-19 unconditional cash transfer)	8%
		Social Health Insurance	22%
		Public Employment Service	0.3%
Costa Rica	58%	Atencion a familias, Cuidado y desarrollo infantil, Avancemos CCT, Creemos - CCT	7%
		Social Health Insurance	30%
DRC	14.1%	World Bank-financed STEP project	0%
Ethiopia	7.4%	World Bank-support Urban Safety Net Project	0%
Iraq	37.5%	n/a	n/a
South Africa	49.3%	Various social grants	About 40%
Sudan	9.3%	Unconditional cash transfer, Samarat programme	0%
		Social Health Insurance	3%
		Mother and child cash transfer	n/a
Uganda	2.8%	Urban cash for work scheme	0.1%
		World Bank-funded DRDIP	2%

Source: Authors and ILO World Social Protection Report 2020-2022.

With the exception of Costa Rica (58%), Iraq (37.5%) and South Africa (49.3%), host population coverage benefiting from at least one social protection programme (excluding health) is low in most countries. This notably raises the concern that the rights enshrined in national constitutions and in some cases, national legislation, does not necessarily transfer to social protection coverage in practice, even for national citizens.

Such gaps in coverage are frequently the result of resource constraints and the limited, often nascent programming in place, as well as practical restrictions in delivering services in certain areas or communities. There is limited access, for example, in areas that are remote or conflict-affected.

Data on refugee inclusion in social protection schemes are only available for a limited number of programmes in a sub-set of the countries. Among the social protection programmes identified, the most widely reported figures of refugee coverage related to cash transfer schemes, based on administrative reports from government or donor agencies.

There are programmes where access appears to be particularly good. In Burkina Faso, access to social assistance for refugees is rather good, as Malian refugees represent half of the individuals benefiting from the Food Assistance to Vulnerable and Disaster Affected Households programme administered by the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity and Family, and the National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation. In South Africa as well, nearly 10 000 refugee households access social grants, which would be equivalent to more than 40% of the refugee population. However, as it is not entirely clear whether the beneficiary number is that of a household or an individual, the estimated coverage rate represents an upper bound. In Colombia, Venezuelan migrants were not officially benefiting from cash transfer programmes, although the COVID-19 pandemic changed that prospect. Forthcoming research from ODI and the University of Los Andes found that a small proportion of Venezuelans were, however, accessing other cash transfer programmes. Access has been particularly good for younger Venezuelans in Colombia. The ICBF supported 26% of Venezuelan children and adolescents in 2019, through early childhood programmes, including nutrition, child protection and family programmes. Moreover, 152 000 Venezuelan students, 38% of Venezuelans under the age of 18, benefited from the school feeding programme offered in public institutions.

In Costa Rica, refugees (as well as asylum-seekers) have been regular beneficiaries of the four major social assistance programmes in the country, including *Atención a familias* (income and in-kind support – 2198 households, in 2019), *Cuidado y desarrollo infantil* (income support for childcare, 167 individuals), *Avancemos* (a CCT, 308 individuals) and *Creceamos* (a CCT, 108 individuals). Overall, the estimated refugee and asylum-seeking population that has benefited equates to around 4% of the total population.

In many cases, there is evidence of some, but not widespread access. For instance, according to World Bank project documentation, 2 099 refugee households were benefiting from the Cameroonian Regular Cash Transfer programme, as of May 2021, which is estimated to equate to approximately 2% of the refugee population. In addition, around 13 500 households have benefited from livelihood support through the Ugandan Labour-Intensive Public Works component of the World Bank-funded DRDIP, of whom 70% are host community members and 30% are refugees, equating to around 2% of the total refugee population.

Like the examples above, in most cases, coverage is low according to available documentation. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, a subsidy scheme for basic services, targeting vulnerable groups (including IDPs and refugees) was deemed as ineffective. The negative assessment was not necessarily against access for forcibly displaced persons, but rather its inability to reach vulnerable groups in general. In Chad, 2 500 refugee households were benefitting from the World Bank-supported cash transfer scheme as of May 2021, which represents around 2% of the refugee population. It is unclear whether, and to what extent, refugee children are included in the nearly 140 000 primary school children receiving school meals through the Government School feeding programme sponsored by the WFP.

The review found many cases of programmes slated to include forcibly displaced populations, but for which it was not yet the case. For instance, the Ugandan DRDIP project mentioned earlier aims to reach nearly 400 000 refugee beneficiaries, which would equate to 28% of the current refugee population. The World Bank-financed Burkina Faso Social Safety Net Project (which began in 2014 and has been extended to run until 2024) includes a target to support refugees (a minimum of 1 800 refugee households through the Labour-Intensive Public Works component by project end). However, this component was not due to start

until June 2021, and as per February 2021, no refugee households were recorded as being assisted. In addition, around 40 000 refugees are expected to benefit in the pilot phase of the Ugandan Urban Cash for Works Programme in Arua District, but no updated information is available yet. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the World Bank-funded STEP project is expected to include refugees by 2024. This will imply at least 10% of the beneficiaries in phase 2, and 30% in phase 3. However as of the latest information, refugees have not been included amongst the nearly 100 000 beneficiaries of the unconditional cash transfer programmes. Although Ethiopian law does not specifically grant refugees *de jure* access to social assistance, there are plans to include refugees in urban social assistance programmes via the World Bank-supported Urban Safety Net Project. However, as of September 2021, refugees had yet to be included. In Costa Rica, the CCSS and UNHCR have developed a project to provide social health insurance coverage for 10 000 vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees in 2021, in which beneficiaries will be able to extend their coverage to other family members. The programme could reach as many as 30% of the total asylum seeker and refugee population in Costa Rica, but coverage numbers are currently not available.

Box 2. *De jure* and *de facto* access to social protection in the fragile context of Sudan

The case of Sudan illustrates the divide between *de jure* and *de facto* access to social protection, and how the socio-political context can affect inclusion. *De jure*, refugees and internally displaced persons in Sudan enjoy explicit legal entitlement to access national social protection programmes since 2009 (IDPs) and 2014 (refugees). *De facto*, progress towards actual inclusion of these populations in state social protection programmes remained limited for years. Only recently in 2020, starting with a COVID-19 emergency programme, was the *de facto* inclusion opened to refugees and IDPs.

Based on the 2014 Asylum (Organisation) Act, refugees have the right to public relief and assistance and rationing (Government of Sudan, 2014). For IDPs, a National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons was adopted in 2009, reaffirming IDPs' rights to all the rights of citizenship, and placing obligations on the State to ensure these rights are upheld, and to allocate adequate resources to addressing IDP issues (Government of Sudan, 2009).

De facto access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons emerged recently, following the establishment of the transition government. In 2020, the temporary COVID-19 Emergency Relief Programme included refugees and IDPs, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, with support by the Sudanese Commission for Refugees, WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR. In 2021, the Commission for Social Safety and Poverty Reduction (CSSPR), in collaboration with the State Ministries of Health and Social Development (MoHSD) – launched the Mother and Child Cash Transfer Plus Programme (MCCT+), with technical support from UNICEF (MoSD et al., 2021), and funding from the German BMZ and Swedish Sida. According to key informant interviews, there are no restrictions on refugees' or IDPs' access to this programme. Some refugees already registered for the MCCT+. As of mid-2021, the new state social protection programme of the country, the Sudan Family Support Programme, was planning the inclusion of IDPs, but had not formally decided to also serve refugees.

Prior to the military coup in October 2021, Sudanese transition authorities were working on a new National Social Protection Strategy. According to key informant interviews, the strategy was intended to streamline the various social intervention programmes by government institutions and development partners, and to embed refugees and IDPs as vulnerable groups. In the post-coup context, it remains unclear if and when this work will be taken forward. It also remains unclear how development finance flows to state social protection programmes will evolve in the fragile context.

Source: Literature review; key informant interviews.

Finally, in cases where there is no *de jure* access, this is – with a few exceptions – translated to an estimated zero *de facto* coverage. In Afghanistan, there is no or limited *de jure* access to social assistance, which translates to no actual access, or no data to measure such access. In addition, as most refugees work informally in the countries of interest, most social insurance is low, in comparison to local citizens, but such low coverage is more related to access to good formal jobs than it is to actual social insurance. In some cases, insurance schemes were planned but at the time of writing, not yet operational. This was the case for instance for the Burkinabe universal health insurance scheme.

Besides refugees, data on IDPs and returnees was found in a few programmes, although not in a systemic manner. These were notably in countries with larger IDP populations. In the World Bank-supported Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project (CCAP) in Afghanistan, the number of IDP and returnee households provided with social inclusion grants reached an estimated 0.1% of the total IDP and returnee population. For Iraq as well, numbers were more accessible concerning IDPs, which are more prevalent than refugees. Recent surveys in Iraq suggest that IDP coverage for the PDS scheme is 45% for IDPs and 78% for returned IDPs. Moreover, the survey estimated information on their locations: a coverage rate of 68% for IDPs living in camps, and 38% for those living out of camps.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided a window for better and more comprehensive access to social protection. Programmes developed in the light of the pandemic are generally not indicated in Table 6, as they were temporary measures rather than a regular programme, with the exception of the Colombian *Ingreso Solidario* programme, which appears to have become a regular programme, extended over a longer period and still ongoing as of 2022. In Afghanistan for instance, the Department of Refugees and Repatriation provided a lump sum of AFN 5 000 for each family receiving a returning refugee. Such aid was provided to 7 633 families with members returning from Iran and Pakistan.

In Colombia, the pandemic acted as a catalyst to integrate Venezuelans more firmly into the social protection system. Since the pandemic began, Venezuelans have had access to the *Ingreso Solidario* scheme, an emergency unconditional cash transfer for poor households who were not already benefiting from existing cash transfer programmes. Near 45 000 Venezuelan migrants were eligible for the programme, and more than 17 000 had benefited from a transfer as of June 2020.

Refugees were included in a new COVID-19 Urban Cash for Works Programme, which was piloted in Arua District in Uganda. Refugees represented 5% of the 4 200 households benefiting from the programme in response to COVID-19. This amounts to about 210 refugee households.

In Sudan, nearly 100 000 urban refugees were included in a one-off COVID-19 related in-kind hygiene and food basket distribution targeting urban populations in Khartoum. The programme was co-ordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and was supported by WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR.

3.4 There is a disconnect between the data systems for displaced populations and regular citizens

The operational implementation of inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in national social protection systems requires reliable and unique identification of beneficiaries. This identification must be included in the social registry of the country, or other beneficiary databases utilised. Apart from unique identity assertion, information is required about their vulnerabilities and socio-economic status to undertake targeting, basic administrative data such as their name, document details (for example birth registration certificate or ID card number), family composition, address, as well as bank account/mobile number if available and relevant. In the ideal situation, such data is readily available and can be imported into social registries via automatic data transfer.

In none of the 12 countries under review, are refugees and IDPs comprehensively included in foundational identity management systems of the country. This leads to a dearth of unique identity data on the forcibly

displaced for the management and targeting of national social protection systems. The lack of data integration constitutes a significant practical barrier for their inclusion in national social protection systems.

In the case of IDPs, registration is incomplete or scattered. The displacement status of IDPs is not systematically recorded in national population registries, and comprehensive new individual IDP registration is not usual practice, apart from registration of IDP population sub-sets by humanitarian agencies for specific assistance purposes. Many IDPs have lost their official documents during flight, or never acquired identity documents. Gaps exist in birth registration.

Part of the issue is that many social protection programmes remain largely paper-based, exacerbated by the additional challenge of identifying forcibly displaced populations, and by the multiplicity of programmes from different ministries and organisations. Paper-based systems also increase the difficulty in making such systems portable within a country, and eventually between countries. Moving towards a more digital-based system would improve co-ordination across bodies, but also improve the portability of such programmes (Box 3).

Box 3. Going digital on social protection programmes in Iraq

A major bottleneck in social protection expansion is the slow bureaucratic and challenging task of managing complex and dynamic situations using a paper-based workflow. A paper-based workflow often also implies a place-based workflow, meaning displaced populations that left their homes in haste typically do not have any means of identification upon arrival. With no or little documentation, such groups, including IDPs face setbacks in accessing social protection programmes. Even in cases where they have documentation, the documentation in-hand may not be recognised by the relevant agencies. An example of this is in Iraq, where refugee identification cards issued to refugees by the Ministry of Interior are not recognised for social security registrations. The law in Iraq requires identification cards to be obtained from one's place of origin. In addition, receipt of social protection provisions, for the Iraqi Public Distribution System (PDS), are often linked to a specific local ration agent and changing to an agent in a new location requires an IDP to have successfully registered as a resident in their new location, which can be a challenging process.

Social protection registration processes are also inflexible and inaccessible in other ways. For example, the online system in Iraq for Social Safety Net registration has only been opened twice, and not since June 2016, meaning parts of the population in areas that have only recently come under government control are not included (as well as households whose needs have become more severe in the last five years) (World Bank et al., 2021).

A key enabler for better coverage for displaced populations include steps to improve the portability of benefits, connect relevant government databases, simplify documentation requirements, improve access to ID/documentation, and provide more accessible platforms for households to register, verify or update their information. Many key informant interviewees stressed the role of digital tools and systems (such as interoperable electronic databases; mobile registration apps; biometric identification) in helping address barriers that have often left the displaced unable to access their entitlements in a new place of residence.

Good practice is emerging in Iraq to support portability through an initiative to digitalise the Iraqi Public Distribution System (PDS), led by the WFP. The initiative includes the development of an electronic database, biometric verification, and smartcards in place of paper ration cards, and the introduction of a single-window, mobile-based application system (an app called MyPDS 'Tamwini') which enables households to register and update their information more easily (WFP, 2021). The app was trialled in two neighbourhoods in Baghdad and Mosul and is now being rolled out to 1.6 million people in Najaf governorate (WFP, 2021).

Source: Literature review; key informant interviews.

In at least half of the countries under review, partial or complete data on refugees is incorporated in foundational national identity systems through parallel enrolment. The prime refugee registration systems, which constitute the basis for refugee status recognition, are not automatically synchronised with identity management systems for citizens of the country in any of the countries under review (Table 7). Asylum seekers and refugees are systematically registered in all 12 countries, always biometrically, as individual registration is considered an essential refugee protection measure. Gaps in refugee registration data and documentation do, however, exist in several countries.

Six out of the twelve countries, namely Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, South Africa and Sudan, undertake some form of complete or partial registration of refugees into parallel national identity management IT systems, in addition to registration into the refugee registration system, ProGres (Profile Global Registration System). ProGres is an identity and case management IT system developed by UNHCR, provided as a capacity-building measure to host governments. Specifically, the governments' refugee agencies of Ministries of Interior register refugees using ProGres and related tools. The registration process is implemented either by the Government, jointly with UNHCR, or by UNHCR. While ProGres tools for asylum seekers and refugees are meant to be interoperable with the IT systems used by the host Government for identity management (UNHCR, 2018a), in practice this has so far not been implemented. The ProGres database does not appear to be automatically synchronised with other national databases in any of the 12 countries (Table 7).

Table 7. Refugee registration and identity management systems

Country	Refugee/asylum seeker registration system (linked to status recognition)	Synchronised with identity data management systems for nationals of the country?	Other registration systems enrolling refugees/asylum seekers
Afghanistan	ProGres v3	Not synchronised	<i>Data not available</i>
Burkina Faso	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	<i>Data not available</i>
Cameroon	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	Civil Registration System
Chad	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	Civil Registration System and Population Register
Colombia	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	Civil Registration System and Population Register
Costa Rica	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	National Identification System
DRC	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	<i>Data not available</i>
Ethiopia	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	Civil Registration System
Iraq	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	Civil Registration System
South Africa	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	<i>Data not available</i>
Sudan	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	Immigration Passport Police (IPP) system
Uganda	ProGres v4	Not synchronised	<i>Data not available</i>

Note: ProGres stands for Profile Global Registration System.

Source: UNHCR key informant interview, 2021.

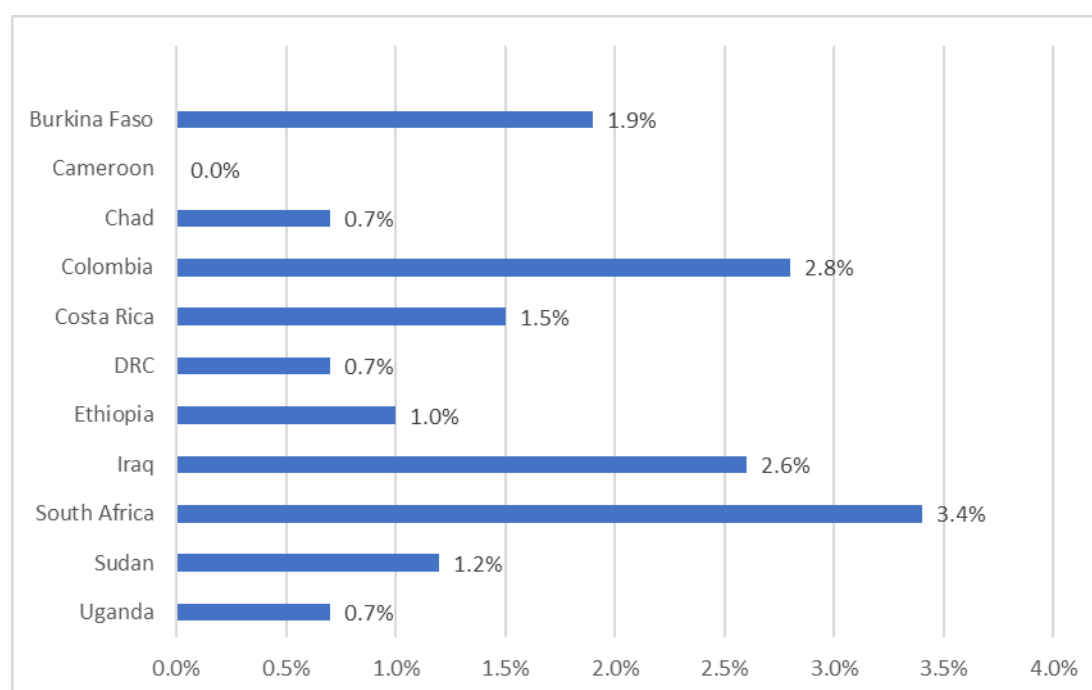
3.5 Sustainable financing is a key aspect of inclusive systems

There is a large financing gap in social protection in developing countries. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, countries around the world spent on average 12.9% of their GDP on social protection. The differences between countries are large, for lower middle-income countries the same figure is 2.5% and for low-income countries 1.1%. To close the coverage gaps, the current expenditure levels on social protection will have to increase. For example, low-income countries would have to invest another 15.9% of their GDP to close the coverage gap. Although external donors have had a role in supporting the development of social

protection systems in many developing countries, especially in the financing of social protection in low-income countries, financing from official development assistance could only play a minor role covering the current financial gap to provide social protection for the population in developing countries (Durán Valverde et al, 2020). Considering the financing gap in social protection in developing countries, sustainable financing is a central challenge to making the systems more inclusive. A large share of official development assistance directed toward refugees is provided through short-term humanitarian financing. At the same time, the GRC calls for sharing of the burden and responsibility by the international community to support a comprehensive response to refugee situations.

The share of GDP spent on social assistance was around 1% or less in most of the 12 countries in this study, although higher expenditure levels were observed in South Africa (3.4%), Colombia (2.8%), Iraq (2.6%) and Burkina Faso (1.9%) (Figure 6). For comparison, the average social safety net expenditure in OECD countries was 2.7% of GDP, as cited in the latest *State of Social Safety Nets Report 2018* (World Bank, 2018).

Figure 6. Social assistance spending (% of GDP)



Note: No data available for Afghanistan.

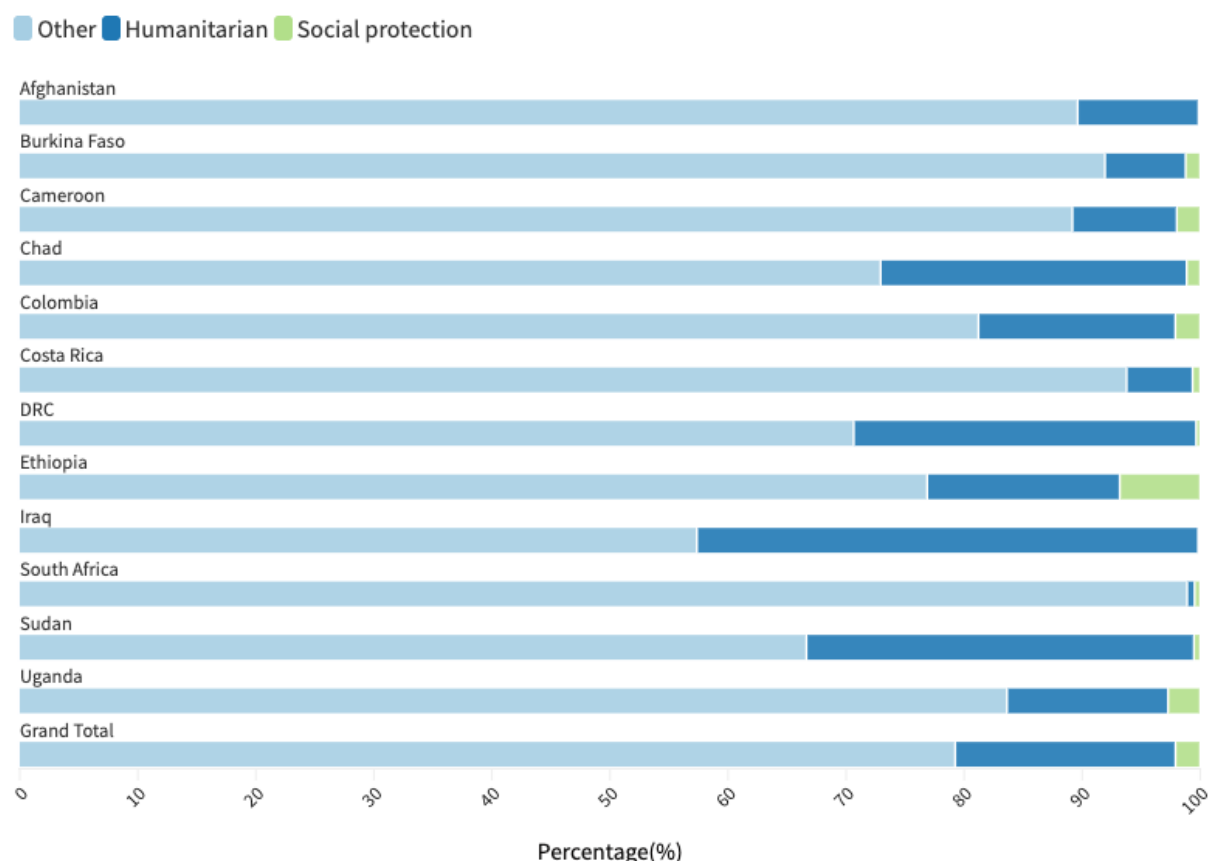
Source: World Bank (2021), Atlas of Social Protection Indicators of Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE) database, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/datatopics/aspire> (accessed November 2021).

Of all global ODA in 2019, 1.17% was earmarked for social protection (OECD, 2019). Donor financing for social protection varies significantly between the 12 countries considered in this study (Figure 7). Ethiopia received the highest proportion of donor financing earmarked for social protection, amounting to almost five times the global proportion. In most of the countries, except South Africa, ODA earmarked for humanitarian assistance was much higher than ODA for social protection, often multiple times the size of social protection contributions. The DRC represents the furthest extreme, where international humanitarian assistance is 83 times larger than donor contributions to social protection.

Ethiopia is a noteworthy exception, as donor funding for humanitarian assistance represents only about twice the size of social protection (Figure 7). This in part reflects the fact that the country's major social

protection programme (the Productive Safety Net Programme) has a shock-responsive function, with the ability to expand to meet humanitarian needs when a crisis such as a drought occurs.

Figure 7. Official Development Assistance earmarked for social protection and humanitarian assistance by country in 2019



Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System, 2019 dataset.

3.6 Contextual factors will determine the feasibility of inclusive social protection

Important contextual factors that will determine the feasibility of making social protection systems more inclusive are the political stability, political will, and the attitudes towards the forcibly displaced in the country. This could be exemplified by the willingness of the government to host refugees in Sudan and the hospitable political and public response towards refugees in Uganda. Shared ethnicities and identities between host and refugee population contribute to positive attitudes. Political instability and conflict on the other hand may halt previous progress and initiatives for inclusive social protection, also creating an uncertainty of the current status of inclusion. Lack of political will and incentives to include forcibly displaced persons may stem from perception by ministries handling social protection programming that refugee and IDP affairs are best managed as a temporary humanitarian operation and that the forcibly displaced may receive more and better support through humanitarian assistance. Social protection may in some cases also create political tensions and programmes including the forcibly displaced may result in politically sensitive demographic changes. There may also be a reluctance from the displaced populations themselves to be included in government social protection programmes.

Legislation and policies in place facilitate the access to social protection for forcibly displaced persons. Even if they have legal access to social protection, either as citizens (IDP) or in legislation including refugees, proactive recognition of this group as being vulnerable is in some cases available. In Sudan, there is a proactive recognition of the vulnerable status of IDPs and in Colombia there is a law providing preferential access to IDP-specific schemes. Gaps in laws and regulations are, however, common across the baseline countries. This may include the absence of a comprehensive refugee law as in Iraq and Afghanistan; laws that are not yet passed in parliament; gaps in the social protection law; or laws that are unclear on what type of displaced persons get access, or for what type of social protection. In the case of Sudan there is a law that allows for the temporary suspension of access to social protection in case of a national emergency, which has been triggered several times.

Economic and financial incentives enable inclusion. This includes financial support from international organisations for both the forcibly displaced and hosting areas of the country. Another economic incentive is that refugees may fill a skills gap in the workforce and contribute to boosting the local economy. Allowing refugees to work opens the possibility to participate in social insurance schemes. Lack of access to formal employment, however, limits the possibility to register for social insurance. Self-employed workers and workers in the informal sector are commonly excluded from social insurance and employer-liability systems. Resource constraints are a major challenge to social protection at large. The limited funding for social protection and reluctance to reallocate resources from other sectors results in the fact that, until sufficient resources can be allocated to social protection for the host population, inclusion of the forcibly displaced will be challenging. Support from non-governmental organisations has, in many cases, driven the process of making systems more inclusive. Technical, operational and financial support by humanitarian actors and international agencies has enabled the expansion of social protection and opened it up to the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations. Donor support is often crucial, but donors are at the same time sometimes reluctant to channel funds through government systems.

An existing and developed social protection system is one of the cornerstones for including forcibly displaced persons in government social protection. This will influence the likelihood of covering displaced populations and increase the likelihood to transfer a humanitarian caseload to government social protection systems. Examples of features in a developed system that facilitates inclusion are digital tools and systems that help address barriers that may leave the displaced unable to access their entitlements in a new place of residence and inclusion of registered refugees in a social registry, as in the example of Colombia. On the other hand, a limited scope and coverage of the government social protection system and lack of programmes for the host population limits the opportunities for the forcibly displaced to be included in such programmes. Even where a system is in place and the forcibly displaced have access, practical and logistical bottlenecks are numerous. These include co-ordination challenges, such as gaps in co-ordination between departments working on social protection and forced displacement; databases that are not interoperable; forcibly displaced persons lacking the documentation required to access social protection such as ID cards; inflexible social protection registration processes; and non-nationals not being able to receive benefits due to the electronic system not reading their status permits.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be a factor in making social protection systems more inclusive, in the fight to counter its negative impacts. Although many programmes have been temporary measures, the COVID-19 social protection response displayed the possibility of rapidly covering new populations with emergency cash transfers, as was the case in Burkina Faso, Cameroon and Chad.

4 Policy discussion and recommendations

Government social protection systems in LMICs hosting IDPs and refugees are often nascent, and implemented with considerable amounts of technical and financial support provided from external donors. This has consequences for the social protection coverage that refugees and IDPs receive in their hosting countries. The overall picture on coverage of *de jure* access is positive, but *de facto* access remains low. Knowledge is particularly hindered by large gaps in data availability and adequacy.

The political economy in forced displacement contexts, including public sentiment towards refugees and IDPs, political will, or conflict dynamics, may not favour the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in social protection systems. National planning and policy making, as well as development co-operation and planning should remain committed to inclusion. Social protection programmes are a pathway to integrate refugees and IDPs in the socio-economic fabric of the host country in a sustainable way, and to prepare displaced populations for durable solutions, including voluntary return, resettlement or local integration. Specific entry points for inclusion in social protection should be aligned with the forced displacement cycle, including in preparedness measures (Table 8).

Table 8. Social protection interventions in the forced displacement cycle

Types of interventions to be considered for inclusion of refugees and IDPs

Forced displacement stage	Types of interventions at country and local level	Considerations
Preparedness	<p><u>System capacity building</u> for all types of social protection, ensuring that shock responsive mechanisms, and robust delivery systems, are in place in areas at risk of receiving populations flows</p> <p><u>Legislation and policy review</u></p> <p><u>Preparedness co-ordination</u> with humanitarian actors</p>	<p>► Context</p> <p>► <i>De jure</i> access</p> <p>► Political will</p>
Emergency	<p><u>Primary</u>: Social assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash and/or in-kind (food; household items; sanitary items) transfers • Housing subsidies • Targeted social welfare programmes (for example: mother & child; elderly; persons with disability; asylum seekers/refugees) <p><u>Secondary</u>: Labour market interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment services (counselling, referral to job opportunities) 	<p>► Feasibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actual system capacity - Capacity of the delivery mechanism in the area hosting refugees and/or IDPs - Availability of financial resources, or ability to inject these

Protracted displacement	<p><u>Primary:</u> Social assistance; labour market interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social welfare • Social safety nets • Job training (skills / vocational training) • Employment generation (micro-credit; SME financing (grants/credits); public works) • Housing subsidies • Targeted social welfare programmes <p><u>Secondary:</u> Social insurance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance • Social security
<p>Solutions</p> <p><i>Transitional</i> Socio-economic integration in the context of displacement</p> <p><i>Durable</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary return - Local integration - Resettlement 	<p><u>Primary:</u> Social insurance; labour market interventions; social assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance • Social insurance • Employment services (counselling, referral to job opportunities) • Job training • Employment generation • Targeted social welfare programmes <p><u>Secondary:</u> Social assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing subsidies • Social safety nets • Social welfare

Mass influxes of refugees and IDPs may initially put pressure on limited resources in a local context. While local communities and country leaders often display generous solidarity with displaced populations, there may be hesitation in sharing scarce national development resources in the medium to long-term. Well-designed communication and advocacy, broader area-based economic development support, promotion of subsidised access for displaced populations, facilitation of operational solutions, and financial responsibility sharing with a longer perspective, can contribute to overcoming these pressures.

Individual refugee and IDP data, such as names or locations, is a sensitive issue. Misuse can put individuals at risk. When including refugee data in databases such as social registries, this must be done with care and in full consideration of data protection standards and related good practices. Some displaced persons, in particular IDPs, may not want to be registered to avoid detection. Conflict-related internal displacement is sometimes characterised by situations where the state forms part of the reasons for displacement, and/or is not able or willing to afford protection. As part of their coping strategy, IDPs in these cases may opt to not register in state systems, as the trust in the social contract between themselves and their government has been broken.

Building a business case for social protection coverage

Given the potential medium to longer-term benefits of social protection for refugees and IDPs, and to the hosting community, the feasibility of how social protection systems can cover forcibly displaced populations should always and continuously be assessed. This should be based on a realistic appraisal of the national and local context, and the capacity and tools of the existing social protection system.

Feasibility studies, as well as regular monitoring and impact evaluation also serve to build a business case on inclusive social protection systems, showing that the motives for investing in social protection systems are not only socially driven, but financially driven as well. Indeed, building a strong business case is a crucial element in overcoming opposition to the inclusion of refugees and IDPs. This also fosters a

favourable environment and boosts buy-in surrounding the issue of social protection coverage. The business case must be tailored to different scenarios and actors:

- *National and local host governments:* Governments need more evidence that investing time and money on social protection coverage for refugees and IDPs generates positive outcomes on social cohesion, employment, skill-building, fiscal contributions and entrepreneurship, to the benefit of the host community and the entire country.
- *Refugees and IDPs:* The buy-in argument for forcibly displaced populations must also be accounted for in the business case for social protection. Certain target groups may wish not to receive certain benefits or access to public services, perceiving this as diminishing their opportunities for resettlement.
- *Donor countries:* Just like host governments, donor countries have limited budgets with competing priorities. The business case must be made not only for predictable financial burden sharing with host countries, but also for a strategic approach involving social protection. In the longer run, such an approach has the potential to reduce cost, as those who are forcibly displaced may be empowered to become contributory members to social insurance and the broader fiscal system in the host country.
- *Private sector actors:* Under certain scenarios, exploring the ways and channels of fostering more for-profit actors may activate efficiency, competitiveness, and innovation in the sector, specifically in areas where governments do not have competitive advantage.

Facilitating an enabling environment

Expectations should be managed, however. Government social protection systems in low- and middle-income countries may struggle to rapidly include additional (forcibly displaced) beneficiaries, unless the system is mature and flexible enough to do so. New system development and inclusion takes time. There should not be an expectation that an investment in building new social protection systems is as reliable as the primary source for supporting displaced populations in the short- to medium-term. Furthermore, many social protection administration systems are not designed to be dynamic or to provide “on-demand” access, with recipient caseloads being updated only every few years. Existing systems should not be overburdened, requiring gradual sequencing of *de facto* inclusion. Humanitarian assistance for both displaced persons and their host communities therefore continues to play a fundamental role throughout the displacement cycle.

Therefore, beyond building a business case, policy makers should facilitate an enabling environment, at global, national and local policy levels. National and local level enablers are highly contextualised, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to creating such an environment. Moreover, fostering such an environment requires identifying the challenges each type of enabler may face in successfully creating the right conditions. This paper draws on a variety of examples from the 12 study countries, to establish a typology of enablers and challenges in delivering better social protection coverage for refugees and IDPs (Table 9).

Table 9. Enablers and challenges for including refugees and IDPs in social protection systems

Enablers	Challenges
Political stability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a greater scope to work on expanding social protection in different areas of the country. 	Political instability and conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halts previous progress and initiatives for inclusive social protection. Uncertainty of the current status of social protection.
Positive attitudes towards the forcibly displaced in the country <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willingness of the government to host refugees. Hospitable political and public response towards refugees. Shared ethnicities and identities between host and refugee populations. Sense of solidarity with and sympathy for the displaced group. 	Lack of political will and incentives to include forcibly displaced in social protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception by ministries dealing with social protection that refugee and IDP affairs are best managed as a temporary humanitarian operation. Political tensions and view that social protection may result in politically sensitive demographic changes. Forcibly displaced may receive more and better support through humanitarian assistance. Displaced populations may be reluctant to be included in government social protection.
Legislation and policies facilitating access to social protection for forcibly displaced in place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laws providing preferential access to social programmes, as well as access to IDP-specific assistance schemes. Proactive recognition of the vulnerable status of IDPs in policies. Allowing portability of benefits 	Gaps in laws and regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of comprehensive refugee law. Gaps in social protection law. Laws not currently passed in parliament. Laws unclear of what type of displaced persons get access, or for what type of social protection.
Economic and financial incentives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial support from international agencies can serve to leverage and channel resources to develop the poorer rural hosting areas. 	Resource constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited funding for social protection. Calls for resource reallocation face opposition. Until sufficient resources can be allocated to social protection for the host population, inclusion of the forcibly displaced will be challenging. Donors are sometimes reluctant to channel funds through government systems.
An existing, developed, social protection system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influences the likelihood of covering displaced populations and increases the likelihood to transfer humanitarian caseload to government social protection systems. Digital tools and systems help address barriers that leave the displaced unable to access their entitlements in a new place of residence. Inclusion of registered people on the move in social registries. 	Nascent social protection systems and fragmented programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited scope and coverage of the national social protection system. Lack of unemployment insurance for nationals and refugees.
Allowing refugees to work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing refugees to work (and access social insurance) and at the same time fill skills gaps in the workforce. 	Informality in the labour market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-employed and informal workers are excluded from social insurance / employer-liability system entitlements. Social insurance is limited to formal workers. Some of the main LMIC refugee hosting countries have high informality rates

Support from non-governmental organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanitarian agencies' expertise and systems in supporting the expansion of social protection. Technical and operational support by humanitarian actors. World Bank financed social safety net including target to include refugees. 	Practical and logistical bottlenecks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps in co-ordination between departments working on social protection and forced displacement Databases that are not interoperable. Forcibly displaced people lack the documentation (e.g. ID cards) required to access social protection. Inflexible social protection registration process, e.g. enrolment procedures not being continuous. Non-nationals often not able to receive benefits in practice due to the electronic system not reading their status permits.
Inclusion of refugees in social protection COVID-19 response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance to refugees during COVID-19 was in some instances channelled via government-led social protection systems. 	Lack of information and data including the forcibly displaced in social protection systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on refugee and IDP coverage is not included in global databases on social protection. The forcibly displaced are not systematically included in data collection efforts.

With these considerations, this paper makes **five main policy recommendations** to address social protection coverage of refugees and IDPs in low- and middle-income countries.

1. Incorporate refugees and IDPs into national social protection policy and planning

Host country governments and their partners need to incorporate social protection more firmly into national preparedness plans for displacement crises, through the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in social protection systems. This requires a shift towards a territorial development approach, in which forced displacement and areas of interest (including camps) are viewed as part of an overall development plan, rather than separate challenges. It also underlines the need to address issues prior to the occurrence of a crisis, rather than addressing ex-post. Legislation and policy should clearly identify *de jure* access by type of social protection programme, avoiding issues of obscure legal access ex-post. Concerning durable solutions, issues of portability of such programmes should be strongly considered, both for potential IDPs and cross-border refugee returnees, who may wish to return home with their accrued benefits.

2. Support multi-year financing for the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations

Donors should support broader social protection system development, and specific multi-year financing for the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations, providing host governments the confidence to engage in the progressive expansion of social protection to displaced (particularly refugee) populations. Particular attention should be paid to shock-responsive mechanisms and the delivery architecture in at-risk areas.

3. Enhance co-ordination across key actors

Better co-ordination across the broad spectrum of actors can be facilitated with coherent, whole-of-government policy visions, as well as co-ordination mechanisms which address the needs of forcibly displaced persons. Enhanced co-ordination with United Nations and non-governmental organisations is, moreover, a pre-requisite for streamlining data to ensure that forcibly displaced persons receive social protection benefits and equal treatment.

4. Include refugees and IDPs systematically in data collection systems

Forcibly displaced persons' access to social protection systems should be facilitated by synchronisation or inclusion of their registration data in a state's identity management systems and social registries. Refugees and IDPs should be systematically included in national socio-economic household surveys, which often constitute a key source for developing targeting criteria of programmes.

5. Monitor and evaluate inclusion regularly

The impact of inclusion policies and legislation should be systematically evaluated. The *de facto* inclusion of refugees and IDPs should be monitored through regular data collection. Data collection systems on social protection beneficiaries should include specific sub-categories on refugees and IDPs, by type of system. This study covered only 12 countries: more should be included in follow-up research. Beyond social protection, the inclusion of the forcibly displaced in broader national planning and socio-economic development strategies should also be examined. Only then will the obscure picture of *de facto* inclusion become clearer.

More specific recommendations are provided for hosting governments, donor countries and civil society organisations in the boxes below.

Box 4. Policy recommendation to governments hosting refugees and IDPs

The development of a coherent whole of government policy vision across ministries and government institutions can contribute to broader development objectives of the country and related planning and leveraging development support. It would aim to address the needs of displacement affected populations including refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities. This entails the adaptation of displacement-specific legislation (such as the country's refugee and asylum law) to specifically include entitlement to social protection, and the adaptation of social protection policies to remove impediments to inclusion. Equally, enhanced co-ordination with UN and non-government organisations is a pre-requisite to streamline data and initiatives, ensuring that forcibly displaced persons receive social protection benefits and equal treatment.

Aligned with the forced displacement cycle, state social protection policies, and related delivery mechanisms, should outline provisions relating to the immediate aftermath of forced displacement, "routine" social protection over the longer-term, inter-operable or integrated identity management systems, and establishing co-ordination mechanisms and partnerships to operationalise legislation. This should be costed into national development plans and presented to development partners. The costing should be based on the existing refugee and IDP population in the country, as well as on scenarios in national preparedness and contingency plans for forced displacement.

Box 5. Policy recommendations to donors

Evidence from the World Bank shows that financing access to social protection for forcibly displaced populations delivers tangible results and positive change towards inclusion in social protection systems. Financing providers should provide specific multi-year financing for the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations to give host governments the confidence to engage in the progressive expansion needed of social protection to displaced (particularly refugee) populations. Particular attention should be paid to financing shock-responsive mechanisms and the delivery systems in at-risk areas. The evidence and data on actual *de facto* inclusion of forcibly displaced populations should guide the extent to which financing of humanitarian programmes is needed. If the inclusion rate is low, refugees and IDPs' well-being will continue to depend on humanitarian aid.

When discussing broader development financing with recipient countries, the inclusion of refugees and IDPs should form part of the agenda early on. Development financing providers have a role to play in leveraging the inclusion agenda in line with stated policy commitments. More resources overall for social

protection systems will eventually facilitate feasibility and inclusion of forcibly displaced populations in these systems, especially in countries where social protection systems are nascent.

Civil society organisations, alongside local government, play a vital role in providing social protection at the grassroots level, in representing community needs, and in generating political will for the inclusion of forcibly displaced populations. Provision of funding with specific attention to areas affected by forced displacement will enable these actors to engage in a meaningful way.

Box 6. Policy recommendations to UN agencies, international NGOs, and civil society organisations

Support to the development of national preparedness and contingency plans can constitute a good entry point for the inclusion of refugees, IDPs, and host communities in social protection systems. The co-ordination of humanitarian-development-peace aspects in forced displacement situations should take place early on. It requires dedicated capacities on the part of humanitarian and development actors. In protracted displacement situations, humanitarian agencies should align parallel cash transfer programmes to government mechanisms, and eventually facilitate the transfer of beneficiaries from parallel programmes to state systems. Agencies supporting the host government with the implementation of national social protection programmes should advocate and facilitate the inclusion of forcibly displaced people early on.

Where feasible, agencies should initiate subsidised pilot schemes for the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and host communities in the national social protection system. This should contribute to building the business case, and to mobilising broader development partner and donor support for inclusion.

Given the importance of beneficiary identification and data for inclusion, agencies should support state authorities overcoming the lack of inter-operability between displacement and broader national identity management systems, including social registries. Agencies should also continue to facilitate access to civil documentation for displaced populations, as these are often a pre-requisite for accessing national social protection systems.

The private sector has a crucial role to play in enhancing access to decent work and livelihoods for both displaced and host communities, thereby setting the base for the sustainability of socio-economic inclusion of displaced populations. Private sector actors should include displacement-affected areas in investment and business development efforts. Government, UN, and civil society organisations have a role in supporting framework setting (right to work) and de-risking private sector investment, thereby attracting potential partners.

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